



**Gohar Ejaz pledges to ensure robust security for upcoming elections-2024**

Caretaker Interior Minister, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, on Tuesday expressed his commitment to ensure robust security for upcoming general elections scheduled to be held on February 8. Speaking at a joint press conference, he outlined the government's comprehensive preparations in place for the upcoming elections. (Report on Page 8)



**Shah thanks Pakistan for showing solidarity with Kashmiris**

Senior APHC leader and President Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah has thanked the government and particularly the people of Pakistan for expressing complete solidarity with the struggling people of occupied Kashmir. In his message from Tihar jail the incarcerated leader extended his heartfelt gratitude to the government and particularly the people of Pakistan for their wholehearted support... (Details on Page 3)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Meeting**

Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (Chairman JCSC) General Sahir Shamshad Mirza meeting with His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday, February 6, 2024.



Photo: ISPR

**CJCSC strengthens defence ties during visit to Saudi Arabia**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (Chairman JCSC) of Pakistan, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, undertook a significant official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in connection with the 2nd World Defence Show, the military said on Tuesday.

During his visit, General Mirza met with His Royal Highness Prince Khalid Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, to discuss crucial strategic and security issues, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement.

The discussions also explored opportunities to enhance defence cooperation between the two brotherly nations, it added.

The visit emphasised the longstanding and robust relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, particularly in the field of defence. General Mirza expressed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral ties and working collaboratively to address regional security challenges.

One of the highlights of the visit was the inauguration of

the Al-Fatah-II Missile stall at the World Defence Show, a momentous occasion symbolising the technological prowess and advancements in Pakistan's defence capabilities.

The Chairman JCSC toured various stalls featuring organisations from Pakistan, showcasing the country's defence industry and fostering collaborations with international partners.

In the ISPR statement, it was highlighted that General Mirza held crucial meetings with key Saudi military officials. His Excellency General Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili, Chief of General Staff of Saudi Arabia, and Lieutenant General Fahad bin Abdullah AL-Muter, Chief of Royal Saudi Land Forces, engaged in discussions with the CJCSC to explore avenues for mutual cooperation in defence matters.

The meetings encompassed a broad spectrum of strategic and operational issues, emphasising the mutual interests of both nations in maintaining regional stability and security. The collaborative efforts between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are expected to enhance the defence capabilities of both countries, fostering a stronger alliance to address evolving challenges.

**Caretaker govt ensures best arrangements for peaceful conduct of polls: PM**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that despite numerous challenges, the best possible arrangements had been made to ensure peaceful and seamless conduct of elections on polling day, across the country. He was talking to a delegation of the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG), led by former President of Nigeria Goodluck Ebele Jonathan who called on him, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Caretaker govt. ensures best arrangements for peaceful conduct of polls: PM The meeting was part of the COG's interaction with various stakeholders ahead of the upcoming general elections on February 8, 2024. The caretaker prime minister



welcomed the COG delegation and said that Pakistan was proud to honour its commitment as a

Commonwealth member state by inviting independent international observers to witness the general elections. Caretaker govt. ensures best arrangements for peaceful conduct of polls: PM He also highlighted that the caretaker government had fulfilled its responsibilities to run the day-to-day affairs of the state and create a conducive environment ahead of the elections. Now it was the turn of the people of Pakistan to exercise their democratic right to vote, he added. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan thanked the caretaker prime minister and conveyed best wishes of the Secretary General of the Commonwealth Patricia Scotland. He said the COG delegation would be visiting various polling sites throughout the country to observe the election process.

**Over 120m to exercise right of vote to elect representatives: Solangi**



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said that on February 8 over 120 million Pakistanis would cast their votes to elect public representatives of their choice to run the affairs of the state as envisaged in the Constitution

Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ijaz he said that last year on August 17, 2023, after oath-taking of the caretaker cabinet, he had committed in a press conference that the caretaker government would provide all possible assistance to the Election

Commission of Pakistan to conduct free and fair elections.

He said that rumour-mongers' claims, that elections would not be held on one or the other pretext and caretaker setup would linger on, had proven wrong.

The minister said that the Ministry of Information yesterday had launched an online media helpline for the convenience of local and foreign journalists during the elections.

He said that the Pakistani nation had been fighting the scourge of terrorism for decades and between 2008 and 2013 law and order situation was not good. The 2008 elections had to be postponed for one month following the martyrdom of Benazir Bhutto. He said that a few incidents of terrorism could not deter the masses who would come out to use their right of vote in a large numbers to elect their representatives to run the affairs of the state.

**Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Istanbul**

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the terrorist attack targeting the Courthouse complex in Istanbul today.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the brotherly people and government of Turkiye and pray for the swift and complete recovery of those injured in this heinous attack. Our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families.

Pakistan reaffirms its resolute solidarity with Turkiye in its fight against scourge of terrorism.

**275 women to contest upcoming elections on general seats**

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: In the upcoming general elections, 275 women from various political parties will be contesting on the general seats.

"111 political parties have nominated 275 women candidates to contest the upcoming elections on general seats, making up for 4.6 percent of the total of 6,037 candidates they have fielded", Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) said in a statement.

According to Section 206 of the Elections Act, 2017 (Selection for Elective Offices), each political party is required to ensure at least five percent representation of women candidates while selecting candidates for general seats for elective offices, including membership of the Majlis-e-Shoorah (Parliament) and Provincial Assemblies, through a transparent and democratic procedure.

FAFEN analysis is based on the

List of Contesting Candidates (Form-33) for National and Provincial Assemblies.

Out of 111 political parties, 30 parties have fielded five or more than five percent women on general seats, while four political parties have fielded between 4.50 and 4.99 percent of women candidates on general seats (that is statistically rounded-up to five percent), and the remaining 77 have fielded up to 4.50 percent women candidates on general seats.

The parties fielding less than 4.50 percent women candidates on general seats is higher since the applicability of this provision is technical party effective only on political parties which field at least 20 candidates on general seats (as the five percent provision requires them to allocate ticket to at least one woman candidate).

Only 35 political parties have fielded more than 20 candidates on general seats.

According to FAFEN, the level of adherence to the five-percent provision varies across the elective houses.

For the National Assembly, 94 parties have allocated tickets for general seats to a total of 1,872 candidates, that included 92 women, making up 4.91 percent of women out of the total candidates fielded.

For the Punjab Assembly, 70 parties have allocated tickets to a total of 1,878 candidates, including 58 women (3.09 percent of the total). For the Sindh Assembly, 50 parties have allocated tickets to a total of 948 candidates, out of which 59 are women (6.22 percent of the total).

For the Balochistan Assembly, 37 parties have allocated tickets to a total of 533 candidates, out of which 19 are women (3.56 percent of the total). For the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, 44 parties have allocated tickets to 806 candidates, out of which 47 are women (5.83 percent of the total).

**Eight-member Russian election observers visits ECP**



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The eight-member Election Observer Group from the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation, led by Chairman Andrey Maximov, visited the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to meet with Secretary Dr Syed Asif Hussain and others.

Secretary ECP, Syed Asif Hussain, extended a warm welcome to the members of the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation upon their arrival in Pakistan to observe the elections.

**OIC envoys meet Czech FM to discuss Middle East situation**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The ambassadors of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries in Czech Republic on Tuesday met Czech Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky wherein they discussed the Middle East crisis. Ambassador of Pakistan in Prague Ayesha Ali was also among the Muslim world envoys.

"I met Foreign Minister Jan Lipavsky with a group of OIC ambassadors to discuss the ME crisis," Ambassador Ayesha Ali wrote on her X timeline. In the meeting, the envoys had a candid discussion on all aspects of the situation including possible solutions.

**Traders reject FBR restructuring**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: All Pakistan Anjuman e Tajran (APAT) expressed displeasure for not consulting with the stakeholders and rejected the reforms in the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR).

The officials from APAT gave a strong reaction regarding the reforms in FBR by the Caretaker Finance Minister stating that the business community will not accept any ordinance made by the caretaker setup.

The president of APAT, Ajmal Baloch, rejected the reforms in FBR produced by the caretaker finance minister stating that the stakeholders were not consulted regarding the decision.

# Govt provides financial support to development of modern technical education institutions: PM

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that despite the financial constraints the government would provide all possible financial support for the development of modern technical education institutions like TEVTA.

The AJK premier said this while addressing an inaugural function at the Technical Vocational Training Authority Complex here today, which has been established in New Prime Minister's House. Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that technical education was a pressing need of the moment.

Young generation has to be attracted towards digitalization, he said, adding that the basic purpose to hand over the new building of the Prime Minister's House to the TEVTA administration



was to promote technical education.

He said that effective measures were being taken to attract the young generation towards skilled education. He said that it was high time that the young generation should make modern and especially the skilled education their motive.

"The dream of real development

could only be materialized through skill development and technical education", he added. On this occasion, Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq inaugurated the TEVTA's website and inspected the stalls of local handicrafts setup by the officials of the TEVTA.

Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-

ul-Haq was also given a detailed briefing on the aims and objectives of the TEVTA by its Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Farid. The function was attended by senior Minister Colonel Retired Waqar Ahmed Noor, Health Minister Nisar Abdali, Dewan Chaghatai, Aamir Altaf, Ahmed Raza Qadri and others.

## Shah thanks Pakistan for showing solidarity with Kashmiris

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior APHC leader and President Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah has thanked the government and particularly the people of Pakistan for expressing complete solidarity with the struggling people of occupied Kashmir.

In his message from Tihar jail the incarcerated leader extended his heartfelt gratitude to the government and particularly the people of Pakistan for their wholehearted support to Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for right to self-determination.

The observance of Kashmir day he said amply demonstrated the Pakistan's unwavering commitment towards the cause of Kashmir.

The people of Kashmir, he said, deeply appreciate the government and people of Pakistan for their consistent support despite facing many daunting challenges.

"We hope that Pakistan will continue to extend its moral, political and diplomatic support till we achieve our cherished goal of freedom from India's unlawful and forcible occupation", Shah said.

Lauding Pakistan's role for championing the cause of Kashmir he said that Pakistan has always played a very pivotal role in strengthening the ongoing liberation struggle of the Kashmiri people.



## Ifat Tahira Soomro joins IPP

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: PTI candidate from NA-155 Lodhran, Ifat Tahira Soomro met Chairman IPP Jahangir Tareen at his residence. Jahangir Tareen welcomed Ifat Tahira Soomro and



expressed his determination to do mixed politics. Ifat Tahira Soomro issued a formal video statement saying that I announce my withdrawal from NA 155 Lodhran. I started practical politics from Lodhran against Siddique Baloch of PML-N. I started politics against the anti-people and ignorant policies of Siddique Baloch. Siddique Baloch group has been propagating for two or three days that I have been kidnapped. This is false and false propaganda. People should not be misled by Siddique Baloch group. People are requested to support me against Siddique Baloch. People vote for Jahangir Khan Tareen in NA 155. I was accused of money which is based on lies. I don't believe in money politics.

## People's Party candidates will be successful with a huge mandate

Spokesman Report

LALA MUSA: Speaker Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly Former President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Member Central Executive Committee Pakistan Senior Parliamentarian Chaudhry Latif Akbar led by Peoples Party nominees Sardar Amjad Yusuf, Shaikat Javed Mir, Special Assistant Syed Izadar Hussain Kazmi, A delegation of Rab Nawaz Tahir, Chaudhry Hanif Khatana, Sardar Afaq and other party officials reached Lala Musa in the election campaign of the party's nominated candidate for the National Assembly from NA-65, Qamar-ul-Zaman Kaira, and visited his election office. Meeting with the candidate Provincial Assembly Nadeem Asghar Kaira while talking to the party officials on this occasion Speaker Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that in the general elections of Pakistan, his intellectual team and nominees to appoint Chairman of the Nation Bilawal Bhutto Zardari as the Prime Minister. Succeed the candidates with a heavy mandate. Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that Qamar-ul-Zaman Kaira is the pioneer of progressive, enlightened ideas and ideals of the People's Party and the bearer of new thinking. Yousuf Syed Azadar Hussain Kazmi Shaikat Javed Mir Rab Nawaz Tahir Chaudhry Hanif Khatana Sardar Afaq expressed his feelings and said that the sun of February rose, the victory of the People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's Prime Ministership, national prosperity, country's dignity and the implementation of the ten-point revolutionary manifesto.



## Amir Dogar says people will vote for its candidates on Feb 8

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Tehreek-e-Insaf candidate NA 149 Malik Aamir Dogar, PP 216,215 Malik Adnan Dogar, Moin Riaz Qureshi while addressing the meetings held in UC 70, 69, 16, 15, 9, 3, 1 said that people are out to vote on February 8. Go out and make the candidates of Tehreek-e-Insaf succeed by putting a stamp on the watch for the right and future of you and your children. Support the truth, support Imran Khan, support the candidates of Tehreek-e-Insaf and make them successful by voting with a huge majority. Tehreek-e-Insaf has crossed all limits of popularity in the whole world. Even if there are interruptions in the election campaign- The people should be stood still Imran Khan is standing with the candidates of Tehreek-e-Insaf, Tehreek-e-Insaf has become the party of public representation. The proof of this is that on February 8, the people will overwhelmingly stamp the candidates of Tehreek-e-Insaf on the ghazal and tell them that Tehreek-e-Insaf is the biggest political party of Pakistan. People consider Imran Khan as their leader because Imran Khan is a true and honest political leader.

## RPO orders to deploy personnel at all polling stations in Faisalabad region for election

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the instructions of RPO Faisalabad Dr. Mohammad Abid Khan, orders were issued to deploy personnel at all polling stations.

On the instructions of RPO Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan, orders have been issued to deploy the personnel at the polling stations of all the districts for the Faisalabad region to make the election 2024 peaceful. There are a total of 6868 polling stations in Faisalabad region, including 3994 normal polling stations, 2179 sensitive polling stations and 695 highly sensitive polling stations.

A total of 7 SPs, 34 DSPs, 204 inspectors, 676 sub-inspectors, 1195 assistant sub-inspectors, 1263 head constables, 1063 lady constables and 10722 constables are involved in the duty at the total 6868 polling stations of Faisalabad region, while 69 reserve police and 59 elite teams are involved in making the election 2024 peaceful. Thus, more than 1700 cameras have been installed at sensitive and highly sensitive polling stations. Control rooms have been set up for monitoring in each district and region of Faisalabad. Arpo Faisalabad Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan issued orders to the district heads to ensure compliance with the code of conduct issued by the Election Commission.



## Anti-smog spray

LAHORE: A worker of Lahore Waste Management Company is washing road with anti-smog spray in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# UN Kashmir solution road map only viable course: Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan President Muslim Conference, ex-Premier AJK has said that the road map given by the UN Security Council for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute is the only viable course that guarantees lasting peace for South Asia. In his serial public addresses to a number of Kashmir Solidarity Day rallies and seminars Monday he urged the UN Secretary General Mr Antonio Guterres to set up an international Kashmir Resolutions Implementation Commission (KRIC) to help evolve a mechanism to implement the UN Kashmir solution road



map. Adopting this approach the UN would be substantially contributing towards a durable regional peace in peace-starved South Asia, he added.

Unprecedented national and inter-

national political and moral support to the cause of Kashmir was expressed by enthusiastic solidarity rallies, march pasts, unity walks, academic events across Azad Kashmir, Pakistan and abroad by Kashmiri diaspora. Speakers in the international public functions in UK, USA, Canada, Japan, South Africa and Middle East made it clear that for the sake of peace their lobbies support peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute whose solution contours the UNSC has already given and accepted both by Pakistan and India. "We are pro-peace, we want Kashmiris in peace, we want peace prosper in South Asia. Therefore we urge on UN, international community

for urgent solution of 77-year pending Kashmir dispute", seminars speakers reiterated.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan thanked the people, government and the institutions of Pakistan and international diaspora community for unprecedented show of solidarity with the struggling Kashmiris. Kashmir, he said, is integral ideological part of Pakistan as its roots sprung from the principles of partition of British India in August 1947. He hinted at future joint ideological role by Muslim Conference and PML/N to implement founding vision of Pakistan. Pakistan, he said, is the centre of hopes and aspirations of Jammu and Kashmir people.

# FCCI lauds CM for fast track implementation of development projects

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Dr Khurram Tariq President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has welcomed record inauguration of development projects in a single day by caretaker Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and requested him to grant permission to a much delayed project of social security medical college in Faisalabad. He paid best tribute to the vision of the CM who involved the private sector to bring a qualitative improvement in the overall working and implementation of public sector projects. He said that Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed and her team also deserve a big applause for translating the



proposed projects into reality. He quoted the first interaction with the caretaker government and said that Punjab Chambers Coordination Committee played a key role in bringing the private sector in limelight who contributed a major role

to make specific public sector projects a total success. He said that CM intended to do something innovative for the business community and FCCI along with six chambers of the Punjab requested him to introduce single window operation

for the facilitation of the business community.

He said that this centre has so far received 270 cases out of which 175 NOCs have already been issued. He said that the CM has inaugurated a series of development projects includ-

ing a safe city project during his visit to Faisalabad. He was sanguine of the administrative expertise of Madam Silwat Saeed who has pushed these projects to the final completion stage. He said that contrary to the vision of CM to facilitate the industrial sector a toll plaza has been erected on canal road which would discourage movement of transportation between Faisalabad city and industrial estates. He requested the CM to order immediate removal of this toll plaza. He further said that there is no representation of FCCI in TEVTA board and it needs immediate attention of the CM. Later Dr Khurram Tariq presented FCCI memento to caretaker CM Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi in addition to a trophy.

Islamabad  
15° - 23° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:36 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:05 pm
Maghrib	5:43 pm
Isha	7:08 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

*Female supporters would be on front line role on polling day*

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The female supporters would play their role on front line on polling day and would not allow any one to hijack the polling process. This was stated by Syeda Sadaf Zehra-incharge women electioneering wing of PTI candidate Syed Ijaz Boukhari from PP-3, Attock while addressing the female polling agents on Tuesday. She said that the female polling agents should not pay heed the rumours that the PTI polling agents would be picked by police or harassed by the polling agents of the other political parties. She said that it is responsibility of the election commission and concerning returning officer to conduct polling in a free, fair and transparent atmosphere. She was of the view that the women supporters of the PTI in rural as well as urban areas would play key role in shaping the results of the polling day.

# India bears responsibility for the regional instability: Mushaal

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, has highlighted India's role in regional instability, attributing it as a major obstacle to economic progress within the region. She was addressing an event organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) held in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day. The event was also addressed by President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawar, Senior Vice President ICCI Faad Waheed, Vice President ICCI Engr. Azhar-Ul-Islam Zafar and many other dignitaries. Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and members of executive committee of Islamabad chamber of Commerce and Industry also attended the event. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister expressed appreciation for the unwavering support of Pakistan's business community for the just and noble cause of the Kashmiri people.

Mushaal highlighted India's engagement in gross human rights violations and atrocities against innocent civilians in IIOJK spanning over seven decades.



She highlighted the implementation of oppressive laws by India to stifle the voices of the people of IIOJK. She lamented the deafening silence of the World leaders regarding the deteriorating situation in IIOJK and Palestine, despite widespread global public support for the oppressed populations.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister highlighted her recent meeting with the Ambassador of South Africa, commending his country's principled stance in bringing Israel's ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people to global attention through the International Court of Justice. She urged the international

community to similarly address India's genocidal actions in IIOJK. She criticized the Modi's authoritarian tactics for unjustly incarcerating peaceful Kashmiri political leaders under fabricated charges. She said that despite court orders mandating their appearance, the Kashmiri leadership was being unlawfully

denied physical access to courts and prevented from being represented by legal counsel.

Mushaal described RSS as parallel state within India, propagating Hinduva policies and expanding its terrorist network around the world. She shed light on RSS terror operations in various countries, including the US, Canada, UK, and Australia. She urged the World to designate RSS as a terrorist organization and impose robust economic and financial sanctions to dismantle its transcontinental terror activities. She said that BJP led mob of Hindu extremists martyred 500 years old Babri Masjid. She further said that the building of Ram Mandir on the site of Babri Masjid was part of Modi's plans to erase Muslims heritage from India. She highlighted the establishment District level Kashmir committees and Kashmir centers in universities across Pakistan and AJK envisioned in 100-days plan initiated under her leadership.

The event concluded with a reminder to the United Nations and the international community to address the longstanding Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN resolutions and the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

## E-Rozgaar

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT & Telecom Dr. Umar Saif addressing inauguration ceremony of Pakistan's First Private Sector E-Rozgaar Center Managed by EC Services in association with NTS.



Photo: APP

## 47th Meeting of the Board of Governors (BoG) of PARC Convenes

**PNP**

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kausar Abdulla Malik, Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research (MNFSR) and President, Board of Governors of Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), chaired the 47th Meeting of the Board at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) Islamabad. Official board members, including the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research and officials from the Ministry of Finance and Planning and Reforms, participated in the meeting. In



addition, provincial members also participated in the meeting. In his address, Dr. Kausar Abdulla Malik extended a warm welcome to all members of the PARC Board and commended the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council for its endeavours in modernizing the country's agriculture sector. Dr. Kausar

also provided guidance to the PARC team, emphasizing the importance of maintaining their current level of dedication while simultaneously strengthening their involvement and interaction with the farming and scientific community. Chairman PARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, delivered a thorough overview to the Board concerning recent initiatives in agricultural research and the achievements made in addressing administrative challenges, as well as resolving longstanding financial liabilities pending since 2013. During the briefing to the board, Dr. Ali highlighted that the majority of the long-pending administrative and financial issues of the council have been resolved. Additionally, for the first time in the history of PARC, a dedicated research budget has been allocated for conducting agricultural research in high-tech areas.

## Lahore Global Village Festival attracts over 100,000 attendees

**PNP**

LAHORE: The Lahore Global Village Festival, a three-day extravaganza celebrating the rich cultural heritage of Lahore, concluded with resounding success, attracting over 100,000 enthusiastic attendees. The festival offered an array of entertainment, showcasing the city's diverse traditions and modern influences. Organized by Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), in collaboration with Genesis Properties.

Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, formally inaugurated Lahore Global Village and commended the efforts of CBD Punjab and Genesis Properties in making LGV a reality.

"CBD Punjab and Genesis Properties have breathed new life into Lahore with the launch of Lahore Global Village," remarked Chief Minister Punjab. "This space offers Lahoris a unique destination to shop, dine, and unwind."

Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, expressed enthusiasm for the project's potential, stating, "Lahore Global Village represents the future of urban development, blending commerce with culture in a dynamic environment."

Chairman of Genesis Properties, Habib Nawaz, echoed Amin's sentiments, emphasizing the collaborative effort behind LGV's success.

## Security plan for election 2024 released by police: 1027 polling stations in Attock

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The security plan for election 2024 has been released by the police, 1017 polling stations have been established across the district, around 4800 police officers and trained special police force have been deployed by the Attock police for security, according to the detailed instructions of the District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan, the Attock Police has issued a security plan for Election 2024, according to which 1017 polling stations have been established across the district, in which 24 A category, 47 B category. Category while 946 C category polling stations are included. About 4800 police officers and trained special police force have been deployed on security duty by the Attock police, in which the district police, elite force, traffic police, patrolling police have performed their duties.

All the security will be monitored from the central control room established in the DPO office, apart from this, a heavy contingent of police force has also been kept on standby in the police lines to deal with any emergency situation. On this occasion, DPO Attock Dr. Sardar Ghyas Gul Khan said that it is our mission to conduct the election peacefully while maintaining the law and order situation throughout the district, for which Attock Police is making foolproof security arrangements. #

# Health experts urged government to take policy measures to reduce consumption of unhealthy sugary drinks

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Excessive consumption of Sugar and Ultra-Processed foods in our diet has significantly increased the risk of Cardio Vascular Diseases, Type 2 Diabetes, Obesity and many other fatal diseases. 2100 people in Pakistan dies due to NCDs daily. Nearly 1100 Pakistanis lost their lives daily due to diabetes or its complications. Pakistan has 3rd highest burden of diabetes worldwide with over 33 million people living with over diabetes. Additional 10 million people are pre-diabetic. If no urgent policy action taken, number of people living with diabetes will increase to 62 million by 2045. Sugary drinks are the major source of sugar intake with 7 to 8 teaspoons of sugar in a small glass of 250 ml. Higher taxes on sugary drinks are an evident based policy action to reduce their consumption. Government must impose higher taxes on sugary drinks to reduce their consumption. This was stated by health experts during a session on "policies to combat sugary drinks" organized by Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA) with

its coalition partners at a local hotel in Islamabad. Those who attended the session include Secretary General Diabetic Association of Pakistan Professor Dr. Abdul Basit, Consultant at Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) Mr. Munawar Hussain, Senior Executive Vice President PANAHA Dr. Abdul Qayyum Awan, President National Press Club Islamabad Mr. Anwar Raza, General Secretary Pakistan Kidney Patients Welfare Organization Mr. Ghulam Abbas, Ex-Commissioner Mr. Abdul Hafeez, health experts, representatives of civil society and media. General Secretary Pakistan National Heart Association Mr. Sanaullah Ghumman hosted the event.

Professor Dr. Abdul Basit said that Pakistan is facing a rapid increase in non-communicable diseases specially diabetes. Pakistan has the 3rd highest burden of diabetes worldwide and if no immediate policy action taken number of people living with diabetes will increase to 62 million by 2045. One of the major reasons of this swift increase in diabetes is our unhealthy dietary patterns. High consumption



of sugary drinks has increased significantly in Pakistan. These drinks are very high in sugar. A small glass (250 ml) of sugary drinks contains 7 to 8 teaspoons of sugar leads to obesity, type 2 Diabetes, and many other fatal diseases. We are now in emergency like situation and government shall take immediate policy action to tax sugary drinks.

Mr. Munawar Hussain said that 60% of all deaths in Pakistan are due to non-communicable diseases. One of the major dietary risks of NCDs are

high consumption of trans fatty acids, sugar and sodium and low consumption of fruits and vegetables. Taxes on sweet drinks and front of pack nutrition labels on ultra-processed foods are the evidence based strategies to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy foods. He said that the revenue generated by taxing the sugary drinks must be earmarked to promote healthy foods like fruits and vegetables and in public health programs.

Professor Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Mirza said that from 2011 to 2016 obesity has

doubled in children. Consumption of sugary drinks has increased manifold in recent years posing a serious threat to health of children. She emphasized for a country wide campaign to aware general public on health risks associated with high consumption of sugary drinks and demanded government to take appropriate policy measure to reduce the intake of these unhealthy foods to save our children that are future of our country.

Mr. Anwar Raza said that PANAHA is doing a remarkable work on a very

serious issue of National health and every one shall support this cause. He said that media stands with PANAHA for this cause.

Mr. Sanaullah Ghumman highlighted PANAHA's four decade-long commitment to raising awareness about public health. The organization collaborates with policymakers to formulate policies aimed at reducing the consumption of unhealthy foods. While acknowledging the success achieved in 2023 with the increased taxes on sugary drinks, he emphasized the need for further action. PANAHA is advocating for a 50% tax on SSBs. He said that we believe on coalitions and today health experts, civil society and media jointly request government to take immediate policy action to reduce the consumption of these unhealthy drinks.

Other speakers echoed these sentiments, highlighting the health hazards of SSBs and calling for effective policy actions to reduce their consumption.

Dr. Abdul Qayyum Awan thanked all the participants to stand with PANAHA to reduce disease burden in Pakistan

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# PMLN propensity of employing calumnious tactics, particularly targeting female adversaries - II

**T**alal Chaudhry, erstwhile Minister of State for Interior Affairs, recurrently launched disparaging assaults on Bushra Bibi, spouse of Ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan, propagating unfounded and unsubstantiated rumors regarding her observance of iddat, her entitlement to remarry, and her adherence to Pardah, which he vehemently censured. Subsequently, it became evident that he himself was implicated in clandestine organizational activities (Tanzeem Sazi).

Rana Sanaullah has consistently exhibited a reprehensible and detestable mindset, evincing clear disdain towards women, particularly those associated with PTI, engaging in public fora, such as political rallies and jalsas. Astonishingly, he held the position of Law Minister, a fact that is truly confounding and disconcerting.

These statements are not exclusively confined to female members affiliated with PTI. Rana Sana's preferred derogatory term for a woman involves labeling her as "Peshawarana."

This incident serves as yet another illustration of the repugnant behavior exhibited by leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN). It is hardly astonishing, given the consistent pattern of deliberate assaults on the reputation of women perpetuated by the leadership of PMLN.

The recent deplorable verbal assault by Talal Chaudhry on PTI MNA Kanwal Shauzab is not unprecedented, nor is it confined solely to the realm of misogyny and malevolent attitudes toward female politicians. In the absence of substantive critique, the default tactic employed against a woman often revolves around impugning her character. Additionally, it is disheartening to observe that many women especially from PMLN acquiesce to and even participate in this debased behavior.

Sabir Mahmood Hashmi, a PMLN worker, was apprehended by the FIA cyber crime wing in February 2022. He was detained on allegations of orchestrating a deleterious campaign aimed at disparaging Ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan, his spouse Bushra Begum and the military via various social media platforms. Hashmi was charged under sections 20, 21 (d), and 24 of the Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (PECA). Undoubtedly, the actions of such workers often reflect the ideologies instilled by their leaders. The entrenched misogyny within PMLN is manifest through the utterances of one of its prominent female leaders, who espouses fallacious notions such as "Jo dar

gaya woh mard nahi." The constituents of this political faction epitomize a mindset characterized by repugnant constipation of thought.

The upper echelons of PMLN leadership have engendered an ambiance and demeanor wherein it is tacitly condoned, and even encouraged, for their subordinates to assail the spouse of the Ex-Prime Minister.

In this instance, we observe the PMLN female leader, Maryam Safdar, engaging in unrefined and sexist remarks directed towards the female relatives of her political adversary, who are not actively involved in politics. She targets the entire 'Niazi' clan as a means to disparage her political opponent, and makes derogatory comments regarding the third wife of the Ex-Prime Minister.

In moments of adversity, individuals aligned with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) often resort to a combative stance by targeting charitable healthcare institutions, engaging in personal life discussions, and expressing misogynistic views. This pattern is exemplified by Ishaq Dar, who, despite delivering a discourse on the importance of respecting women, concluded with an attack on Jemima Khan, insinuating that Imran Khan's aspiration for the position of Prime Minister was driven by an alleged fascination with a Jewish woman's beauty.

Marvi Memon alleged that individuals affiliated with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) subjected her to sexual harassment by forcibly disrobing her "shalwar," thereby exhibiting a complete disregard for the dignity and honor of women. This conduct, she implied, exemplified a cultural norm within their ranks.

Even young girls like Zainab Ansari are not immune to the manifestation of their misogynistic tendencies. They exhibited their contemptible traits openly, as evidenced by their laughter during the press conference held to commend the apprehension of the perpetrator. Zainab, tragically the 13th victim of the killer, was mourned by her father alone, as the rest found amusement in her plight.

In 2018, PMLN Senator Nisar Muhammad was attending a protest rally against fake encounter of Naqeeb Mehsud by Rao Anwar when a video was shot where he was seen touching and groping a little girl in front of a huge crowd. It just makes me sick to the core that we have an active political party with its followers who are willing to follow them while disregarding their derogatory stance against women at the same time.



Analysis

Kiran Asim

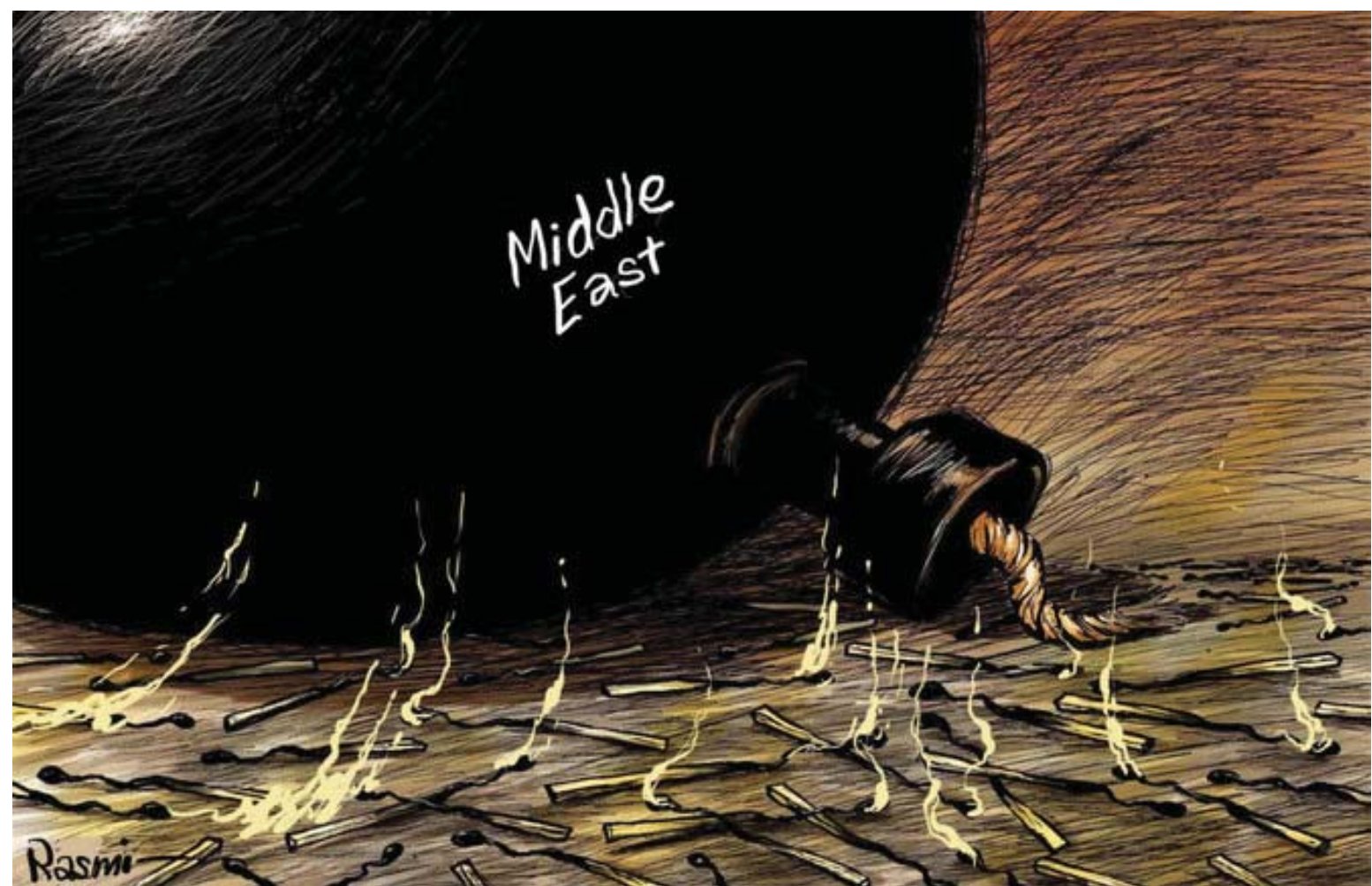
## Pakistan, Henan to further promote trade, investment cooperation

**P**akistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi and Deputy Mayor of Pingdingshan city in China's Henan province have agreed to further advance trade and investment cooperation between Pakistan and Henan. "Glad to meet Ding Shaoge, Deputy Mayor of Pingdingshan, a dynamic city in Henan province. Productive conversation on further advancing trade and investment cooperation between Pakistan and Henan including through exchanges between business delegation," the ambassador posted on 'X' formerly known as twitter.

According to details, Ding Shaoge led a delegation to Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, China for an in-depth discussion on further developing the friendship city relations between Pingdingshan and Multan.

Ambassador Hashmi expressed his support for both cities to engage in exchange and cooperation across various fields. "We hope that both sides will further promote practical cooperation in the construction of friendship cities, textile industry and trade of agricultural products," he added. Ding Shaoge said that the establishment of friendship city relations between the two cities was solidified through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2021. Emphasizing the significance of the textile industry as a shared sector, Ding Shaoge expressed optimism about expanding textile trade between the two cities, with a specific focus on cotton. He highlighted the immense potential and complementary strengths of textile industry cooperation between Pingdingshan and Multan. While Pingdingshan City possesses a complete industry chain and robust technological capabilities, Multan City brings valuable expertise and advantages in cotton textiles, textile processing, and exports.

The deputy mayor also expressed his desire to foster practical cooperation between the two cities in agriculture, education, and tourism and underscored the abundant agricultural resources and high-quality agricultural technology of Pingdingshan City, expressing a willingness to share these experiences with Multan City to jointly explore agricultural product markets. Shaoge extended an invitation to Khalil Hashmi to visit Pingdingshan City for further exchanges and discussions.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## Kashmir Solidarity Day and the Proportion of Kashmiri Personnel in the Armed Forces of Pakistan and India - III

**A**llegations of extrajudicial killings by the Indian Army in Kashmir have sparked controversy. Human rights organizations have recorded instances where individuals, including civilians, were reportedly targeted without due legal process, leading to accusations of excessive use of force. The deployment of pellet guns for crowd control during protests has faced criticism. Despite being labeled as non-lethal, these pellets have caused severe injuries, including blindness, raising concerns about the proportionality and appropriateness of such crowd control measures. Human rights reports have also highlighted arbitrary detentions and allegations of torture by security forces in Kashmir, encompassing offenses like custodial deaths and the use of torture to extract information.

During periods of heightened tensions, the Indian government has imposed communication blackouts and restrictions on movement in Kashmir. These measures limit transparency and impede the reporting of human rights violations, making it challenging to independently verify or refute claims. Internationally, various human rights organizations and international bodies have expressed concerns, urging independent investigations.

On the contrary, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Kashmiris enjoy more facilities than those living in occupied Kashmir. Pakistan provides greater rights to Kashmiris compared to India. The deep-rooted historical and cultural

ties between the Kashmir region and Pakistan contribute to a shared identity and a sense of belonging. The political status of Kashmir remains a longstanding issue, with differing perspectives on whether the region should be independent, part of India, or integrated with Pakistan. Being with Pakistan grants Kashmiris a unique form of governance through locally elected representatives. AJK operates with a certain degree of autonomy, allowing for the formulation of policies and decision-making by leaders chosen by the local populace, ensuring a form of self-governance within the larger framework of Pakistan. Kashmiris are represented at the national level through elected officials in the Pakistani National Assembly and Senate.

Being part of Pakistan facilitates access to educational opportunities for Kashmiri students. Pakistan, with its diverse range of universities and educational institutions, offers avenues for academic growth and specialization, contributing to the overall development of Kashmiri youth. Integration allows the rich cultural diversity of Kashmir to be interwoven into the broader fabric of Pakistani culture. Cultural exchange, festivals, and traditional practices contribute to the vibrant mosaic that constitutes the cultural identity of Pakistan.

For Kashmiris, integration with Pakistan provides a sense of security and stability, particularly in areas where historical geopolitical tensions and security concerns have prevailed. The presence of a larger national

security apparatus contributes to peace and stability in the region. Being part of Pakistan ensures access to national resources and development initiatives, with investments in infrastructure, healthcare, and social welfare programs enhancing the quality of life for Kashmiris.

Furthermore, integration with Pakistan strengthens the diplomatic standing of Kashmiris on the international stage. The collective voice of Pakistan and its diplomatic efforts contribute to garnering support for the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Readers, Kashmir Solidarity Day, observed worldwide on February 5, advocates for acknowledging the ground realities. The provided information and data unequivocally highlights the dynamics of value and respect in the relationships. Kashmiris in Pakistan exhibit a profound love for their country, reciprocated by Pakistan considering them an integral part, as evidenced by the substantial representation of Kashmiris in the Pakistani Army. In contrast, the relationship between India and Kashmiris lacks genuine acceptance, evident in the limited presence of Kashmiris in the Indian Army. While Kashmiris wholeheartedly desire to live with Pakistan, India's forceful occupation against their will remains a significant challenge. Kashmiris do not accept the coerced merger of Kashmir with India, and this reality should be comprehended by India and its Army. The international community should take cognizance of these tangible factors, in addition to UN resolutions, and exert pressure on India to grant the right of self-determination to Kashmiris.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## Election 2024: Reaffirmation democratic journey - I

**A**mid swirling rumors, concerns, and a charged atmosphere both domestically and internationally, Pakistan is set to conduct its highly contested and controversial 2024 elections amidst significant economic challenges including stagnant growth, acute balance of payment issues, hyperinflation, and high unemployment rates. This election is marked by an unprecedented increase in the active voter base, reaching the milestone of 128 million, over half the country's population. This elevates Pakistan to the status of the world's fifth-largest democracy. With an anticipated 80% voter turnout, the nation demonstrates a strong commitment to the democratic process reflecting the population's strong commitment to influence their nation's future.

FAFEN in its recent report noted that for the first time, there were more women registered to vote than men between two election periods of 2018-2024, showcasing significant progress in gender inclusivity in the electoral process marked by an increase in women's voter registration by 27%, surpassing the growth in men's registration, which was 17% during the same period. This has led to a substantial decrease in the gender gap in voter registration from 11.8% in 2018 to 7.7% in 2024.

Recognizing the potential of women voters in the upcoming elections, both PTI and PML(N) have issued a 'record' number of National Assembly tickets to women, which might further encourage female voter participation reflecting a broader movement towards gender inclusivity in Pakistani politics. However, female voter registration and participation in the election process will depend on various factors, including

campaign strategies, voter mobilization efforts, and the addressing of socio-cultural barriers that have historically limited women's political participation. As the elections approach, the focus on encouraging and facilitating women's participation in the democratic process remains crucial for a fair and inclusive electoral outcome.

The elections 2024 being the fourth elections since the era of martial law under Pervez Musharraf starting with governments of PPP, PML(N), and PTI reflects the evolving political landscape amidst the pre-election phase, where the PTI faced significant challenges and allegations of unfair advantages to the PML(N), highlighting underlying challenges in Pakistan's democratic processes which has been intermittently disrupted by martial laws posing setbacks to the democratic continuum.

International media, including the Council on Foreign Relations, Al Jazeera, The Diplomat, and DW, along with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the European Union, have raised concerns about the 2024 elections in Pakistan, highlighting issues such as "election engineering," disinformation, extensive media censorship, and state intervention in media coverage. These reports underscore the restrictive conditions facing political parties, particularly PTI, whose leadership is significantly constrained, impacting their ability to campaign freely. Allegations of an uneven playing field, exacerbated by the military's significant political influence and the barring of key political figures like former Prime Minister Imran Khan, suggest a contentious electoral environment that may not be free or fair, disadvantageous to certain parties and undermining the democratic process.

To be concluded



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

# Strengthened cooperation between China, Britain benefits both sides, world: Chinese premier

Xinhua

BEIJING: Chinese Premier Li Qiang said Monday that facts have fully proved that strengthened cooperation between China and Britain not only serves the fundamental interests of both sides, but also contributes to world peace and prosperity.

Li made the remarks in a congratulatory message to the "Icebreakers" 2024 Chinese New Year celebration hosted by Britain's 48 Group Club.

For a long time, the 48 Group Club has actively fostered economic and trade exchanges as well as people-to-people exchanges between China



and Britain, which has promoted mutual benefit and win-win results

and deepened mutual understanding, Li said.

The historic contribution made by the older generation of British friends will always be remembered, he added.

Li said he hopes that visionary people from all walks of life in China and Britain will carry forward the "ice-breaking spirit," continue to take action actively and vigorously, and make new contributions to enhancing the friendship between the two peoples, promoting bilateral friendly cooperation, and achieving mutual benefit and win-win outcomes at a higher level.

## A sonnet ode to a steel

man-ordinaire pleasant adorable humble  
inimitable patient compos'd passionate  
abounding in firm leadership role stands tall  
name adorned thrice with prime crowns resonate  
above all en verite he fought the 'systems'  
with malice to none inspired his people  
as he doggedly faced 'state' scheming games  
zigzagged through thick'n thin many a ripple  
till he never bends on standings and goals  
high above trickiness negative approach  
appears all sufferings tames all souls  
relentlessly pursues aims no reproach  
indeed 'king of comebacks' all love him more  
fourth crown to win as he stands steel 'n victor.  
— su coedrey,  
An ex-diplomat, in respect,  
Paying tribute to mns!

## Gov't of Kazakhstan resigns

Xinhua

ASTANA: The government of Kazakhstan has resigned and first deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar will serve as the interim prime minister, the press service of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said Monday.

"In accordance with Article 70 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, I decide: to accept the resignation of the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and to temporarily assign the duties of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Roman Vasilyevich Sklyar," said Tokayev's decree.

"Members of the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan continue to fulfill their duties until the approval of the new composition of the government," said the decree.

Before the decree was published, the government of Kazakhstan was headed by Alikhan Smailov. Smailov was appointed prime minister in January 2022, and was reappointed in March 2023.



## China adopts ethical guideline for brain-computer interface research

Xinhua

BEIJING: China has adopted an ethical guideline for brain-computer interface research, the first guideline of its kind in the country, which stipulates that this frontier tech should be principally used for remedial purposes.

The guideline, published recently by the national science and technology ethics committee, specifies that research on brain-computer interface should cause no damage, and its fundamental purpose should be to assist, enhance and repair sensory-motor functions or to improve human-computer interactions — thus enhancing human health and well-being.

Clinical trials of innovative brain-computer interface products are allowed in the event of rare diseases that are life-threatening and for which there is no other effective treatment. Such clinical trials should be conducted with the fully-informed consent of participants and comply strictly with national regulations, according to the guideline.

In addition, an ethical review, a bio-compatibility test, and an animal study proving safety and effectiveness are also required, the guideline said.

## Kashmir Day

A pictorial exhibition held at Pakistan High Commission, Ottawa, Canada in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day on 5th February 2024.



Photo: Online

## Death toll of India's firework factory blast climbs to 11; 80 others injured

At least 11 people were killed and 80 others were injured Tuesday in a giant explosion at a firework factory in Harda in India's Madhya Pradesh, according to officials, AFP reported.

Indian broadcasters showed videos and images of a tower of flames after a fireworks plant explosion, with dozens of ambulances sent to evacuate the wounded. Army helicopters were also called in.

"We can confirm seven deaths so far," an official at Harda district hospital said, asking not to be named as they were not authorised to speak to the media. "We have 65 injured admitted here, and have referred 10 others to a bigger hospital."

## Xinhua Commentary

# To understand China's economy, come to China

Xinhua

BEIJING: Despite the pessimism among some Western economists regarding the Chinese economy, entrepreneurs like Jon Moeller, CEO of consumer products company P&G, are optimistic about future business opportunities in China.

The reason for this disparity is straightforward: While many Western economists rely on Excel spreadsheets and rigid models for their flawed projections, entrepreneurs with firsthand experience in the Chinese market tell a different story.

Moeller said a visit to China last month had bolstered his view that there would be opportunities to expand the company's business in the years ahead.

During a recent earnings call, Moeller said he spent six days in China, meeting the company's

local employees and government officials and visiting residents' homes. "The long-term China opportunity remains intact," he said after his visit.

Seeing is believing. The best way to understand the Chinese economy is to visit China for a firsthand experience. This is crucial to businesses and investors: Knowing China well benefits investments.

Bridgewater Associates, the world's largest hedge fund, provides a good example. Despite widespread negative sentiment towards China's financial market, the hedge fund performed exceptionally well in China last year.

The performance of Bridgewater China Investment Management surpassed many local and other foreign funds and is set to grow to some 5.6 billion U.S. dollars at the end of 2023, according to the Financial Times.

Analysts attributed the hedge fund's outstanding performance to its investment strategy and the full experience gained from long-term research into the Chinese market.

Some Western economists who are indulged with rigid models may never accurately understand China's economy.

Not only have these economists failed in their predictions about China, but their estimates of the global economy have also been proven incorrect.

"Many economists are actually a tribal clique," said Christine Lagarde, European Central Bank president, who joined the chorus of criticism at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month.

"They quote each other... They don't go beyond that world because they feel comfortable in that world," Lagarde said.

In 2023, China maintained the top position for growth among major economies, with a GDP expansion of 5.2 percent. Innovation-driven development, vibrant services spending and vigorous investments provided robust momentum for the country's economic growth.

As 2024 begins, booming consumption and vibrant tourism markets are a reality in China. Harbin, capital of China's northernmost province of Heilongjiang, attracted some 3.05 million tourists during the three-day New Year holiday thanks to its snowy landscapes and warm hospitality.

The country is also increasingly becoming a magnet for foreign visitors.

"When in Shanghai, I saw the most magnificent displays for Year of the Dragon," Maye Musk, mother of Tesla CEO Elon Musk,



said on a social media post Saturday.

"More people should visit China," her son followed the next

day on X, formerly Twitter.

As a thousand-year-old Chinese poem puts it, "If the waters of the spring river are

warm, the frolicking ducks will be the first to know." To better know China, come see it for yourself.

## Explainer

# Why does US conduct 'retaliatory strikes' in Middle East

Xinhua

BEIJING: The United States and Britain Saturday night launched joint airstrikes on Houthi militia targets in Yemen, the third time in two weeks.

Just the day before, the U.S. military also carried out airstrikes on over 85 targets in Iraq and Syria related to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and affiliated militia groups in retaliation for a drone strike that killed three U.S. soldiers in Jordan on Jan. 28.

### Why So Many U.S. Strikes?

Since the outbreak of the latest Israel-Palestine conflict, Houthi militias, demonstrating their support for Palestine, have frequently attacked Israeli vessels in the Red Sea, one of the world's most important shipping lanes.

On Jan. 26, the Houthi armed group claimed it had launched a missile attack on a British oil tanker in the Gulf of Aden, setting it on fire, and fired one anti-ship ballistic missile toward the U.S. destroyer



USS Carney in the Gulf of Aden, leading to subsequent retaliation from the United States and Britain.

Frequent attacks on ships in the Red Sea have led several international shipping companies to announce the temporary suspension of this route, opting to navigate around the southern tip of Africa. This could lead to delays and additional costs, thereby increasing shipping expenses.

On Jan. 28, a U.S. military base near the northeastern Jordanian border with Syria was attacked, resulting in the death of three U.S. soldiers and over 40 people injured. This marks the first time since the current Israel-Palestine conflict erupted that the U.S. military has reported soldiers being killed.

The United States attributes the attack to the pro-Iran group "The Islamic Resistance in Iraq," which uses Iranian-manufactured drones to target the U.S. military in Jordan. Recently, U.S. President Joe Biden and several senior U.S. government officials have repeatedly warned of phased retaliatory measures against armed groups

attacking U.S. forces, starting from airstrikes on over 85 targets in Iraq and Syria on Friday.

John Kirby, the National Security Council's coordinator for strategic communications, said that the U.S. airstrikes on military targets in Iraq and Syria, which lasted about 30 minutes, "were carefully selected and based on clear, irrefutable evidence that they were connected to attacks on U.S. personnel in the region."

Douglas Sims II, the director of the Joint Staff, said that the U.S. military was confident that it had hit targets that were associated with continued attacks against Americans.

### Will It Escalate?

Analysts suggest that the U.S. military may continue to expand the scope of retaliation in the coming days, but a direct conflict between the United States and Iran is unlikely.

In a statement issued on Friday, Biden said that "the United States does not seek conflict in the Middle East or anywhere else in the world,

but let all those who might seek to do us harm know this: If you harm an American, we will respond."

For potential U.S. military actions against Iran, Kirby declined to reveal any specific plans when asked. However, he emphasized that the U.S. goal is "to degrade and disrupt the capabilities of the IRGC and the groups that they sponsor and support."

Since the death of U.S. soldiers in the Jordanian attack, Biden has faced significant pressure to retaliate against Iran. Some Republicans have called for strikes on Iranian targets, but this could potentially escalate into a full-scale war, a scenario Biden wishes to avoid.

Professor Ding Long of Shanghai International Studies University believes that the U.S. policy may not be effective, and a protracted tug-of-war will likely continue in the Middle East. Ding further believes the situation is expected to remain volatile, but that a direct conflict between the United States and Iran is unlikely.

### What Is The Purpose Behind It?

Analysts argue that such chaos reflects the confusion, contradictions, and divisions within U.S. Middle East policy. This approach not only fails to bring an end to the current Israel-Palestine conflict but also exacerbates tensions in the region.

Tarek Fahmy, professor of political science at Cairo University, said that while the U.S. government seeks a ceasefire in Gaza, it continues to launch attacks on Houthi militias and targets in Iraq and Syria which indicates confusion in U.S. Middle East policy. Not only does it weaken the United States' credibility in the Middle East, but also demonstrates its inability to address the current challenges in the region.

Regarding U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's fifth visit to the Middle East, the United States is adopting a posture of mediating a ceasefire to appease allies and ease anti-American sentiments in Arab countries, said Liu Xinlu, dean of the School of Arabic Studies at

Beijing Foreign Studies University. Bassam Salhi, general secretary of the Palestinian People's Party, also believes that the United States has never seriously considered a ceasefire in the conflict, Blinken's frequent visits to the Middle East are simply to prevent Biden from losing votes due to the humanitarian crisis resulting from the Gaza conflict during his reelection campaign.

Mohammed Omari, a Syrian expert on international relations, believes that the United States' aggressive actions in an already tense Middle East exacerbate the situation, pushing the region into a highly unstable state, adding that a confrontation is imminent, and any miscalculation could push the region to the brink of conflict.

To resolve the challenges and crises in the Middle East, it is necessary to address the root cause of the current turmoil — the Israel-Palestine conflict. Achieving a permanent ceasefire in the conflict is the first step to solving the dilemma, said Ding.

**Bull & Bears**  
**PSX 100-Share**  
**Index Fluctuation**

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close
63,799.01	63,002.91
Day's High	Day's Low
63,885.09	63,176.96
Index Value	Change
12,346,312,091	+796.10
Percentage	Time
+1.26%	6 Feb, 2024 5:00 pm

**Europe: FTSE 100 Index**

Index Value	Change
7,681.01	+68.15
Percentage	Time
+0.90%	6 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

**USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average**

Index Value	Change
38,440.48	+60.36
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	6 Feb, 12:07 pm GMT-5

**Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average**

Index Value	Change
36,160.66	-193.50
Percentage	Time
-0.53%	6 Feb, 3:15 pm GMT+9

**Open Market Forex Rates**

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	184.8
Bahrain Dinar	743.71	751.71
Canadian Dollar	206	208
China Yuan	39.09	39.49
Danish Krone	40.25	40.65
Euro	305	308
Hong Kong Dollar	35.75	36.1
Indian Rupee	3.37	3.48
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.18
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.12	917.12
Malaysian Ringgit	58.87	59.47
New Zealand \$	169.12	171.12
Norwegians Krone	26.13	26.43
Omani Riyal	726.31	734.31
Qatari Riyal	76.82	77.52
Saudi Riyal	74.6	75.35
Singapore Dollar	207	209
Swedish Korona	26.33	26.63
Swiss Franc	320.98	323.48
Thai Bhat	7.81	7.96
U.A.E Dirham	76.7	77.6
UK Pound Sterling	356.5	360
US Dollar	280.5	282

**IS Safer Internet Day**

*Knowing user rights can safeguard personal data from falling into the wrong hands: Kaspersky Experts*

ISLAMABAD: Safer Internet Day 2024 comes amid data fears about limited access imposed on various popular apps, causing users to circumvent the new rules by downloading replacements. In an era where vast amounts of data is constantly being collected and analyzed, the risks of data breaches, identity theft, and invasions of privacy are more pronounced than ever. So, on February 6 – the day recognized annually as a vital reminder of the importance of safeguarding personal information in our digitized world – Kaspersky's experts emphasized the critical need for users to be proactive about their data security.

In 2023, debates were sparked in several countries regarding the restriction of certain popular apps in Brazil, Ireland and Japan. In the USA deliberations on restricting access to TikTok resulted in limitations of the Chinese app on government-issued devices in more than half of the states. But customers are not always willing to give up their favorite apps when it comes to popular services. Facing prohibitions, users resorted to alternative means of accessing content, such as installing replacement apps or bootlegged copies.

It's always better to minimize the amount of data an app collects about you as there's a risk of inadvertent disclosure or misuse of personal data due to insufficient data security measures. Moreover, once personal data is shared, it's often difficult to control its distribution and use, potentially leading to long-term privacy issues.

To prevent such issues, consider limiting the access to the photo feed, contacts, and location to the apps that can function without it. This also applies to the microphone: limited access will ensure applications don't collect personal data while overhearing what you say.

"Restricting popular apps have become a more frequent practice than it used to be. Users looking for a replacement do not always get a quality app with a transparent privacy policy. Knowing users' rights and paying attention to who and how the app collects data can help prevent personal information from falling into the wrong hands," comments Usman Qureshi, Country representative at Kaspersky in Pakistan.

**Ban on Minerals' Exports Opposed**

**\$10 bn Worth of minerals & marbles can be exported: President FPCCI**

PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has strongly opposed the proposed ban on raw minerals and marble as approved by Senate Standing Committee on Commerce; and, which includes both metallic and non-metallic minerals. This is contradictory to the vision of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), which has made mines and minerals as one of their only five focus areas, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh categorically mentioned that Pakistan can easily reach a level of \$10 billion in exports in minerals and marble, if a facilitative and incentivizing regime for the sector is introduced. Furthermore, the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce should have consulted the business community before proposing the aforementioned ban as the consultative process can help avoid discontentment with the governmental policies and direction.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, demanded that the government should give a framework for the setting up of value adding

manufacturing facilities with a deadline of 2 – 3 years as it is virtually impossible to transition to the value addition model overnight.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon stated that a lot of credit goes to the exporters of minerals that they are still exporting \$1.5 – 2.0 billion worth of products in such unfavorable circumstances.

Mr. Zaki Aijaz, VP FPCCI, proposed that FPCCI should write a letter to SIFC and apprise the institution of the distressing news for the entire mines and minerals sector; and, hold a round table to bring all the stakeholders together.

Mr. Shakeel Munir, former President Islamabad Chambers of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), said that the proposed ban has come as a shock to the business community as it was bolstered by SIFC initiatives and was gearing to bring FDI, JVs and industrial collaborations to Pakistan in mines & minerals sector.

Mr. Bilal Khan, VP Mines & Minerals Association of Pakistan, pointed out that the sector is already strained by the most expensive electricity in the region and we do not have the adequate infrastructure as well.

**Kinnow**

ISLAMABAD: Vendors are selling Kinnow at fruits and vegetable market in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

**Zong 4G holds Annual Business Conference to set strategic roadmap for 2024**

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, held its Annual Business Conference 2024 at its Headquarters in Islamabad. The conference, themed "Elevate Core Capabilities, Strive for Excellence", celebrated Zong 4G's remarkable achievements in 2023 and presented its strategic direction for the year 2024. The Chairman & CEO, Mr. Huo Junli praised the employees for their exceptional efforts that resulted in the company's positive growth, creating over 47 million satisfied and happy customers.

Mr. Huo Junli reaffirmed that Zong 4G's industry success is attributed to the unwavering commitment and resilience of its employees, propelling the company to greater heights. Even in challenging times, Zong's dedication to placing its employees at the forefront of its operations was strengthened, accompanied by various initiatives for their well-being.

"Furthermore, he emphasized that in 2024, the company must sustain the momentum of digital and intelligent transformation to achieve the vision of a Digital Pakistan. The commitment extends to actively contributing to the high-quality



joint development of the 'Belt and Road' and the 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor'. He also emphasized Zong 4G's crucial role in providing top-notch network services, dedicated to ensuring an exceptional customer experience nationwide. Moreover, while sharing Zong's sustainability contributions, he stressed that the company remains committed to reducing the digital divide and improving the livelihood of people in Pakistan.

Highlighting company's vision for

2024, Mr. Huo shared that "our primary focus persists on introducing advance and cutting-edge technologies that elevate the quality of life for individuals and businesses across Pakistan. We are committed to fortifying partnerships with local businesses and communities, concurrently broadening our product portfolio to adeptly address the requirements of enterprises and SMEs. Our objective is to empower them in realizing their ambitions by improving operational efficiencies and propelling business growth.

**Driven by historic growth in deposits, MCB posted highest ever profit before tax of Rs.125.2b (+75%) for the year 2023**

PPA

LAHORE: The Board of Directors of MCB Bank Limited (MCB) in its meeting under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha, on February 06, 2024, reviewed performance of the Bank and approved the financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2023. The Board of Directors has declared final cash dividend of Rs. 9.0 per share i.e. 90%, in addition to 210% already paid, bringing the total cash dividend for the year 2023 to 300%.

Through focused efforts of the Bank's management in building no-cost deposits and optimizing its earning assets mix, MCB achieved

significant growth in core earnings to post a historic Profit Before Tax (PBT) of Rs. 125.2 billion; registering an impressive increase of 75% over last year. The Profit After Tax (PAT) was recorded at Rs. 59.6 billion (+82%) and translated into an Earning Per Share (EPS) of Rs. 50.32 compared to an EPS of Rs. 27.63 reported in the last year.

Aided by a strong volumetric growth in current account and time-lapse repositioning of the asset book, net interest income for the year 2023 increased by 69% as compared to last year.

Non-markup income increased to Rs. 32.9 billion (+34%) against Rs. 24.6 billion in the last year with

major contributions coming in from fee commission income (Rs. 20.2 billion), income from dealing in foreign currency (Rs. 8.5 billion) and dividend income (Rs. 3.0 billion).

Improving customer and inter-bank flows, diversification of revenue streams through continuous enrichment of service suite, investments towards digital transformation and an unrelenting focus on upholding high standards of service delivery supplemented a broad-based growth of 43% in income from fee commission; with trade and guarantee related business income growing by 111%, cards related income by 49%, branch

banking customer fees by 14% and income from home remittance by 26%.

The Bank continues to manage an efficient operating expense base and monitor costs prudently. Amidst a persistently high inflationary environment, currency devaluation, rapidly escalating commodity prices and continued investments in human resources and technological upgradation, the operating expenses of the Bank were reported at Rs. 51.8 billion (+25%). The cost to income ratio of the Bank improved significantly to 29% from 37% reported in the last year.

Navigating a challenging operating and macroeconomic environ-

ment, the Bank has been addressing asset quality issues by maintaining discipline in management of its risk return decisions.

Diversification of loan book across customer segments and a robust credit underwriting framework that encompasses structured assessment models, effective pre-disbursement evaluation tools and an array of post disbursement monitoring systems has enabled MCB to effectively manage its credit risk; the Non-performing loan (NPLs) base of the Bank was reported at Rs. 53.9 billion as at December 31, 2023. The coverage and infection ratios of the Bank were reported at 82.70% and 8.66% respectively.

**Ignite inks agreement with Pakistan Services Limited: Hashoo Group**

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development for the thriving Pakistan's technology and startup ecosystem, Ignite National Technology Fund, Company incorporated under Ministry of IT & Telecom signed an agreement with Pakistan Services Limited (PSL) – Hashoo Group, led consortium that includes Fauji Foundation, Telenor Pakistan, Change Mechanics, CyberVision International and Founder Institute to manage the National Incubation Center Islamabad for the next 5 years. This initiative underscores a collective commitment through public private partnership to further bolster the startup ecosystem in Pakistan, with a special focus on nurturing technology start-ups that promise to elevate the country's economic GDP and generate employment opportunities for its youth.

In his welcome address, Adeel Aijaz Shaikh, CEO Ignite apprised the audience about the overall impact of Ignite's nationwide network of National Incubation Centers that has incubated more than 1480 startups which have created more than 188,000 direct and indirect jobs while attracting committed investment of Rs. 23 Billion and generated revenue of Rs. 16 Billion so far. Dilating upon the particular success of NIC Islamabad Mr. Adeel said,

since its inception it incubated 295 startups including 136 female founders that have created 23,597 direct and indirect jobs, generated revenue of 7.05 billion rupees with a committed investment of 7.88 billion rupees.

NIC Islamabad is poised to build upon the success of its predecessor by offering an enhanced array of services designed to empower start-ups. These services encompass state-of-the-art workspaces, access to venture capital, mentorship from industry leaders, UI/UX design labs, makers spaces, and a focus on pivotal technological sectors such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Robotics, Health, and Augmented/Virtual Reality. Special emphasis is provided on creating investment opportunities for startups and the consortium and its supporting partners include leading incubators, accelerators and venture capitalists such as Founder Institute, Mass Challenge, International Accelerator, Loyal VC, Zayn Capital, Sarmayacar, 47 Ventures, FCD Capital and Pak Launch.

NIC Islamabad will also have extensive focus in building health-tech startups, Aga Khan University and Hospital along with Rehman Medical Institute Peshawar are core Health Track Partners along with 10+ other renowned health institutions as supporting partners.

**Eighteen reveals Centro II and Pavilion 15 at exclusive sales event**

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Eighteen proudly announces the launch of Centro II, Pakistan's premier business center, and Pavilion 15, a sanctuary of luxury apartments offering panoramic views of the 'Twin Cities' most scenic golf course. An exclusive sales event held to redefine the very essence of commercial excellence and upscale living.

Following the tremendous success of Centro, Centro II is a top-tier commercial building and the core of dynamic business activity, forging a new era of corporate success.

Simultaneously, Pavilion 15 introduces a new dimension of luxury living with its captivating views of the picturesque golf course. Pavilion 15 offers the perfect blend of sophistication and tranquility.

# PSL 9 ticket booking website under cyberattack

A Sports

LAHORE: The online ticket booking platform for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 9 on Tuesday night was hit by a cyberattack, the franchise league confirmed.

The league disclosed that the technical team of the PSL ticket partners are trying to address the problems caused by the cyber-attack on the website.

"There has been a cyberattack on the [HBL PSL 9] ticketing website (http://pcb.tcs.com.pk)," wrote PSL.

"Technical team of the ticketing partners are addressing the issue with efficiency. We anticipate a swift resolution and expect the website of the service provider to be operational again shortly."

Notably, the tickets for PSL 9 were supposed to go on sale from today as announced by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday.

Physical tickets will go on sale at designated TCS express centres from 12 February 2024 onwards. Tickets booked online can also be collected from TCS' designated pick-up centres or can be home-delivered by TCS.

The opening ceremony and first match of the ninth edition of the HBL PSL is



scheduled to take place on 17 February at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

Over the course of PSL 9, Karachi will host 11 matches including the final leg of the tournament, Rawalpindi and Lahore will host nine matches each while Multan will host five matches.

**Enclosure details for PSL 9 Tickets**

Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

VIP – Imran Khan and Fazal Mahmood

Premium – Rajas and Saeed Anwar

First class – Javed Miandad, AH Kardar, Sarfaraz Nawaz and Abdul

Qadir

General – Majid Khan, Inzamam-ul-Haq, Nazar, Quaid, Imtiaz Ahmed, Zaheer Abbas, Hanif Mohammad and Saeed Ahmed

Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan

VIP – Imran Khan, Fazal Mahmood

Premium – Zaheer Abbas, Javed

Miandad

First Class – Elahi Brothers, Wasim Akram

General – Hanif Mohammad, Mush-

taq Ahmed

Pindi Cricket Stadium, Rawalpindi

VIP – Imran Khan, Javed Akhtar,

Javed Miandad and Azhar Mahmood

Premium – Shoaib Akhtar, Sohail Tanvir, Miran Buksh and Yasir Arafat

National Bank Stadium, Karachi

VIP – Fazal Mahmood, Hanif

Mohammad, Javed Miandad

Premium – Imran Khan, Quaid,

Wasim Akram

First Class – Asif Iqbal, Intikhab

Alam, Iqbal Qasim, Mohammad Brothers,

Nasimul Ghani, Zaheer Abbas

General – Majid Khan, Waqar Hasan,

Wasim Bari

# 14th Syed Manzoor Hussain Memorial Golf Tournament draws in ex-pioneers

Tahir Amin Malik

The 14th Syed Manzoor Hussain (SMH) Memorial Golf Tournament had segments for senior golf professionals, veteran professionals, amateurs, and ladies and was held at the par 72, Lahore Gymkhana Golf Course yesterday. Arranged and faithfully endorsed by his son Syed Shaghil Hussain, who travelled to Lahore from United States and assuredly generated warm hearted competitive golfing activity and engaged zealous ones of the golfing arena of Lahore Gymkhana in a golfing combat that yielded rewarding cash prizes for the triumphant senior golf professionals and gratifying souvenirs for the outstanding ones of amateur category and the ladies segment.

In the race for success in the senior professional section, the field included a large number of former golf champions who were yearning for beneficial achievement through exceptional display of golfing expertise. And this included former golf professionals like Ghulam Nabi, M. Shafiq, Manzoor Ahmed and Tahir Nasim, all of whom had won national titles times over in their youthful days. But now with health limitations restrict-



ing their ability, it was the relatively younger ones who succeeded in coming to the forefront with scores of excellence.

The superb and sensational one in this 2024 Syed Manzoor Hussain Memorial Golf Tournament turned out to be M. Javed of Punjab Police who played exceptionally well to bring in a score of gross 75, three over par. Throughout the 18 holes he consistently produced shots of high quality and complemented this by putting with a mastery touch. His remarkable effort enabled him to

overshadow some very tough competition as his proficient adversaries like Muhammed Akram, M. Iqbal and Zulfiqar remained just one shot short of emerging as the trophy winner. While M. Javed had the honor of shining as the glorified one of the 2024 SMH Championship, his rivals M. Akram, M. Iqbal and Zulfiqar had to be content with sharing the runners up slot with a score of gross 76. These three remained in a head to head rivalry contest and only on the final 18th hole conceded the title to M.

Javed. The cash prizes were certainly beneficial for these top performers.

As for the veterans professional category Ghulam Nabi, a legendary name of our national golf scene, turned out to be the best performer.

Leading one in the competition for amateurs turned out to be Ahmed Zafar with a gross score of 77 and the runner up gross was Nasir Irshad. Net winner was Mian Khurshid and runner up net was Atif Butt.

As for allied prizes Hasan Atta hit the longest drive.

Ladies competition was dominated by Tehmina Ahmed. She won the first gross. Mina Zainab was the runner up. Best net winner was Sameea Javed and Sobia Waseem won 2nd net. Tehmina Ahmed hit the longest drive.

At the conclusion of the 14th Syed Manzoor Hussain Memorial Golf Competition, the prizes were awarded to the winners by Syed Shaghil Hussain, in a ceremony attended by Shaukat Javed, Convenor Golf, the Chief Organizer Col(r) Syed M. Mazhar, Dr Amin-Ur-Rehman, Ameen Taqi Butt a former Golf Champion, Mrs Maimoona Azam, daughters of Syed Manzoor Hussain and participating golf professionals.

# Gulf Giants sink Dubai Capitals in low-scoring encounter

A Sports

DUBAI: A combined bowling effort scripted Gulf Giants' sensational 19-run victory over home side Dubai Capitals in the 24th match of the ILT20 here on Tuesday.

Put into bat first, the Giants could post a modest total of 126/9 on the board in the allotted 20 overs.

The Giants had a dismal start to their innings as they were 17/4 in 3.4 overs.

Following the slump, in-form batter Shimron Hetmyer joined captain James Vince in the middle and launched a recovery.

The duo added gutsy 51 runs for the fifth wicket before Vince perished in the 11th over.

He scored 32 off 28 deliveries with the help of four boundaries.

Aayan Afzal Khan partnered briefly with mainstay Hetmyer after Vince's dismissal. Their stand yielded 23 runs.

However, their back-to-back dismissals left the Giants reeling at 92/7 in 15.2 overs.



Hetmyer remained the top-scorer for the Giants with a 28-ball 34, featuring four boundaries.

Later, Dominik Drakes' brisk cameo bolstered the Giants' total. He smashed one boundary and three sixes amid his

12-ball 24.

Olly Stone led the bowling attack for the Capitals with 4/14, followed by Scott Kuggeleijn, who bagged three.

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Chasing a modest 126-run total, the Capitals' batting lineup folded on a measly 107 despite Dasun Shanaka's unbeaten 24.

The right-handed batter walked out to bat at number seven when the Capitals needed an achievable equation of 55 required off as many deliveries.

But Shanaka kept losing partners at the other end and eventually got stranded at the striker's end when Haider Ali perished, courtesy of a running mishap.

Besides Shanaka, Rahmanullah Gurbaz (15) and Ben Dunk (13) were the other notable contributors to the Capitals' response.

For the Giants, Aayan Afzal Khan claimed two wickets while Zubaib Zubair, Chris Jordan, Jamie Overton, Gerhard Erasmus and Blessing Muzarabani struck out a batter each.

The 19-run victory lifted Gulf Giants to the third in the ILT20 standings with eight points in as many matches while Dubai Capitals remained in fifth with six points.

# Wana Young Mughal Football Tournament final match won by Wazir Club



Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: District Sports Office and Civil Administration South Waziristan Lower concluded a football tournament on the named Young Mughal Football League.

The final was played between Wazir Club Wana and HQ Hospital Wana, Wazir Club Wana won by 2/1 goals.

On this occasion, a walk was also organized by the sports department and players to show solidarity with Kashmiris.

It should be remembered that February 5 is celebrated all over the country in both Kashmir and Pakistan.

Here is a message to the world that the people of Kashmir are not alone in their struggle and the Kashmir Solidarity Day will continue Pakistan's support, unity and their ongoing freedom struggle with the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir.

On this occasion, the participants of the rally pay homage to the Kashmiri martyrs who lost their lives fighting for the freedom of Kashmir.

Sports Officer Noor Ullah Wazir, Sports Officer Taj Muhammad Wazir, District Youth Officer Sardar Ali Wazir and Akbar Wazir Chairman HNRD Wana Welfare Association were the special guests of this final match tournament program

# Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal to play 'Kings Slam' in Saudi Arabia

Sports desk

Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal will headline a new exhibition tournament in Saudi Arabia, organisers said, as debate swirls about tennis's push into the conservative country.



The Serb and the Spaniard, with 46 major titles between them, will be joined by Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz and Australian Open winner Jannik Sinner at the 6 Kings Slam.

World number three Daniil Medvedev and seventh-ranked Holger Rune will also play the event in Riyadh in October, oil-rich Saudi Arabia's latest foray into the sport.

Women's greats Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova last month criticised the flow of Saudi money into women's tennis, as officials consider staging the end-of-season WTA Finals there. "We did not help build women's tennis for it to be exploited by Saudi Arabia," read the headline for their joint opinion piece in the Washington Post.

But Tunisian star Ons Jabeur hit back, saying "People should be more informed about what's happening in Saudi", where a number of economic and social reforms are in progress.

Rafael Nadal, who has hinted this may be his final season, signed up as a tennis ambassador for Saudi Arabia, whose efforts to improve its international reputation through sport are often branded "sportswashing".

As well as hosting F1 and top-level boxing, and signing a swathe of football superstars for its domestic league, Saudi Arabia will also hold a number of big events in the next decade including the 2034 World Cup.

# Mohsin Naqvi appointed PCB chairman unopposed

LAHORE: Punjab's Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi was elected unopposed as the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman for the next three years, Geo News reported Tuesday.



Announcing the development in a presser, PCB's Chief Election Commissioner Shah Khawar said Naqvi is the chairman from today and will take up the responsibilities in a few days.

Naqvi is the 37th chairman of the cricket board after replacing the former chairman of the PCB Management Committee, Zaka Ashraf, in the Board of Governors (BoG).

"Mohsin Naqvi can take up the role of chairman along with his chief minister position. There is no restriction in the law and constitution that might restrict him from becoming the chairman immediately," said Khawar.

He said that the cricket body has constituted a board in accordance with the constitution. "There will be good decisions and work in the upcoming events," added the chief election commissioner.

Naqvi — a media channel owner, who has been serving as the interim chief minister for a year — was nominated by caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar for the cricketing body's BoG.

"I will try to fix the issues affecting Pakistan cricket. Reforms in cricket are the need of the hour," Naqvi had said.

Earlier in January, Ashraf resigned as the chairman of the PCB Management Committee. The 72-year-old announced his resignation during the committee's meeting.

# Jordan stun South Korea to reach Asian Cup final for first time

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Jordan powered past Son Heung-min's South Korea 2-0 on Tuesday to reach their first Asian Cup final and a showdown with Iran or hosts and holders Qatar.

Playing in the semi-finals for the first time and ranked 64 places lower, Jordan were full value for their victory over Jurgen Klinsmann's shell-shocked side.

South Korea's talisman Son endured a frustrating night and his country's wait for a first Asian Cup since 1960 goes on.

Jordan had more of the

chances and deservedly went ahead soon after the break, Yazan Al-Naimat scoring his third goal of the tournament after South Korea gave the ball away cheaply.

They had been in a losing position in four of their matches in Qatar, but there was no way back this time for the Koreans when Mousa Al-Tamari sliced his way through the South Korean defence 13 minutes later.

South Korea simply could not handle the pace and power of the attacking duo of Naimat and Tamari.

Son stood with his hands on his hips at the final whistle in

disbelief.

Jordan fans were in the majority among the crowd of 43,000 at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, a 2022 World Cup venue, and jeered and whistled loudly whenever South Korea had the ball.

Jordan were the underdogs — despite the teams drawing 2-2 in the group phase — but they shaded an entertaining first half in which they racked up 12 attempts at goal to South Korea's four.

On 17 minutes South Korean goalkeeper Jo Hyeon-woo was forced into a decent save from Noor Al-Rawabdeh after good

work from Montpellier's Tamari. Jo kept out a fierce drive from Naimat after the South Korean defence opened up, before Tamari blazed over the bar.

On the half-hour referee Mohammed Abdulla Hassan from the UAE awarded Klinsmann's side a penalty after a collision in the Jordan box between Seol Young-woo and Yazan Al-Arab, but changed his mind after consulting the pitch-side monitor.

Lee Jae-sung pinged a header onto the post — South Korea's first proper chance — then Naimat slalomd his way through three weak Korean



challenges before drawing a close-range stop from Jo.

Hwang In-beom skied a golden chance way over the bar with

just the goalkeeper to beat on the stroke of half time.

Skipper and Tottenham ace Son, who scored the extra-time winner over Australia in the quarter-finals, had yet to stamp his authority on the semi-final and his side were behind on 53 minutes.

Park Yong-woo gave the ball away, Tamari ran towards goal and slipped in Naimat, who popped a cool finish over the advancing Jo.

South Korea could not cope with the rampaging duo and on 66 minutes Tamari drove to the edge of the box before unloading past an exposed Jo.

## Cabinet meeting

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

## Federal Cabinet approves restructuring of PIA

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Tuesday approved the restructuring of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on the recommendation of the Privatization Division.

The cabinet, in its previous meeting approved the appointment of a financial advisor for financial and administrative restructuring of the airlines.

The cabinet, in a meeting chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was told that the financial advisor had formulated a financial restructuring plan of PIA in line with international precedents under which the airlines will be divided into two companies, Top-Co and Hold-Co.

PIA's core operations of engineering, ground handling,

cargo, flight kitchen and training will be incorporated into Top-Co while other entities such as Precision Engineering Complex, PIA Investment Limited and others subsidiaries and properties will be incorporated in Hold-Co. These measures will help attract capital investors to PIA.

The cabinet also directed the cabinet sub-committee on Privatization to deal with the matters related to settlement of government-owned enterprises with PIA as soon as possible.

On the recommendation of the ministry of Privatization, cabinet also approved the privatization of First Women Bank Limited.

The cabinet on the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health approved the proposals regarding de-regulation of the prices of the medi-

cines which were not included in the national list of essential medicines.

Under these proposals, prices of medicines other than essential medicines in the national list will be exempted from the Drugs Act, 1976 and necessary amendments will be made in the Drug Pricing Policy 2018.

Furthermore, the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council will ensure that doctors will not prescribe vitamins, multivitamins, minerals and over-the-counter products to the patients.

The Drug Regulatory Authority will compile a list of vitamins, multivitamins, minerals and over-the-counter products as per the prevailing international standards and will also be in touch with the provincial governments in this

regard.

The cabinet also approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee held on February 01, 2024.

Meanwhile the cabinet approved the appointment of Lt. General Tahir Hameed Shah as a member and chairman of the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Board on the recommendation of the Ministry of Defense Production.

The appointment of Lt. General Tahir Hameed Shah will be effective from November 29, 2023.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cabinet allowed Major Abid Mansoor Khan to receive award of "Note-e-Shujaat" and "Note-e-Sharf" from the Ministry of Defense of Saudi Arabia in recognition of his services.

The Federal Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, gave permission to Protocol Officer Mohammad Ashraf Khan to receive a gold medal from the Government of Austria in recognition of his services.

Likewise the cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also gave permission to Air Commodore Syed Imran Ali to receive "Defense Cooperation Award First Class" award in recognition of his services as Defense Attaché at the Pakistani Embassy in Tokyo.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Law and Justice and the proposal of the Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court, the cabinet approved the conversion of 4 out of 8 accountability courts in Peshawar into special courts.

## President Alvi directs Postal Life to pay Rs 5 mln to heirs of insurance policyholder

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has directed Postal Life Insurance to pay the death insurance claim of Rs 5 million to the legal heirs of the deceased policyholder within 30 days.

He gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by the Postal Life Insurance (PLI) against the decision of Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to pay the death insurance claim, a President Secretariat press release said on Tuesday.

As per details, complainant Abdul Aziz's deceased father had obtained an insurance policy from PLI for the sum assured of Rs 5 million against an annual premium of Rs 448,600 in

2010.

After his father died in 2015, PLI refused to pay the death insurance claim on the pretext that the deceased had concealed material facts about his date of birth and the pre-insurance ailment of diabetes at the time of obtaining the insurance policy.

Feeling aggrieved, the son (complainant) filed a complaint with the Wafaqi Mohtasib to seek relief. Wafaqi Mohtasib held that the deceased had purchased the insurance policy as per his date of birth mentioned on CNIC and that PLI had issued the insurance policy after accepting the requisite information.

The Mohtasib held that the denial by the insurance agency to honour the



claim of the complainant amounted to maladministration.

Afterward, PLI filed a representation against this decision with the president.

President Dr Arif Alvi, in his decision, observed that as per Section 80 of the Insurance Ordinance, 2000 no policy of life insurance effected after the commencement date shall, after the expiry of two years from the date on which it was affected, be called in

question by an insurer on the ground that a statement made in the proposal for insurance or in any report of a medical officer was inaccurate or false.

He also referred to Lahore High Court's decision wherein it had been held that concealment of ailments, such as diabetes and hypertension, could not be termed as done fraudulently as most people having such ailments, by remaining more careful in their lifetime, lived either for decades or longer than people not having such diseases.

Keeping in view the facts, the President directed Postal Life Insurance to pay the death insurance to the heirs of the deceased within 30 days in compliance with the earlier decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib.

## IHC stops police from harassing workers of political party

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday stopped the police from harassing candidates and activists of a political party during the general elections.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by independent candidates including Shoaib Shaheen and Ali Bokhari Advocate.

During the hearing, the petitioners adopted the stance that they were being harassed by the police during the election campaign. They said that it was the last day of election campaign.

The counsel for Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) said that his

department had taken action immediately on the complaints and directed the Inspector General of Police (IGP) of Islamabad to view the matter.

The SSP Operations Islamabad informed the court that only two out of 112 candidates had leveled allegations.

The chief justice stopped the police from harassing the candidates and activists of the political party.

Addressing the SSP, he said that the court has summoned him because he was a responsible officer. It was not appropriate to pick up political activists.

The court adjourned case till next week.

## Gohar Ejaz pledges to ensure robust security for upcoming Polls-2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, on Tuesday expressed his commitment to ensure robust security for upcoming general elections scheduled to be held on February 8. Speaking at a joint press conference, he outlined the government's comprehensive preparations in place for the upcoming elections.

The minister was flanked by Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi, and Federal Secretary for Interior, Aftab Akbar Durrani. Highlighting the security measures, Dr. Ejaz assured that there would be no compromise on maintaining law and order during the elections. He underscored the collaboration between security agencies and the administration to prevent any unlawful interference.

Dr. Ejaz emphasized the presence of trained commandos in Balochistan and the support of the armed forces in ensuring the safety of the electoral process. Providing an overview of the election preparations, the interior minister shared that out of 90,777 polling stations across the coun-

try, 44,000 were declared normal, 29,985 deemed sensitive, and 16,766 labeled as highly sensitive. He reassured the public that security would be deployed in three levels, with 7 to 8 law enforcers stationed at each polling station. Despite concerns and challenges, Dr. Ejaz expressed hope for a "transparent", and peaceful election. He urged the public to exercise their right to vote with confidence, acknowledging the dedication of the 511,000-strong police force guarding the polling stations. T

The minister recounted his visits to Karachi and Balochistan, addressing specific challenges in each region. In Sindh, he noted the absence of enmity between political parties, while in Balochistan, he highlighted the disruptive actions of terrorists tarnishing Pakistan's image. Dispelling rumors surrounding the elections on February 8, Dr. Ejaz clarified that, as of now, no decision had been made to shut down mobile or internet services. However, he emphasized that, if necessary, considerations would be made based on security requests from specific districts or provinces.

## Two cops injured in Wana remote control blast

Adam Khan Wazir

WANA: A remote control bomb exploded on a police vehicle in Wana's Rustam Bazar, Lower South Waziristan on Tuesday, and as a result, two policemen were injured.

As soon as the information about the explosion was received, Rescue 1122 reached on the spot.

The injured police personnel were shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Wana for medical treatment by ambulance, while one condition is said to be dangerous, he was shifted to Dera Ismail Khan for further treatment.

Official sources said that a remote control bomb exploded on a police vehicle on the wana Kari Kot road, causing severe damage to the vehicle.

Some reports have also been received, additional SHO Wana was the target of remote control bomb

blast while he narrowly escaped this attack.

Officials said that the remote control bomb was planted in a shed, 2 policemen were injured on the spot due to the bomb blast, while the received report said that there was no loss of life in the remote control bomb blast.

Official sources added that at the time Additional SHO of City Police Station Wana was passing by, however, the pre-installed remote control bomb exploded with a loud explosion.

After the bomb blast, police and security forces surrounded the entire area and started investigating the incident.

It should be remembered that a remote control explosion was carried out on the SHO of Wana Police Station yesterday too, in which he also escaped unhurt while four civilians were injured.

## Expanding Horizons of the Halal Market:

## Trends, Challenges, and the Role of Certification in a Growing Global Industry

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The Halal market transcends food and beverages, encompassing everything from travel and tourism to cosmetics and pharmaceuticals. This diversity is fueled by the growing Muslim population, expected to reach 2.3 billion by 2030, representing nearly 30% of the global population. In 2023, the market reached a staggering value of about USD 1.91 trillion. This growth is expected to continue, with projections indicating a compound annual growth rate of nearly 16.5% from 2024 to 2032. This demographic shift, coupled with rising disposable incomes and increasing awareness of Halal principles, is driving the market's expansion.

With the market's rapid growth, ensuring product and service integrity through Halal certification has become paramount. Halal Research Council, at the forefront of this movement, emphasizes the significance of rigorous certification processes that adhere to the



highest Islamic standards. This not only safeguards consumer trust but also opens doors to lucrative international markets where Halal certification is often mandatory.

Our services span across various sectors, including food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and travel, reflecting the diverse needs of the global Halal market.

The Halal industry is highly institutionalized, comprising government

regulations, Muslim demands for Halal products, and intense industry competition. These factors have led to the implementation of Halal food certificates, a trend that HRC has been instrumental in promoting.

Halal Research Council's market analysis reveals several key trends shaping the future of Halal certification:

- **Technological Integration:** Blockchain technology is revolutionizing traceability and transparency within supply chains, ensuring product authenticity and enhancing consumer confidence.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Consumers are increasingly seeking Halal products that are also environmentally friendly and ethically sourced. Certification bodies are adapting to cater to this growing demand.
- **Rising Demand for Niche Certifications:** As consumer preferences become more diverse, specialized Halal certifications are emerging for specific sectors like sports, leisure, and finance.

and finance.

- **Focus on Education and Awareness:** Building consumer understanding of Halal principles and certification processes is crucial for sustained market growth.

Halal Research Council identifies several emerging areas with immense potential for Halal certification:

- **Nutraceuticals and Functional Foods:** As health and wellness become priorities, Halal-certified nutraceuticals and functional foods are gaining traction.
  - **Islamic Fintech:** Integrating Islamic principles into financial services such as banking and insurance is a rapidly growing segment.
  - **Halal Tourism:** Muslim travelers are seeking destinations and experiences that cater to their cultural and religious needs, presenting a lucrative opportunity for tourism providers.
- As the demand for Halal products continues to rise, HRC is committed to playing a specific role in meeting this

demand. We are continually innovating our certification processes to stay ahead of these trends and meet the evolving needs of the global Halal market.

As we look to the future, Halal Research Council provides reliable, comprehensive Halal certification services that consumers can trust. We are excited to be a part of this global movement and look forward to continuing to serve the Halal community.

About Halal Research Council: Halal Research Council is dedicated to certifying products with the guidance of a reputable Shariah Supervisory Board, skilled Food Technologists, Chemical Engineers, and R&D professionals. Our certification process involves a research-based methodology that thoroughly assesses ingredient sources, scrutinizes the entire supply chain, conducts chemical examinations, and analyzes the Shariah compliance of the ingredients used in the products. For additional details, please explore our website at [www.halalrc.org](http://www.halalrc.org)

## Cold wave to grip upper parts of country: PMD

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Cold wave will continue gripping upper parts of the country during the next 24 hours, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

"Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country while very cold in upper parts", the PMD said.

However, rain wind-thunderstorms with snowfall over mountains are expected at isolated places in northeast Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan.

Cold winds are likely in upper Punjab during the evening/night.

Shallow fog is likely to persist at isolated places in plain areas of Punjab during morning hours.

As per the synoptic situation, continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country.

A shallow westerly wave was likely to affect north-eastern parts of Balochistan and southern Punjab in the next 24 hours.

During the last 24 hours, cold and partly cloudy weather prevailed over most parts of the country.