



## Elections 2024: Cabinet approves deployment of Pak army, civil armed forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Tuesday approved the deployment of Pakistan army and the civil armed forces to ensure the peaceful conduct of general elections across the country. These forces will perform duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations, and will also act as a rapid response force. The decision came following the submission of a summary by the federal Interior Ministry in the meeting. The cabinet which met here under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also discussed in detail the recommendation with respect to the digitization and restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). After a thorough discussion of the proposals made in light of the opinions of the cabinet members regarding the restructuring and digitization of the FBR, the prime minister directed to establish of an inter-ministerial committee under the su-

pervision of the caretaker finance minister. Other members of the committee will include federal ministers for privatisation, foreign affairs, commerce, energy, law and justice and information technology. The committee will present its recommendations regarding these proposals in the next meeting of the federal cabinet. The cabinet appreciated the efforts of Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar in increasing the tax revenue and improving the tax-GDP ratio. The cabinet also admired the finance minister for presenting detailed proposals regarding the administrative structure of the FBR. The prime minister and all members of the cabinet unanimously supported the proposals regarding the FBR reforms and reiterated that the caretaker government should play its due role in concluding the FBR reform agenda. On the recommendation of the finance ministry, the federal cabinet approved the extension

of the tenure of Tahir Hussain Qureshi as the President of SME Bank for three months or till the formal closure of the institution. The cabinet, On the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health, appointed Principal Shifa College of Dentistry, Shifa-e-Milat University Islamabad Prof. Dr. Anwar Ali Shah as the representative of medical colleges in the registration board of Islamabad Health Regulatory Authority. Likewise, the cabinet also approved the appointment of Dr. Dur e Shehwar Faisal as the representative of the Private Healthcare Establishment Sector in the Board. On the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health, the cabinet also approved the formation of a search committee for the appointment of the vice-chancellor of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University Islamabad. The minister for national health will head the committee.

## Huawei moves to totally abandon Android

BEIJING (Agencies): Huawei has unveiled its new in-house-developed operating system, HarmonyOS NEXT, which the Chinese tech giant expects to help it break with the Android ecosystem. The company last week announced plans to roll out a developer version of the platform in the second quarter of the current year followed by the full commercial version in the fourth quarter. The step comes as part of Huawei's ambitious plan to bolster its own software ecosystem. The Shenzhen-based corporation first unveiled its proprietary Harmony system back in 2019, and launched it on some smartphones a year later. However, shortly thereafter the US imposed restrictions aimed at cutting the Harmony system's access to Google's technical support. As a result, unlike previous consumer



versions of the HarmonyOS, the new version is not compatible with Android. The company has opened its first developer beta test to acquire testers and experience key features. Last year, Huawei launched its Mate60 series of smartphones that, according to the company, will be powered by a domestically developed chip set. The release represented a remarkable comeback into the high-end smartphone market for Huawei, which has been struggling under US sanctions for years.

## 21 Israeli soldiers killed in deadliest attack since Gaza war began



GAZA CITY (Agencies): The Israeli army said Tuesday that 21 soldiers were killed in the Gaza Strip in the deadliest attack on its forces of the 3-month-old war against the militant Hamas group. The reservists were preparing explosives to demolish two buildings in central Gaza on Monday when a militant fired a rocket-propelled grenade at a tank nearby, Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the chief military spokesperson, said. The blast triggered the explosives, causing both two-story buildings to collapse on the

soldiers inside. The heavy death toll could add new momentum to calls for Israel to pause the offensive or even halt it altogether. Large numbers of Israeli casualties have put pressure on Israel's government to halt past military operations. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to press ahead until Israel crushes the ruling Hamas militant group and wins the freedom of over 100 hostages held captive in Gaza. Israelis are increasingly divided on the question of whether it's possible to do either.

## Israel proposes new hostage deal to Hamas - Axios



TEL AVIV (Agencies): The Israeli government has offered Hamas a pause in the fighting of up to 60 days so all the remaining captives can be released, Axios reported on Monday, citing two unnamed officials. Hamas seized around 240 Israelis in its October 7 raid from Gaza. While some were released during a week-long humanitarian pause at the end of November, Israel estimates that 130 are still being held in the Palestinian enclave. According to two Israeli officials who spoke to Axios reporter Barak Ravid, the War Cabinet approved the parameters of the proposal "ten days ago" and sent it to Hamas via Qatar and Egypt. Israel is now waiting for the militant group's response and is reportedly "cautiously optimistic" about it. US envoy Brett McGurk was in Egypt on Sunday and is set to proceed to Qatar for talks aimed at negotiating the release of captives held by Hamas.

## China races to find landslide survivors in subzero temperatures



BEIJING (Agencies): Rescuers in China have stepped up efforts to find dozens of people who were buried in a deadly landslide in southwestern Yunnan. The landslide struck two villages in mountainous Zhengxiang County in the early hours of Monday morning when many people were asleep, burying 18 homes and at least 47 people. More than 30 hours since the disaster, twenty people have been confirmed dead, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Twenty-four remain missing, the report added. "The mountain just collapsed, dozens were buried," a witness, named Gu, told state-owned television. He said four of his relatives were among those beneath the rubble. "They were all sleeping in their homes," he said. State news agency Xinhua said rescue workers were in a "race against time" to find those missing after a night of subzero temperatures. Chinese President Xi Jinping has ordered "all-out" rescue efforts. Hundreds of rescue workers including soldiers have been sent to the area, which is known for its steep rugged mountains that are covered with snow in winter. The two affected villages were built towards the foot of the mountains and more than 500 residents were evacuated after the disaster.

## US 'Drags' Japan Into Conflict With China; Damaged US Warships To Be Repaired In Japanese Shipyards

TOKYO (Agencies): The United States and Japan have entered into an agreement to conduct regular overhauls and maintenance on US Navy warships at Japanese shipyards. The Ship Repair Council Japan, a working group comprising representatives from the US Navy, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and private companies from both nations, has been established to facilitate maintenance and repairs for US naval vessels at private Japanese shipyards. This move is aimed at optimizing resources and reducing downtime, ensuring the continuous readiness of American naval vessels in the Indo-Pacific region, and bolstering their preparedness for any potential conflicts in the region. The initiative, announced

by US Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel on January 19, is a strategic partnership aimed at enhancing the operational readiness of US naval vessels and countering China's military expansion. Speaking about the initiative, Ambassador Emanuel highlighted the importance of keeping US Navy ships in the region. The collaboration aims to strengthen the US-Japan Alliance and joint deterrence efforts by enabling crucial repairs in Japan. Currently, US warships stationed in Japan undergo basic maintenance at US bases, but extensive repairs and overhauls necessitate a return to the United States. The Ship Repair Council Japan is expected to significantly cut down on costs and downtime associated with the repair process.

## Indian Army deploys artificial intelligence to fight spies trying to honey-trap its officers

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The Indian Army has developed an AI-based chatbot to combat Pakistani spies who try to honey-trap its officers and extract information. The chatbot, developed by the soldiers of the Territorial Army, will work through WhatsApp and mimic various scenarios to gauge the gullibility of unsuspecting soldiers to such traps online. Once deployed, it is envisaged that the commanding officer or another senior officer will be using

the technology to chat with the men in his unit and figure out who is gullible to such traps. The AI bot converses with soldiers over WhatsApp (can also be moved to other channels of communication) and learns from itself, and new scenarios can be easily added for effective training. The Indian Army's initiative is aimed at sensitizing the gullible soldiers better to the pitfalls of cyber technology and enhancing the operational readiness of its officers.

## Scientists make Alzheimer's breakthrough



NEW YORK (Agencies): Scientists have hailed a potentially 'revolutionary' breakthrough in the early diagnosis of Alzheimer's, after a team of Swedish researchers found that a commercially available blood test can detect biological markers of the disease about ten to 15 years before symptoms develop. In a study of 768 people in their fifties, sixties, and seventies over an eight-year period conducted by the University of Gothenburg, it was found that the test - which detects the presence of tau proteins in blood - was 97% accurate in assessing if a subject was liable to develop the disease. The results of the study, published in the JAMA Neurology journal on Monday, have been hailed as a breakthrough in early screening tests for the disease well in advance of the onset of symptoms.

## Israel attempts to convince EU to build an island for Palestinians

TEL AVIV (Agencies): Hebrew media reported on Monday that the Israeli occupation proposed to the European Union (EU) to build an island for Palestinians in the Mediterranean Sea, Khaberni reported. The EU is the primary source of economic aid to the Palestinians and has a comprehensive cooperation deal with Israel, which includes a free trade zone. Some officials secretly speculate that this may be used to influence Israel. A document proposed by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, outlines a series of "procedural steps" that are believed to be capable of bringing peace to Gaza, establishing an independent

Palestinian state, normalizing relations between Israel and the Arab world, ensuring long-term security in the region, and centered on a "peace preparatory conference." The plan asks for the convening of "key actors," namely the EU, the US, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Arab League, and the United Nations. Participants will be in constant contact with Israeli and Palestinian officials, referred to as "conflict parties," but the two sides will not initially be required to sit with each other. Gaza and the West Bank will be represented by the Palestinian Authority (PA) and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) rather than Hamas, which has governed Gaza since 2007.

## Two B-1 Bombers Deploy to Indo-Pacific, Train with Singapore and Japan

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Two B-1 bombers from Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, have deployed to Singapore for joint exercises with the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF)'s A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport. The pair of Lancers arrived at Paya Lebar Air Base on the island nation on Jan. 18 and is scheduled to lead aerial refueling exercises. The Pacific Air Force spokesperson told Air & Space Forces Magazine that they continue to fly bomber

missions in the Indo-Pacific region and demonstrate the credibility of their forces to address diverse security environments. PACAF highlighted the significance of integrating with the RSAF, citing valuable professional exchanges and training opportunities with different aircraft and aircrews. The B-1s also engaged in separate training with four F-15 Eagles from the Japan Air Self-Defense Force over the Sea of Japan on Jan. 18

## India overtakes Hong Kong to become fourth-largest stock market

NEW DELHI (Agencies): The Indian stock market has pipped Hong Kong to become the fourth-highest equity market globally, Bloomberg reported. The combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached USD 4.33 trillion as of Monday's close, versus USD 4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, according to data compiled by

Bloomberg. India's stock market capitalization crossed USD 4 trillion for the first time on December 5, 2023, with about half of that reportedly coming in the past four years. The top three stock markets are the US, China, and Japan. Cumulatively, the past 12 months have been stellar for investors who parked their money in Indian stocks.

**About Khyber Mail** The Khyber mail was first published in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1932. A newspaper in English by the eminent journalist Sheikh Sana Ullah. From 1932 to 1989 it has survived as leading English newspaper in the region by the sons of Sana Ullah i.e. Sheikh Zaka Ullah, Sheikh Inayat Ullah and Sheikh Saleem Ullah. The publication was shut down in 1989 due to various reasons. The current owner Rizwan Inayat son of Sheikh Inayat Ullah and grandson of Sheikh Sana Ullah, has restarted the family heritage but meeting with the requirement of the century, by giving the readers current happenings around the world with one touch anywhere any time and updating the reader to pace up with the world.

## Shazia Aziz's Productive Meeting with Chairman e-Hujra Unveils Vision for Peshawar's Future



PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): In a significant development, Shazia Aziz, daughter of Bannu Gul and a candidate for the upcoming elections in PK-79 constituency, visited the head office of e-Hujra, engaging in a fruitful meeting with Chairman Muhammad Asif Qureshi.

• Productive Collaboration for Positive Change:

The meeting between Shazia Aziz and Chairman e-Hujra, Asif Qureshi, showcased a collaborative effort to bring about positive changes in Peshawar. Shazia Aziz commended the outstanding performance of e-Hujra, describing it as an online organization comprising educated individuals dedicated to projecting the soft image and talent of their homeland to the global stage.

• Elevating the Voice of Bannu Gul: Expressing her admiration for the organization's mission, Shazia Aziz emphasized the importance of spreading the message of Bannu Gul's residents. She urged candidates from the region to visit the e-Hujra head office, underlining the potential to amplify their voices on a global scale.

• Commitment to Local Development:

Shazia Aziz reiterated her commitment to establishing an organization modeled on the success of e-Hujra for her constituency. This commit-

ment stems from her deep-seated desire to address the issues faced by ordinary citizens and work towards the betterment of their lives.

• Shazia Aziz's Vision for Peshawar: Addressing Key Issues

As a candidate for the PK-79 constituency, Shazia Aziz outlined specific problems in the Hayatabad area of Peshawar and proposed solutions to address these challenges:

• Boundary Wall for Public Safety: Shazia Aziz will recommend the construction of a boundary wall around the Hayatabad sector to curb rising street crimes and ensure public safety.

• Community Hall-Center: Proposing the construction of a community hall to make celebrations more accessible for ordinary people and provide a space for community activities.

• Transport System: Recommending the initiation of a separate government-level transport system, particularly for children, women, and the elderly.

• Special BRT Buses for Females: Suggesting the introduction of separate buses for women on the existing BRT system or exploring alternative solutions.

• Filter Plants for Clean Drinking Water:

Endeavoring to establish filter plants for clean drinking water to safeguard



residents from water-borne diseases.

• Reinstallation of Sewerage and Water Pipes:

Initiating the reinstallation of aging and damaged water and sewage pipes to ensure proper infrastructure.

• Funds for Healthcare and Education:

Focusing on bringing in government funds and diverse resources to enhance healthcare and education facilities.

• Combatting Drug Supplier Mafias: Pledging efforts to eradicate drug supplier mafias from the area.

• Rehabilitation of Drug-Addicted Individuals:

Committing to working towards the societal reintegration of drug addicts.

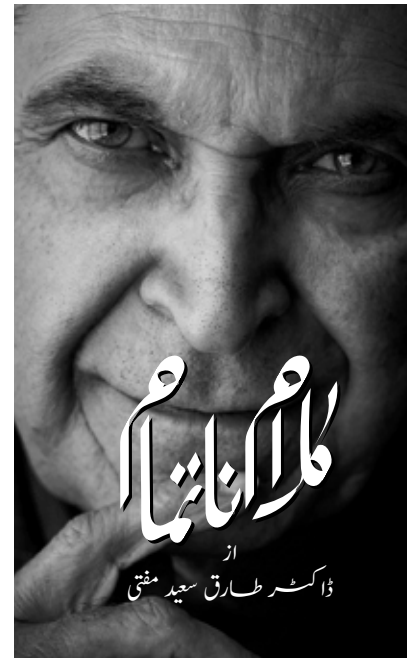
• Garbage Disposal Solutions: Striving to address the issue of garbage disposal across Peshawar.

• A Leader with a Bold Vision

Shazia Aziz emerges as a resolute and determined leader with a vision to make a meaningful impact in the lives of her constituents. Her ambitious plans reflect a commitment to fostering positive change and enhancing the overall well-being of the community. As the elections approach on February 8, 2024, Shazia Aziz stands as a strong candidate poised to bring about transformational leadership in Peshawar.

## Autobiography 'Kalaam-e-Natamaam' launched

PESHAWAR (Agencies): "Kalaam-e-Natamaam", an autobiography by a senior surgeon, Dr Tariq Saeed Mufti, has been launched at a ceremony. Vice-Chancellor of the Gandhara University, Prof Dr. Ejaz Hassan Khan, graced the occasion as the chief guest. A known mental health expert and chairman of Horizon organisation, Prof Dr Khalid Mufti, presided over the function moderated by literatus Prof Dr Nasir Ali Syed. A number of writers, poets, academicians and people from other walks of life turned up at the event hosted at the Haq Baba Auditorium of the Ibadat Hospital at Nishtarabad. The speakers shed light on the contents of the 223-page book penned by the 76-year-old author hailing from Peshawar who has served as the principal of the Ayub Medical College Abbottabad and Rehman Medical College Peshawar in the past besides working at various other significant positions during his medical career. The book has been published by the Syndicate of Writers, Peshawar. The author has devoted the publication to his family members, friends and all those who crossed path with him over time and extended him support and assistance. The speakers at the launching event, spotlighted the significance of the publication by referring to the insightful 23 chapters of the book. They lauded the author for showcasing the cultural values of his hometowns of Peshawar and Abbottabad, the city he loved because of spending 26 long years there during his postings. Iqbal Sikandar, an intellectual famous for his knowledge and profound understanding of mysticism, praised Dr Tariq Saeed Mufti for crafting the autobiography in plain Urdu language with a captivating style. "Human compassion is reflected throughout the book. The author made consistent efforts to improve the things wherever his duties took him," said the speaker. He was appreciative of the title of the publication emphasizing that it showed the growth mindset of the writer as he himself stated that this was not the final word and remained receptive to further improvements. An academician, Prof Dr Noor Hakeem Jeelani, said Peshawar possessed a distinct cultural identity that stood on a par with cities like Lahore, Delhi and Lucknow. "The writer has avidly highlighted this aspect of his city of birth in "Kalaam-e-Natamaam". He has meticulously detailed the beauty of Peshawar and Abbottabad terming them unique cities along with people who impacted his life," he added. The professor said the autobiography serves as an expression of gratitude to the society where you have been brought up and trained. "It is thankfulness to both people and the places. Dr Tariq Saeed Muf-



ti has demonstrated his love for the culture and people of Peshawar through this book as he thinks he owes that," he elaborated.

Mushtaq Shabab, a trilingual writer, columnist and broadcaster, said the publication pointed to the great values and traditions the Peshawar city once had when it was situated inside a wall. "Reading this book transports you to the city of Peshawar as it used to be six decades back. The writer has described Peshawar of the past and the great people who lived here in very impressive manners. This rejuvenates the memories of a bygone era," said the speaker who writes in three languages- Urdu, Hindko and Pashto. Mushtaq Shabab noted that despite being categorized as an autobiography, the publication also seamlessly incorporates elements of a travelogue. "The writer has stated the journey he had undertaken along with other intending pilgrims by road to proceed on Hajj almost 50 years back when he was part of the medical team. This particular section of the book carries the characteristics of a travelogue," explained the speaker. Prof Dr Hafiz Abdul Ghafoor, a former head of Seerat Studies Department of the University of Peshawar, said "Kalaam-e-Natamaam" had inspiring writings, providing the readers an insight into the old Peshawar and its inhabitants, adding it had the tales of progress made by a son of the soil with the support of the community around him while navigating his life journey. A writer and telecaster, Aziz Ajaz, Pashto scholar, Nisar Ahmad Khan, Engineer Attiqur Rehman, Akhtar Saeed and Associate Prof Dr Ali Ahsan Mufti also shared their thoughts on the occasion as well. Expressing optimism, they anticipated that the publication would serve as a source of encouragement to the young generations for connecting with and appreciating the rich cultural heritage.

## Massive Fire Sweeps Through Mobile Market in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (Khyber Mail): A massive fire erupted in the wee hours of Monday at TIMES CENTER mobile market situated in Peshawar's Saddar area. Fortunately, no casualties have been reported so far. Rescue officials stated that the fire, which originated on the fourth floor of the

building, rapidly spread to the other floors. This caused a wave of panic among the shopkeepers and customers, as reported by private news channels. The rescue operation involved more than 30 fire brigade vehicles and four water bowsers. The fire, which has been classified as a

third-stage fire, is currently being extinguished by teams from the Pakistan Army, Air Force, and Cantonment Board. Rescue 1122 teams have successfully rescued four individuals. In response to the incident, the district administration has initiated an investigation.

## Dense fog grips parts of KP; low visibility affects traffic

PESHAWAR (Agencies): Like other parts of the country, dense fog prevailed for the second consecutive day in the provincial capital and most parts of the province during the last 24 hours while substantially decreasing the temperatures. Due to low visibility, the tariff remained very thin in the cities while the public transport was also affected thus causing inconvenience for the commuters of inter-city. The National Highway and Motorways Authority closed the



M-1 motorway from Peshawar to Islamabad and Swat expressways and diverted the traffic to GT road. The mercury dropped to 03C in the provincial capital

with 86 percent humidity in the air. According to the Met Office, very cold and dry weather would prevail in most districts of the province, adding there were chances of rains and snow in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Thursday. In the last twenty-four hours, the lowest temperature recorded in the various districts of the province was Saidu Sharif and Malam Jabba -01, Kalam -07, Chitral and Dir -03, Parachinar -02, Mirkhani -03 DI Khan and Bannu 04 and Mardan 01.

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## Red Sea Crisis

The Red Sea crisis has had a significant impact on global trade. The Suez Canal, which handles about 12% of global trade, is accessed by vessels traveling from Asia via the Bab-el-Mandeb strait. The conflict has led to a significant increase in insurance premiums for ships traveling through the Red Sea, which has impacted the global economy. The crisis has also led to a rise in piracy in the region, which has further complicated the situation. The Houthis have been accused of receiving support from Iran, which has further escalated tensions in the region. The crisis has also led to a humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which has been exacerbated by the conflict. The world's largest shipping firms are continuing to pause shipments through the Red Sea after attacks by Houthi rebels along the crucial international trade route. As container ships are diverted around the Cape of Good Hope on the southern tip of Africa, adding thousands of miles to journeys, the disruption is driving up the cost of shipments from Asia to Europe, raising the prospect of a renewed inflation shock for the world economy. Redirecting ships is expected to cost up to \$1m in extra fuel for every round trip between Asia and Europe, while insurance costs are also rising, adding to the overall cost of shipments. Tankers transporting diesel and jet fuel from the Middle East and Asia are being diverted, while container shipments of consumer goods, commodities, clothing, and food are also likely to be delayed. The Red Sea crisis is a matter of concern for the international community. It is essential to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict to ensure the safety of the region's people and the uninterrupted flow of trade. The international community must work together to find a lasting solution to the crisis.

## Butterflies in January — By Muhammad Faisal

There was a time, after a particularly cold winter season, we would witness a beautiful spring in March in the northern areas. However, environmental disruption has altered everything we once knew. In January, we now observe butterflies, tree blooming, fresh flowers, notably the rise in temperature and no rain for almost two months. This shift in seasonal patterns has brought about a profound transformation in the natural landscape. The once predictable rhythm of winter giving way to spring has been replaced by an unseasonably early burst of life in January. Butterflies gracefully flutter amidst blooming trees, casting a surreal charm over the surroundings. The air is infused with the fragrance of fresh flowers, marking a departure from the expected winter chill. Notably, the rise in temperature persists, and the absence of rain for nearly two months hints at a changing climate, challenging our traditional understanding of the seasonal cycle. In the north of Pakistan, we have beautiful valleys like Chitral, Dir, Gilgit Baltistan, Kaghan, Naram, Swat and many more. In December 3rd, 2023, according to the 'World Tourism Barometer' released by the United Nations World Tourism Organization, Pakistan achieved an impressive 92% recovery to pre-pandemic levels. The country witnessed an extraordinary 115% surge in foreign tourist arrivals, marking a resilient comeback post-Covid. With projections indicating international receipts reaching \$1.3 billion by the year's end, Pakistan emerges as a standout example of tourism resurgence, underscoring its considerable potential on the global stage. Furthermore, Lower Chitral saw a substantial influx of 591,330 tourists, whereas Upper Chitral welcomed 38,771 visitors throughout the year. The landscape of foreign tourist arrivals presented a varied scenario, with Lower Chitral taking the lead by hosting 1,624 international tourists. As these tourist attractions generate money, what will happen to the people who are living there? As climate change is hitting the locals of these areas really badly. As we have seen footage of Shandur Lake which is turned into a complete desert. Locals are argu-

ing that "as it didn't snow enough we don't have access to clean water and there is a huge chance of floods this summer". Both locals of Chitral and Gilgit face the same issue, as the government generates money from these regions and does not return the favour. Furthermore, a local influencer recently published a video on YouTube where he showed Chitral coldest region where it snowed every January and cover each and everything, but this year it didn't snow and the local argus in the video that if this keeps up it will be a devastating and alarming situation for not only for the people in the north, it will also cause a lot of damage to the rest of Pakistan. The influencer showed that in January he is witnessing butterflies and green leaves in Chitral and it is not normal. The climate disruption is caused by man, as in The north mafias are smuggling woods, cutting hundreds and thousands year old trees. The very thing which protects us, smugglers are now smuggling it and turning it into expensive furniture. There are videos available on the internet showing how these people do such things but our authorities are so blind that they can't see or don't want to see because of high pressure. Deforestation, Chloro fluoro carbon, traffic, too much light, noise pollution, everything play a role in this yet no one is doing anything. Mam is playing with nature and now mother nature is reshaping nature and if we don't stop and still do what we are doing, in the near future we would not see a happy clean earth, we would probably see much worse. Subsequently, we can now put pressure on the upcoming government to ensure certain things. First of all, deforestation, the illegal smuggling of old trees should be banned and there should be a really high punishment for those who does it, second the management of vehicles, Pakistan is one of those countries where you can drive anything you like, here we see really old cars that pollute air too much and the government should come up with plans. Moreover, there are so many suggestions but the upcoming government should keep in mind that disasters will come and it is their responsibility to protect the citizens of this country at any cost.

## Commemorating 50 Years of the F-16 Fighting Falcon:

A Legacy Beyond the Skies — By Ali Raza

Today, we celebrate a significant milestone in aviation history – the golden jubilee of the F-16 Fighting Falcon, fondly known as the "Viper." This momentous occasion is not merely a tribute to an extraordinary aircraft, but it also acknowledges the technological leaps, international cooperation, and enduring influence it has imprinted on the world over the past five decades.

– Genesis of the F-16  
The F-16's remarkable journey took flight unexpectedly on January 20, 1974, when test pilot Phil Oestricher was compelled to make an unplanned maiden flight at Edwards Air Force Base in California. What began as a high-speed taxi test transformed into an emergency takeoff, marking the F-16's rise to become a cornerstone of aerial dominance.

– Transformation and Global Influence  
Over the course of fifty years, the F-16 has transformed from a lightweight day fighter into a versatile multi-role aircraft, continually enhancing its combat capabilities. With its exceptional agility, speed, and precision, the F-16 has become the aircraft of choice for air forces worldwide, contributing to its extensive international presence.

– Worldwide Reach  
With a presence in 25 countries and over 2,100 active service aircraft, the F-16's impact is truly global. As of 2015, it held the title of the most prevalent fixed-wing aircraft in military service worldwide. Beyond the United States, Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey, and South Korea manufacture the F-16 under license, exemplifying its collaborative international efforts. The F-16's influence extends to Japan, where its design inspires the FS-X fighter.

– F-16's Role in Critical Conflicts  
The F-16 has played a pivotal role in enhancing the military capabilities of U.S. allies, notably in the Middle East. Its effectiveness was showcased in air-to-air combat and ground attacks during significant conflicts, including



the Israeli-Syrian conflict of 1982 and the Persian Gulf War of 1990–91.

– Creators of the F-16 and its Ongoing Evolution

Initially developed by General Dynamics, the F-16 became part of Lockheed Martin's legacy in 1993, evolving into an advanced Block 70/72 model. With an active production line and 140 units awaiting assembly, the F-16 remains at the forefront of the 4th generation fighters. Looking ahead, advancements in technology promise to enhance its autonomous features, ensuring its continued relevance in global defense strategies.

– Salute to the F-16

As we commemorate the F-16's 50th anniversary, we extend a salute to the countless individuals who have contributed to its success. From engineers to pilots and mechanics, their collective efforts have secured the F-16's place in history.

– F-16's Role in Modern Warfare  
Undeniably, the F-16's advanced avionics, weapons systems, and stealth capabilities make it indispensable in modern warfare. Its ability to execute precision strikes with minimal collateral damage has positioned it as a key player in numerous military operations, especially in asymmetric warfare.

– F-16 in Popular Culture

Beyond its military significance, the F-16's sleek design and exceptional

performance have made it a cultural icon, featured in films, television shows, and video games. Its status as an inspiration for generations underscores its lasting impact on popular culture.

– Future of the F-16

Looking ahead, the F-16 is set to evolve further with technological advancements. Incorporating more autonomous features will enhance its operational efficiency, ensuring its continued role in global defense strategies for years to come. The F-16's adaptability guarantees its significance in the future of aviation.

– Salute to the F-16: Pakistan's Perspective

In 1981, Pakistan began acquiring F-16 fighters from the United States, and since then, these aircraft have played a crucial role in the country's defense strategy. Between 1986 and 1990, the F-16s have been credited with shooting down several enemy aircraft, demonstrating their effectiveness in combat. Today, Pakistan operates a significant fleet of F-16s, underscoring the aircraft's continued relevance in the nation's defense strategy.

As we celebrate the F-16's 50th anniversary, we acknowledge its significant contribution to Pakistan's aerial defense capabilities.

Here's to many more years of the F-16's service in the skies!

## "I am not Batman" - By: Ali Inan

Well, there is no Bat and no Batman in Pakistan politics after the Supreme Court's verdict. However, the nature of power politics in Pakistan is analogous to what Harvey Dent (played by Aaron Eckhart) says in The Dark Knight, the second film in Christopher Nolan's Batman movies, "You either die a hero or you live long enough to see yourself become the villain." The politicians have time and again suffered political deaths. If they live a little longer in power, they have been seen as villains. The politicians have even strived to achieve the political martyrdom to prolong the political career and occasionally carve an eternal legacy. The tragedy is that such efforts have been rarely in the cause of democracy. In Pakistan, democracy has been both a narrative to gain power, and a casualty in pursuit of power. The blame game, and the heroics on the political spectrum of Pakistan ask multiple questions. Every institution and political group blame each other for the ailing democracy in Pakistan. As it was manifest in Shakespeare's play Henry VI, where during the war of the Roses, similar blames were hurled upon each other, which culminated into the oft' quoted remark, "Tis much when sceptres are in children's hands, But more when envy breeds unkind division: There comes the ruin, there begins confusion." Such confusion renewed in the legal and political corridors, recently. In a significant development on the night of January 13, Supreme Court of Pakistan declared the intra-party polls of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) null and void, revoking the party's use of the 'bat' as its election symbol. This ruling addressed the ongoing controversy surrounding the iconic electoral symbol. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had contested the decision of a two-member bench of the Peshawar High Court (PHC), which had earlier reinstated the cricket bat as the official symbol for PTI while validating its elections. Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, along with Justices Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Musarrat Hilali, presided over the three-member bench hearing the ECP's

petition. Following the proceedings, the court, in a late-night announcement on Saturday, revealed its judgment to "set aside the PHC judgment and restore the ECP judgment," thereby nullifying PTI's intra-party elections and withdrawing the 'bat' as its electoral symbol. This verdict echoed the 2018 verdict of the Supreme Court of Pakistan when the Pakistan Muslim League (N) was stripped off its election symbol. In 2018, the chief justice of Supreme Court of Pakistan, Mian Saqib Nisar, along with two other members on the apex court bench, had declared that an individual disqualified from serving in the parliament is also ineligible to hold the position of party president. Following the Supreme Court's verdict against Sharif, which invalidated all his decisions as the party president, the election authorities declared that PML-N candidates were ineligible to contest the Senate Election on party tickets. There are various compelling arguments related to these contemporary verdicts. However, metaphorical similarities can be found articulated in works like Billy Budd by Henry Melville, and Measure for Measure by Shakespeare. Both works explore jurisprudential themes—justice, morality, mercy versus rigor, and the societal impact of individual punishment. Billy Budd questions the justification of harsh punishment for the greater good, while Measure for Measure delves into the tension between mercy and rigor in justice administration, presenting a dilemma that echoes the biblical concept of "an eye for an eye" or the merciful justice advocated in the Sermon on the Mount. The Supreme Court and its verdicts also raise similar questions that may receive multiple answers and a wide range of interpretive justifications. Some may call it the right decision free from any populist influence, while others may call for mercy considering it a compromise on the greater good for democracy. Hence, the Supreme Court of Pakistan finds itself under the scrutiny of history. There are questions that could be answered through multiple perspectives. Whether Supreme Court's rigor in administration

of justice compromised the greater good for democracy, or the observance of leniency and mercy would have adversely affected the democratic process in the long run. The Supreme Court's verdict might have a long-term impact on the democratic aspirations of the future generations in Pakistan. As in Tison v Arizona, Justice Brennan in his dissenting note had quoted Shakespeare, "Yes, truly, for look you, the sins of the father are to be laid upon the children" (The Merchant of Venice Act III Sc V L1). While democracy remains haunted by a baggage of history, the politics in Pakistan has continually manifest the Shakespearean political drama. The rankness in politics of the land of the pure could "smell to heaven." Like a scarlet thread, the blame of usurping the crown from the rightful ruler and the allegation of stealing the will of the masses continue to run through the political fabric of Pakistan. There are no clear winners, no trustworthy friends, no permanent foes, and no clear heroes in the politics of Pakistan. Power is the sole obsession, political juggling is the apparent ideology, and demagoguery is the most lethal policy. Today, while the world looks progressively ahead and aspires to achieve transcendence in politics, Pakistan presents an enigma of regression. Here, Plato would find his ideals of The Republic turned upside down. Aristotle might find himself dumbfounded in the face of the populist rhetoric in Pakistan. Whereas, Machiavelli might not find his ideal prince, he may end up meeting his several diabolic versions. Hobbes and Nietzsche would indeed find much to meditate here on the human condition in relation to politics. Even Shakespeare wouldn't have had it in the farthest of his imaginations that a country, born after 331 years of his death and thousands of miles away from the English peninsula, would be asking the moral questions of justice system in Measure for Measure. But indeed, Christopher Nolan must rest assured that here is no Batman.

– The writer is a PhD Scholar in English Literature, a Lawyer, and an International Relations Analyst.

## PM reaffirms unwavering commitment to CPEC success



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Talking to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong who paid a courtesy call on him in Islamabad, the Prime Minister emphasized the crucial need for both nations to maintain close collaboration for the timely completion of ongoing projects. The Prime Minister extended a warm welcome to the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister and his delegation, expressing Pakistan's deep appreciation for its all-weather, strategic, cooperative partnership with China. Reflecting on his visit to Beijing for the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, the Prime Minister conveyed

his profound appreciation for the warm sentiments expressed by President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang towards Pakistan. He also conveyed best wishes for the Chinese leadership. Beyond discussions on Pakistan-China relations, the meeting also addressed the regional situation. The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for the courtesy call and provided insights into various meetings held during the visit. He conveyed special greetings from the Chinese leadership to the Prime Minister. Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun reiterated the strong bond between China and Pakistan, referring to them as "iron-brothers." He assured that China would remain a steadfast partner in Pakistan's socio-economic progress.

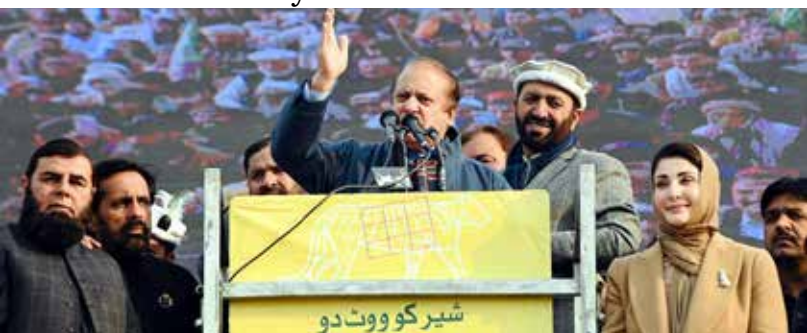
## President lauds China's support for stabilizing Pakistan's economy



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): President Dr. Arif Alvi has said Pakistan is fully committed to the high-quality development of CPEC. Talking to Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China Sun Weidong in Islamabad, he said the Chinese support in the next phase of CPEC would be crucial for Pakistan's industrial development. He said economic cooperation between the two friendly countries would further cement bilateral ties. He appreciated the Chinese support in stabilizing Pakistan's economy. The President said China is a very dear friend that has always supported Pakistan during difficult times. He highlighted that CPEC projects have contributed to the economic development of Pakistan, besides helping meet its energy needs. The President said Pa-

kistan wants to learn from the Chinese experiences in IT, education, health, agriculture, and poverty alleviation for its socio-economic development. The President reiterated that Pakistan would continue to support China on all core issues, including the 'One China' Policy, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Tibet, Xinjiang, and the South China Sea. He said Pakistan is grateful to China for supporting Pakistan's national development and its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The visiting Vice Foreign Minister of China said Pakistan and China have a long history of friendly relations which would continue to grow stronger. He said CPEC has yielded fruitful results, adding that both the countries have huge potential for increasing cooperation in various fields.

## PML-N completed mega development projects countrywide: Nawaz Sharif



MANSEHRA (Agencies): Former Prime Minister and PML-N leader Muhammad Nawaz Sharif says PML-N completed mega development projects during its tenure to uplift living standards of people across the country. Addressing a public gathering in Mansehra today, he said PML-N is fully capable of keeping the

country on the path of progress and special efforts will be made to provide basic amenities and employment opportunities to the public. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Organizer of PML-N Maryam Nawaz Sharif reaffirmed commitment to provide basic facilities to people of Hazara Division at their doorstep.

## Pak-Afghan border crossing at Torkham reopened



PESHAWAR (Agencies): Pak-Afghan border crossing at Torkham was reopened for commercial consignments after ten days today. The decision was

made in a meeting between Afghan Consul General and Pakistani authorities in Peshawar. According to Customs authorities, the first cargo vehicle has entered Pakistan through Torkham border crossing. Afghan drivers of commercial vehicles have been given visa and passport relaxation till 31st March. No cargo vehicle will be allowed entry into Pakistan without travelling documents from 1st of April. The border was closed on 13th January after the federal government decided that no commercial vehicle will be allowed entry into Pakistan without valid travelling documents.

## Info Minister lauds Turkiye's role in defusing Pak-Iran tensions

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi, has commended the constructive role played by friendly countries, especially Turkiye, in de-escalating the recent tension between Pakistan and Iran. In an interview with TRT, he said that the situation has largely returned to normalcy due to the effective measures taken by the government of Pakistan and state institutions. However, he emphasized that the goodwill gestures and continuous contacts by friendly countries are highly appreciable. The Minister highlighted that, as a responsible nuclear power, Pakistan fulfilled its duty and normalized the situation. He explained that it was not possible for Pakistan to refrain from responding to the aggressive action, leading to a proportional and well-measured response. According to Information Minister, this response has sent a clear message that whether the aggression against Pakistan comes from a small or a large country, Pakistan will not remain silent and will respond accordingly. He added that this has also bolstered the confidence of the Pakistani people in the state and its institutions. Murtaza Solangi mentioned that Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan maintained close contact with the foreign ministers of both Pakistan and Iran. He further stated that Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Jalil



Abbasi Jilani, welcomed the Turkish Foreign Minister's efforts and message of goodwill. Pakistan continues to be in contact with Turkiye and China, who are actively contributing to ongoing diplomatic efforts in this regard. The Minister reiterated that the strong relations between the government and people of Pakistan with the government and people of Turkiye are a valuable asset for Pakistan. Shifting focus to the upcoming general election, Murtaza Solangi said that the Election Commission of Pakistan has completed all preparations to organize free and fair polls on the 8th of the next month. He mentioned that the printing of ballot papers is ongoing, and postal ballots are being dispatched. The caretaker government is resolute in en-

sureing peaceful, just, free, and transparent elections as per the schedule issued by the ECP. Information Minister stated that the commission will announce poll results within two days after the election. Following the official declaration of results, the outgoing Speaker of the National Assembly will summon a session of the Lower House within one week and administer the oath to newly elected members. Subsequently, the election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker will take place, followed by the election of the leader of the House, who will then take the oath as the Prime Minister of Pakistan, administered by the President. The interim setup will dissolve as soon as the elected Prime Minister takes the oath and forms his cabinet.

## Chinese Vice FM meets CJCS



RAWALPINDI (Agencies): Vice Foreign Minister of China, Sun Weidong called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Monday. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, matters related to bilateral security, defence cooperation, regional and international security environment were discussed during the meeting.

## Pakistani envoy seeks ways to promote trade among OIC states



ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Permanent Representative to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Syed Fawad Sher on Monday held a meeting with Director of International Relations Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development Aalia Jafar in Jeddah. According to a post on X by the Pakistani envoy, they discussed issues of mutual interest and agreed on enhancing the role of the private sector in promoting trade and investment among states of OIC.

## Ambassador Baseer calls for enhanced interaction between Pakistani, African companies



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan's ambassador to Zimbabwe Murad Baseer on Monday called for enhanced interaction between Pakistani and African companies to boost trade and business. He was talking during a zoom meeting of representatives of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Pan African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI).

## Caretaker Sindh CM, US Ambassador discuss bilateral trade ties

KARACHI (Agencies): US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome called on Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice retired Maqbool Baqar in Karachi today. Bilateral relations, steps taken by the government to improve the economy, two hundred schools constructed by the US government in Sindh and other issues came under discussion in the meeting. The Sindh Chief Minister said on the occasion that the US is helping the provincial government in education,



health and malnutrition besides restoration of flood affected areas.

## China lauds Pakistan's counterterrorism, peace efforts

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Vice Foreign Minister of China Sun Weidong called on Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir in Rawalpindi today. During the meeting matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed. The Chinese Vice Foreign Minister said that Pakistan and China are all weather strategic partners. He acknowledged Pakistan's efforts towards regional peace and stability and also conveyed China's satisfaction on security arrangements for CPEC projects. Thanking the visiting digni-



tary for his warm remarks, the Army Chief said relations between Pakistan and China are founded on a common understanding of regional peace, stability and prosperity for the people of both countries.

## Finance Minister appreciates World Bank's continuous support for Pakistan



ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar met with the Country Director World Bank Najy Binhassine and his team in Islamabad to discuss and finalize the financing for two World Bank funded operations in Pakistan. These include additional financing of 250 million dollars for an ongoing World Bank funded program titled Crisis-Resilient Social Protection Program and Resilient and Accessible Microfinance Program worth 175 million dollars. The World Bank team apprised the Finance Min-

ister about the broad contours of the RAM program, its funding volume and objectives. The meeting was informed that microfinance sector of Pakistan has shown resilience and continued to grow despite multiple exogenous shocks. The proposed program will help to not only overcome the constraints of microfinance sector but also ensure more resilient, inclusive and growing microfinance sector in Pakistan. At the end, Finance Minister appreciated the continuous support of the World Bank to Pakistan.

## PPP will overcome challenges after winning election: Bilawal

SAHIWAL (Agencies): Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has says his party will eliminate inflation, poverty and unemployment after winning general election. Addressing a public gathering in Sahiwal, he emphasized that the PPP is the only party that has consistently fulfilled the promises made to the people.



## Washington ready to enhance cooperation with Punjab Govt in diverse sectors: Kristin

LAHORE (Agencies): Consul General of the United States in Lahore, Ms. Kristin K. Hawkins has said that Washington is ready to enhance cooperation with the Punjab government in education and trade sectors. During a meeting with Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore today, she said under the Punjab and California sister states relationship agreement, the United States aims to promote bilateral relations with the province. Matters of mutual interest and cooperation in various sectors also came under discussion during the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister said the



provincial government wants to utilize expertise of the United States in the agriculture sector, especially in

wheat harvesting. He expressed the desire to work with the US in education and housing sector as well.

## SIFC installs 1MW solar power plant in Hunza district



HUNZA (Agencies): Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in partnership with NPAK Energy has installed one megawatt solar power plant in Hunza district of Gilgit-Baltistan. This solar plant will meet the energy deficit in the region and

ensure uninterrupted power supply to the people living in these valleys. Located 2,800 meters above sea level, the plant's more than 2,300 solar panels will generate 1,600 MW of electricity annually for local households and industries.

## ANF seizes 190 kg drugs in six operations

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

## Four killed in accident

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Four women were killed and two others, including a young girl, sustained injuries when an over-speeding Mazda van collided with a rickshaw on the National Highway in Shikarpur Tuesday morning. According to Rescue 1122 sources, the accident took place near Achi Masjid area of Town Madeji due to dense fog and poor visibility, a Private news channel reported. The police said that the bodies and injured were shifted to a hospital. Three of the four women were identified as Farida, Hajira and Najma.

## Pakistan anticipates 90 more days of internet disruptions, says PTA

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has indicated that the internet disruptions in Pakistan, which have already been a source of frustration for the online community, may persist for an additional 90 days. On January 20, the PTA provided technical justifications, attributing the blackout to ongoing system upgrades. However, the specified timeline of "2 to 3 months" has only heightened public concerns. During a press conference led by Director General Ahmed Shamim Pirzada, accompanied by Caretaker Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and FIA Cybercrime Director of Operations Waqaruddin Syed, skepticism prevailed.

## Balochistan's Economic Challenges in Spotlight: Senators and Analysts Discuss Gwadar Port, CPEC, and Urgent Development Needs

ISLAMABAD (Adnan Hameed): Pakistan-China Institute, under Friends of Silk Road (FOSR) Initiative? organized a dialogue on "Outlook of Security Situation in South Asia in 2024." The event took place simultaneously at two venues: Islamabad, and a second venue at Quetta Press Club. The dialogue featured speeches by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Senate Defense Committee Defense & Pakistan-China Institute; Senator Mohammad Abdul Qadir; Lt. General (r) Muhammad Afzal, Former Chairman NDMA & DG FWO; Amir Rana, Director, Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS); Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General of Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI); Ambassador (r) Masood Khalid, Former Ambassador to China; Sultan M Hali, Security Analyst; Shahzada Zulfiqar, former President, PFU, and Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, Pakistan China

Institute. The dialogue was chaired by Former Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque. In his opening speech, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted the significance of the current scenario, dominated by turbulence and transformation. In this context, he analysed China's Global Security Initiative (GSI) as a new framework for peaceful resolution of security issues, since GSI focuses on security as being indivisible, based on respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. It seeks also to promote a security governance framework, including A.I., cyber security and related security threats based on accepted international norms of behaviour enshrined in the UN Charter and international law. He strongly condemned the ongoing Genocide and Crimes against Humanity in Palestine by Israel. Delving into security issues, he discussed three new realities: the shattering of the Middle East status quo af-

ter October 7, serious challenges posed by Non-State Actors, and the complex security situation between Iran, Pakistan, and Afghanistan which is now inextricably intertwined with regional geopolitics, necessitating dialogue and diplomacy. Senator Mushahid Hussain termed the swift and smooth resolution of the Iran crisis as 'model of crisis management and crisis resolution' adding that the two crises, Pulwama 2019 (with India) & Panjgur 2024 (with Iran) had helped Pakistan in establishing certain 'regional rules of behaviour based on our red lines in our troubled neighbourhood'. He said 'Iran is not India, but a brotherly Muslim neighbour with which Pakistan has no fundamental conflict of interest'. In this regard, Senator Mushahid Hussain especially praised the Pakistani leadership for their deft handling of the Iran crisis, maintaining a mature and measured, cool and calm approach, while avoiding jingoism.

## Seerat Conference starts in Bahawalpur

BAHAWALPUR (Agencies): Under the auspices of Islamia University Bahawalpur (IUB), the 10th International Seerat Conference has started at the Baghdad-Ul-Jadid Campus of the varsity here on Tuesday. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Aneeqe Ahmed is likely to address the 10th International Seerat Conference being held at Khawaja Fareed Auditorium of Islamia University Bahawalpur here.



Renowned scholars from abroad and locals will also address the conference.

## Punjab Police ready to provide security in upcoming general elections: IG



LAHORE (APP): Inspector General Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has said that the Punjab Police are ready to provide security in the upcoming general elections. In a statement, he said that one lac thirty thousand police personnel including ten thousand women police officers are being assigned duties during elections. He assured that the law and order situation across the province is satisfactory, and action will be taken against those who violate the law.

## ECP warns heavy fines for election hoardings on government buildings

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



ning from the areas of two sworn to Clifton. Monitoring teams, during their visit to Quetta-Kharan Road in Balochistan, removed banners and flags of various political parties, penalizing those who violated the code of conduct. They also cleared illegal flags, banners, and pamphlets from the Quetta road in Kharan.

## Sargodha Citrus Fest kicks off in capital; captivates fruit enthusiasts

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



cott and many others were exhibited through several stalls. The citrus fest is set to captivate visitors especially fruit enthusiasts of all ages on Wednesday too offering citrus-infused culinary delights and interactive exhibits. The staff of the University of Sargodha briefed the visitors about the products made from citrus fruit and offered them to taste.

## Pneumonia claims 12 more lives in Punjab during 24 hours

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pneumonia in the Punjab region continued to claim lives as 12 more children died of the disease during the past 24 hours, according to provincial health department. The children who succumbed to pneumonia during this period was aged between two months and 12 years, private news channels reported on Tuesday. There have been 491 cases of pneumonia was reported in Punjab during the past 24 hours, whereas in Lahore, 230 children have been

confirmed with the disease during the same period. The total number of children who have suffered from the disease in Punjab this year has reached 194, while in Lahore, 45 children have been affected by the disease so far this year. Pneumonia, an infection causing inflammation in the air sacs of the lungs, has manifested as a serious health concern. Symptoms include cough with phlegm or pus, fever, chills, and breathing difficulties, leading to severe consequences.

## Interior Ministry establishes control room for General Elections 2024

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Federal Minister of Communications Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Tuesday visited the control room established in the Ministry of Interior for monitoring of security arrangements and law and order situation during the general election 2024. The caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar appointed Shahid Ashraf Tarar as the Chairman of the Committee for the Security and Administrative Affairs of General Elections 2024. The coordinator National Action Plan briefed the minister in detail about the functioning of the control room on behalf of the Secretary of Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani, who was also present in the meeting. The minister appreciated the efforts of the officials of the interior ministry while expressing satisfaction with the functioning of the control room and said that the security and law and order situation will be monitored during the elections in



the country through the control room. He said that it is the prime responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan, according to the constitution, to conduct transparent elections in the country and the caretaker government will provide full support to the Election Commission in this regard.

## 49 foreign journalists issued visas for Feb 8 elections coverage so far: Solangi



ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said that certain elements were spreading rumours claiming no foreign journalists and observers were coming to Pakistan for coverage of upcoming general elections which was contrary to facts. He was addressing a press conference

flanked by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid, Executive Director General External Publicity Wing Ambreen Jan, Director General Radio Pakistan Saeed Sheikh and Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood. He said that several foreign media representatives were already in Pakistan who would cover the elections in Pakistan. Many foreign journalists have applied for visas to cover the election, Murtaza Solangi said adding that 49 visas have been issued to observers and foreign journalists so far whereas 32 visa applications were under process. He said 24 visa applications for coverage of elections were under process at the Pakistan High Commission New Delhi.

## Expert encourages citizens to wear masks, boost immune system to prevent spread of 'Pneumonia'

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Health expert Tuesday encouraged citizens to wear face masks and boost their immune systems which can reduce their chances of catching the 'Pneumonia virus' where due to weak immune systems several pneumonia cases among children have also witnessed a surge in Punjab during this month. Talking to a Private news channel, Child Specialist Dr Ibrahim Yousaf stressed that 'Pneumonia' can be prevented by immunization, adequate nutrition, and by addressing environmental factors.



## Riyadh to undergo palpable change every year until 2030: Diriyah CEO

RIYADH (Agencies): The Saudi capital will be undergoing consistent transformative change "every year" that will allow visitors and residents to feel a palpable difference, says the CEO of Diriyah Co. Speaking to Arab News on the sidelines of the second edition of the Saudi Tourism Forum in Riyadh, Jerry Inzerillo affirmed that visitors of the Kingdom's capital do not need to look forward to 2030 to begin to witness the changes that the area is undergoing. Instead, they are already experiencing



the transformation that will continue throughout the coming years. The executive cited the last quarter, which was filled with "great victories," spanning from Saudi Arabia's winning of the Expo 2030 bid to the World Cup. He

highlighted that the forum is "really critical" as it aids in highlighting the Kingdom's dynamic transformation, a feat considered impossible just a few years ago. He said: "Riyadh is now going to have a big transformative change every year. What I love now is that the public, our community will see great physical changes each year now. So we'll open hotels will open restaurants, we'll open retail, you know, we just finished 9 km of parks, so that people don't have to wait 2030 to feel the change."

## BYD outpaces VW as China's best selling brand in 2023

BEIJING (Agencies): BYD Co officially overtook Volkswagen AG as China's best selling car brand in 2023, clear evidence its all-in bet on electric vehicles in the world's biggest automobile market is paying dividends and helping it pass some of the world's biggest legacy names. Shenzhen-based BYD chalked up 2.4 million new domestic car insurance registrations last year, data from the China Automotive Technology and Research Center show, giving it a countrywide market share of 11%, up 3.2 percentage points year-on-year. The Chi-



nese automaker's meteoric rise reflects the wider lead Chinese car brands have in developing affordable and hi-tech EVs that are quickly gaining international acceptance. Firms like Stellantis NV and VW are now even turning to Chinese car

companies to breathe life into their own EV strategies. BYD had overtaken VW as China's best selling car brand on a quarterly basis earlier last year but later data show that's now its status on a full-year basis. VW was China's best selling brand since at least 2008, when CATRC information became available. Among the other top five brands, Toyota Motor Corp and Honda Motor Co both saw their market shares and sales volumes fall. Domestic player Chongqing Changan Automobile Co did benefit from increased sales, though its share held flat.

## Red Sea shipping chaos starts to bite into companies' profits

CAIRO (Agencies): With the Red Sea crisis roiling shipments of everything from cars to energy, it's a matter of time before soaring costs and supply-chain strains show up in companies' earnings reports. Several firms are already warning of the impact. Electric-vehicle maker Tesla Inc plans a two-week production halt at a German plant due shipment delays, while Sweden's Volvocar AB has announced a three-day stoppage at its Belgian factory. British retailers Tesco Plc, Marks & Spencer Group Plc and Next Plc have all flagged the risk of higher prices



es for consumers. All that's because at least 2,300 ships are taking lengthy detours to avoid Houthi militants' attacks in the Red Sea — a waterway that normally handles over 12% of global sea trade. Central bankers are warning of an inflation surge that could hamper

interest-rate cuts. For many companies, especially in Europe, it's adding to transit times, padding out freight bills and raising insurance costs. And it's forcing analysts to re-think companies' earnings estimates for the coming year. In the past three months, the consensus forecast for carmakers' earnings is down 5%, data compiled by Bloomberg shows. Shippers on the other hand are emerging winners — with container rates surging 300% on some routes, earnings estimates for MSCI Europe's transportation index have risen 7% in just two weeks.

## Canada caps international student permits amid housing crunch

OTTAWA (Agencies): Canada on Monday announced an immediate, two-year cap on international student permits and said it would also stop giving work permits to some postgraduate students as it seeks to rein in record numbers of newcomers seen aggravating a housing crisis. The cap is expected to result in approximately 360,000 approved study permits in 2024, a decrease of 35% from 2023, according to a statement from the immigration ministry. Im-



migration minister Marc Miller said the federal government would work with the provinces, which oversee the educational system, to apply the cap. He said the main reason for the cap

is to protect students who attend colleges, which are often private-public partnerships, that provide inadequate services at high costs, but also to ease pressure on housing and services. "Some private institutions have taken advantage of international students by operating under-resourced campuses, lacking supports for students and charging high tuition fees, all the while significantly increasing their intake of international students," Miller told reporters.

## India overtakes Hong Kong as world's fourth-largest stock market

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's stock market has overtaken Hong Kong's for the first time in another feat for the South Asian nation whose growth prospects and policy reforms have made it an investor darling. The combined value of shares listed on Indian exchanges reached US\$4.33 trillion as of Monday's close, versus US\$4.29 trillion for Hong Kong, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That makes India the fourth-biggest equity market globally. Its stock market capitalisa-



tion crossed US\$4 trillion for the first time on Dec 5, with about half of that coming in the past four years. Equities in India have been booming, thanks to a rapidly growing retail investor

base and strong corporate earnings. The world's most populous country has positioned itself as an alternative to China, attracting fresh capital from global investors and companies alike, thanks to its stable political setup and a consumption-driven economy that remains among the fastest-growing of major nations. "India has all the right ingredients in place to set the growth momentum further," said Ashish Gupta, chief investment officer at Axis Mutual Fund in Mumbai.

## Japan shares hit 34-year highs, yen steady ahead of BOJ decision

SYDNEY (Agencies): Japanese shares surged to fresh 34-year highs and the yen steadied on Tuesday, hoping the Bank of Japan will not rock the boat by pivoting away from its super easy policy any time soon, while Chinese stocks extended declines after a brutal session. Japan's Nikkei rose 0.6% to the highest level since February 1990, bringing the year-to-date gains to 9.9%. Meanwhile, MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan edged 0.2% higher, but were



down more than 6% this year due to the tumble in Chinese shares. The yen languished at 148.12 per dollar, having slid 5% this year. The BOJ is expected to retain its ultra-easy monetary

settings later in the day, as policymakers assess the progress made by the economy towards meeting the conditions for phasing out the decade-long accommodative policy. None of the economists polled by Reuters expect the central bank to end its negative rate policy this time, though many see it happening in April. Governor Kazuo Ueda will hold a press conference after the decision, with traders focusing on the inflation outlook and any signs of imminent policy change.

## United forecasts first quarter loss after grounding Boeing 737 fleet

NEW YORK (Agencies): United Airlines warned Monday that it expects losses in the first quarter of 2024 due to the grounding of its Boeing 737 MAX 9 aircraft, while beating analyst expectations for the fourth quarter. The US airline's decision to ground its 737 MAX 9 fleet came amid heightened scrutiny of Boeing's narrow-body airliner following a recent scare on an Alaska Airlines plane when a panel blew off in mid-flight, leaving a hole in the fuselage and forcing an emergency landing. While there were no fatalities or serious injuries in the Jan 5 incident, US



regulators grounded 171 jets from the 737 MAX 9 fleet with the same configuration as the plane involved in that drama. In estimates published Monday alongside its fourth quarter earnings, United said it expects an adjusted loss of between 35 and 85 cents per share in the first three

months of 2024, citing the likely financial impact of its decision to ground its fleet of Boeing 737 MAX 9's. In the final quarter of 2023, the US airline reported net income — or profits — of US\$600 million on operating revenues of US\$13.6 billion. This was down almost 29% on the same period a year ago. But on an annual basis, United reported net income of US\$2.6 billion last year on revenues of US\$53.7 billion, up sharply from annual profits of US\$737 million in 2022. The company's shares jumped almost 6% in after-hours trading after its earnings were published.

## Amazon's French unit fined €32mil for 'intrusive' surveillance

PARIS (Agencies): France's data protection agency said Tuesday it had fined Amazon's French warehouse management unit €32 million (US\$34.9 million) for an "excessively intrusive" surveillance system to monitor staff performance. Amazon France Logistique monitored the performance of employees through data from scanners used by the staff to process packages, according to the agency, known by its initials CNIL. Scanners recorded moments of inactivity exceeding 10 minutes or the handling of packages and parcels "right up to the second", the CNIL said in a statement. The other surveillance methods deemed unacceptable by CNIL



were the "stow machine gun" which noted if an article was scanned "too fast" or in less than 1.25 seconds. It said workers were under constant pressure and had to regularly justify absences. Even the time between the employees' entry into the warehouse and the start of work was monitored. It said they were not adequately informed about the surveillance and the data was kept for 31 days.

## UK industry fears disruption from new post-Brexit border checks



LONDON (Agencies): British businesses are warning of a new wave of post-Brexit trade disruption because EU exporters are not ready for UK customs changes which start this month, and Britain's port infrastructure might be unprepared too. Britain left the European Union's single market in January 2021 but it has repeatedly delayed imposing checks on EU imports. By

contrast, the EU immediately enforced its rules, leading to port delays in 2021 and prompting some British exporters — such as cheese-makers and high-end beef farmers — to give up on selling to the bloc, at least initially. Make UK, representing manufacturers, said in December that 90% of firms it surveyed still faced problems doing business with the EU with customs and clearance the biggest barrier. Marco Forgiione, director general of the Institute of Export & International Trade, representing UK importers, said large EU firms would probably cope with Britain's new rules but smaller ones — such as specialist food exporters — might struggle.

## US FDA seeks 'boxed warning' for CAR-T cancer therapies

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US health regulator said on Monday companies will be required to add a serious warning on the prescribing information for cancer therapies known as CAR-T, made by Gilead Sciences, Johnson & Johnson, Novartis and others. The other cancer therapies include Bristol Myers Squibb's Breyanzi and its partnered therapy, Abecma, with 2seventy bio, J&J unit Janssen and Legend Biotech's Carvykti, Novartis AG's Kymriah, and Gilead unit Kite's Tecartus and Yescarta. Novartis said it will update the prescribing information for its CAR-T cell therapy Kymriah to include instances of T-cell malignancies occurring after treatment



with Kymriah. The Swiss drugmaker said, to date, it has not identified a causal relationship between Kymriah and secondary T-cell malignancies and remains confident in the therapy's profile. Last November, the U.S Food and Drug Administration said it had received reports of patients developing a type of T-cell blood cancer after being treated with CAR-T therapies.

## US retailer Macy's rejects US\$5.8bil takeover offer



NEW YORK (Agencies): The US department store Macy's, which has had financial troubles for years, announced it has rejected a US\$5.8 billion takeover offer, citing reservations about its would-be investors' financing capacity. In a statement on Sunday, the company, which also owns the Bloomingdale's store chain, confirmed it had

received "an unsolicited, non-binding proposal from Arkhouse Management and Brigade Capital Management to acquire all of the outstanding shares of the company for US\$21 per share in cash on December 1, 2023." Speculation about the US\$5.8 billion deal has been swirling since the Wall Street Journal first reported on it in December. However, Macy's said the proposal "does not constitute a basis to enter into a non-disclosure agreement," with Arkhouse and Brigade. In a letter to the two firms cited in the statement, Macy's chairman Jeff Gennette said he had "serious reservations" about their ability to finance the deal.

## Accused of sexualising kids, H&M pulls school uniform ad

SYDNEY (Agencies): Swedish fast fashion giant H&M on Tuesday said it had pulled an advert for school clothing, which critics said sexualised young girls. The campaign was launched in Australia and featured two young girls in school uniform with the caption "Make those heads turn in H&M's Back to School fashion". Social media users pilloried the company for the ad, which has since been withdrawn. "We have removed this ad," a company spokesperson told AFP. "We are deeply sorry for the offence this has caused and we are looking into how we present campaigns



going forward." On the Mumsnet parenting website, user "pickledandpuzzled" asked how the advert had been approved in the first place. "It's been taken down, but why aren't these things spotted? What's the thought process that generates these ads?"

## China selloff leads to record US\$38 trillion gap with US stocks

BEIJING (Agencies): The value of China's stock market has never been this far behind that of the US, as the losses continue to pile up in a seemingly relentless equity rout. The market capitalisation of the US stock market is now US\$38 trillion greater than that of Hong Kong and China put together, a fresh record, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. "China offers value, but catalysts are just not there," said Michael Liang, chief investment officer

at Foundation Asset Management HK Ltd. "Meanwhile, the US market has momentum and economy on its side." The growing divergence comes as steep losses paint a troubling picture of global investor sentiment toward the world's No 2 economy. At the same time, US stocks have hit record highs, powered by a megacap technology rally amid optimism that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates this year and navigate a soft economic landing.

## Inter boss Inzaghi praises 'leader' Martinez after Italian Super Cup win

RIYADH (Agencies): Inter manager Simone Inzaghi lauded Lautaro Martinez as "a leader" after the club captain's injury-time winner sealed a dramatic EA SPORTS FC Supercup 1-0 triumph against Napoli at a sold-out Al-Awwal Park in Riyadh on Monday night. With the final heading to a penalty shootout after 90 minutes, Martinez struck a magical 21st goal of the season just as the stadium announcer said there would be five minutes of stoppage time. The Argentinian found space in the box to whip home Benjamin Pavard's cross from the right and



spark wild celebrations among the Inter personnel on the pitch, in the dugout and their fans in the stands. Martinez was so delighted that he peeled off his top and ran all the way to the Inter fans behind the goal at the other

end of the stadium. To the joy of the fans, his teammates quickly followed. Speaking at the post-final press conference, Inzaghi said: "He must continue like this, he has had an excellent six months. He helped his teammates — he is a leader and a captain. He's doing a great job, and he must continue to do so. "We have many fans here in Saudi and I am glad that they are happy tonight, moreover we have our fans from Milan here tonight and I think it was really nice of Martinez and the bench to go and celebrate the goal with them."

## Martinez fires Inter to Italian Super Cup glory

RIYADH (Agencies): Lautaro Martinez shot Inter Milan to a third straight Italian Super Cup after netting in the final moments of Monday's 1-0 win over furious Napoli in Riyadh. Argentinian striker Martinez swept home Benjamin Pavard's low cross in the first minute of stoppage time at Al-Awwal Park, seeing off Napoli who played the final half-hour with 10 men after Giovanni Simeone was sent off for two bookable offenses. The 26-year-old's winner was his 21st goal in all competitions this season for Inter, who lost their Serie A



lead to Juventus while in Saudi Arabia for the four-team tournament. And he whipped his shirt off in celebration after drawing level with Christian Vieri at ninth place in Inter's all-time goalscoring charts, with 123 strikes since arriving in 2018. "The emotion took over and I couldn't think," Martinez told

Mediaset. "It was a unique moment, I scored my 100th goal in the Italian Cup Final and my 123rd goal in the Super Cup, allowing me to match a legend like Christian Vieri." This year's edition was the first to be played in four-team format, but failed to capture the imagination of the Saudi public. Organizers were also embarrassed by a portion of the crowd, reportedly the locals and not traveling Italians, whistling the quickly-arranged minute's silence for deceased former Italy striker Gigi Riva before the start of the second half.

## PIF creates new Electric 360 partnership with Formula E, Extreme E and E1 powerboat racing

RIYADH (Agencies): The Public Investment Fund (PIF) has unveiled a multi-year partnership, Electric 360, with Formula E, Extreme E and E1 to support the growth of electric motorsports and their role in advancing the future of electric mobility. The new partnership will draw together initiatives that underscore the power of electric motor sports to drive technological innovation, and revolutionize sustainable transport and future mobility — while leading the way in carbon reduction. PIF also announced the launch of its new brand revamp, which captures PIF's



heritage and essence and embodies its commitment to progress and growth in driving transformation at a historical scale. The new identity will be used at all PIF partnership events, including E360 events, throughout 2024 and beyond. PIF is ranked by

Global SWF as one of the top sovereign wealth funds in the world and number 1 in the Middle East for sustainability among the top 100 sovereign wealth funds globally. The E360 collaboration is in line with PIF's broader sponsorship platform, bringing to life the brand's ambition with a focus on four pillars: inclusivity, sustainability, youth, and technology. The partnership announced today will also promote educational opportunities tied to the cutting-edge engineering of electric motor sports, as well as community, social programs and environmental stewardship.

## Runners from around world limber up for Riyadh Marathon

RIYADH (Agencies): Runners from around the world are making their final preparations for taking part in the third Riyadh Marathon. Hosted by the Saudi Sports for All Federation, the event will be held in the city on Feb. 10. And for fitness coach Jerry Diaz Valenzuela it will be his first full marathon this year. The 42-year-old from the Philippines will be dedicating the 42-km run to his mother, who suffered a stroke six years ago and will be celebrating her 80th birthday three days



before the race. Valenzuela, who has run two half-marathons, noted that remembering his mom's suffering spurred him on in the later stages of

a run. He said: "When I do a long run and I struggle, I'm feeling that this is a simple struggle for me. This struggle is a short time only. If you're thinking about other people who struggle for a whole day or a whole year, it's very different." He trained every day during December and is currently working out twice a day in preparation for the event. "I feel very confident with myself. I'm healthy, and that's where my motivation is coming from," Valenzuela added.

## McIlroy keeps his cool to claim record fourth Dubai Desert Classic title

DUBAI (Agencies): Rory McIlroy secured his place in the history books by winning a record fourth Hero Dubai Desert Classic title by one shot on Sunday at Emirates Golf Club. The Rolex Series Event once again attracted thousands of fans on the fourth and final day, as McIlroy held his nerve to finish 14-under and successfully defend his Dallah trophy, ahead of Adrian Meronk. He is the second golfer to retain the title after Stephen Gallacher, and adds to his 2009, 2015 and 2023 triumphs. McIlroy was presented the



Dallah trophy by Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, chairman of both the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and Dubai Airports, and CEO of Emirates

Airline & Group. McIlroy went into the final day two shots off the lead and made three birdies in his first nine. The world No. 2 suffered a minor blip with a bogey on the 13th hole but made par for the last nine to shoot 70 for the title. "It's really cool to win. It was a really tricky day and it was hard to get it close and make a ton of birdies," the Northern Irishman said. "The pivotal point for me came on the eighth and ninth hole. Making two threes there set me up to try to control it on the way in.

## \$4m up for grabs at Dubai International Arabian Horse Championship 2024

DUBAI (Agencies): The Dubai International Arabian Horse Championship will have a total prize purse of \$4 million in 2024. The event's organizing committee also announced on Sunday that the 21st edition will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre from March 22 to 24. The Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre will host the championship's events in Zabeel Halls four, five and six and will be free of charge. The show's 10 judges, and two reserve judges, were selected



by a raffle draw from a pool of 18 experienced officials. All the invitees have participated in judging panels at pre-

vious editions of the event. The judges are Gianmarco Argano and Cristian Moschini from Italy, Nikolaus Jung and Claudia Darius from Germany, Eric Gear from France, Christine Jamar from Belgium, Renata Schibler from Switzerland, Ali Mohamed Al-Sharawi from Egypt, Eliys Ebrahim Faraj from Bahrain, and Joe Polo from the US. The reserve judges are Marianne Tengstedt from Denmark, and Urs Aeschbacher from Switzerland. Registration for horse owners will open later this month.

## Dushmantha Chameera's heroics not enough to save Dubai Capitals from ILT20 defeat to Sharjah Warriors

DUBAI (Agencies): The Dubai Capitals' bowler Dushmantha Chameera picked up four wickets in the DP World ILT20 clash against the Sharjah Warriors, but it was not enough to counter the batting prowess of Johnson Charles, who helped his team chase down the target of 170 in a closely fought encounter at Dubai International Stadium on Monday. Speaking after the match, the Sri



Lankan bowler said: "Johnson Charles is an attacking player. We made the mis-

take of bowling length balls, which he put away to the boundary. There was a little bit of dew on the pitch after the 10th over and that definitely hurt us." This did not stop Chameera from shining with the ball, also taking the wicket of Charles, who scored 93 off 51. Despite the loss, the Dubai Capitals' bowler was optimistic about other aspects of his team's performance.

## Egypt held to Cape Verde draw without Salah but through to AFCON last 16

ABIDJAN (Agencies): The injured Mohamed Salah watched from the stands as Egypt played out a crazy 2-2 draw with Cape Verde at the Africa Cup of Nations on Monday, a third consecutive stalemate that was enough to clinch a spot in the last 16. Cape Verde had already secured first place in Group B and were on course to make it three wins from as many games when Gilson Tavares Benchimol put them ahead just before half-time at Abidjan's Felix Houphouet Boigny Stadium. But substitute Mahmoud Trezeguet equalized five minutes after the restart and Mo-



stafa Mohamed lobbed in a brilliant stoppage-time goal for Egypt which was confirmed after a VAR check ruled out a handball. It was not the winner, with Bryan Teixeira scoring Cape Verde's second goal nine minutes into added time.

## Coco survives Kostyuk test to reach Australian Open semis



MELBOURNE (Agencies): US Open champion Coco Gauff came through a huge test at the hands of Ukrainian world No 37 Marta Kostyuk 7-6(6), 6-7(3), 6-2 to reach the semifinals of the Australian Open for the first time on Tuesday. The fourth-seeded American will rarely play as badly and still progress but prevailed after more than three hours on a blistering hot Rod Laver Arena to fulfil her coach Brad Gilbert's famous maxim by "Winning Ugly". Gauff, playing her final Grand Slam as a teenager, had swept into the last eight on a nine-match winning streak as she looked to back up

her first major success in New York last year. Kostyuk got right in the American's face from the off, however, and stormed to a 5-1 lead, serving twice for the opening set as well holding a set point on Gauff's serve. The 19-year-old American knew she was up against it and, problem-solving on her feet, battled her way back into the contest by rattling off five successive games to serve for the set herself. Kostyuk had been looking increasingly frequently at her coach as her confidence waned but she earned three break points off Gauff's forehand and forced the tiebreak when the American double-faulted. The Ukrainian was revived by treatment on blisters on her feet before the tiebreak but blew her second set point, allowing Gauff to come racing into the net to go a set up. The players traded breaks throughout a second set featuring some lengthy rallies but it was Gauff who was able to edge ahead and serve for the match at 5-3.

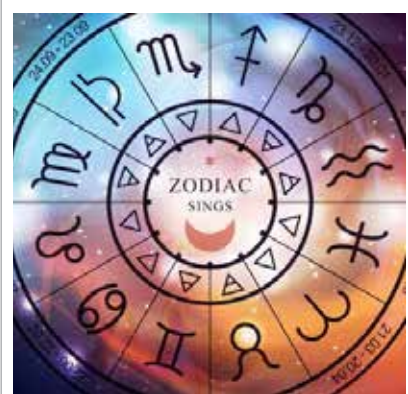
## Morata header gives Atletico Madrid win at Granada

GRANADA (Agencies): Atletico Madrid's Alvaro Morata netted a second-half header to secure a 1-0 win at lowly Granada despite his side's uninspiring performance on Monday, moving them up to fourth place in LaLiga. Diego Simeone's side climbed to 41 points and are now three behind third-placed Barcelona on 44 points after 20 games. Leaders Girona are top with 52 points, one ahead of second-placed Real Madrid, but the surprise package of the season have played one more game than all of their main rivals. After a low key first half Atletico were more aggressive after the interval



against LaLiga's second-bottom side and broke the deadlock in the 55th minute when Antoine Griezmann lifted a cross for Morata to head past goalkeeper Augusto Batalla. The referee ruled out the effort for offside but a VAR check showed Morata was marginally onside and the goal was given.

## DAILY HOROSCOPE: JANUARY 24, 2023



– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.  
 – **ARIES:** You're in the middle of something big and sweet. It might feel like you're in an action flick! Your great energy helps you swing from scene to scene with flair, so have fun with it all!  
 – **TAURUS:** Nobody has infinite patience, though you sometimes feel like people expect it of you. Today, you need to do your best to stay open to people's weirdness and moods, but it won't last forever.  
 – **GEMINI:** Nothing too serious is going on right now. In fact, you might decide to put off some important business for later when you know you will be able to give it the attention it really deserves.  
 – **CANCER:** You may outrage some friends or strangers today with your wild ways or your big ideas, but don't hold back. It's a great time for you to show the world that it needs your help in a big way.  
 – **LEO:** You experience a burst of great energy that should help you achieve almost anything close to your heart. A new love, a big win in

business, or even a quiet reconciliation is possible.  
 – **VIRGO:** You're generally quite organized, so much so that you may be the butt of jokes. But today, you feel a step out of sync with your life, and it may get quite frustrating before you settle back into it.  
 – **LIBRA:** People are all turning your way looking for answers to their burning questions. It may be a good time for you to reflect on your deeper values so you can articulate them clearly when the time comes.  
 – **SCORPIO:** You may stumble a bit at work today or have second thoughts about a career choice. You shouldn't panic, because the worst thing that could come of it is a more satisfying life.  
 – **SAGITTARIUS:** It's a good time to bet on yourself. You're in the right place at the right time and ought to be able to get pretty far today. If it feels like a risk, you are almost certainly heading in the right direction.  
 – **CAPRICORN:** You're not sure that things are supposed to be going the way they're going. You're pretty sure that you're not supposed to be the center of attention. Redirect it to someone more appropriate.  
 – **ACQUARIUS:** Creative power is making life much more interesting now, so make the most of it! You should be able to work on some new project or get support for something you've always wanted to do.  
 – **PISCES:** Life is a little overwhelming today, but not so much that you can't get stuff done. Try to blow off anyone or anything that's too much trouble, but expect a bit more stress than usual.

## Germany told to prepare for another war with Russia

BERLIN (Agencies): Germany should be ready to respond to a possible Russian attack, Defense Minister Boris Pistorius has warned. He said that to prepare for such a scenario, Germany and its NATO allies must commit to strengthening their military capabilities. In an interview with German public broadcaster ZDF on Monday, the defense chief pointed out that while Germany is not currently under a direct threat of attack, the country should do its best to be prepared for it. If Germany wants to be ready for an attack "that you don't know if and when it will occur, then that means you have to arm yourself - and that's what we're currently doing together with allies in NATO," he explained. Pistorius went on to say that "deterrence is the only effective

means of positioning oneself against an aggressor from the outset" as it signals to a potential adversary that the target is capable of striking back. To achieve such a posture, however, Germany must have "a credible deterrent" and be able to "wage a war that is forced upon us," he noted. Commenting on a potential scenario in which Russia attacked the Baltics, Pistorius remarked that Berlin was setting up its "Lithuania Brigade" specifically to address those concerns. The unit, composed of about 4,800 soldiers is expected to be ready by 2027 and will be the first German force to be permanently stationed abroad since World War II. Pistorius suggested that amid the Ukraine conflict it would take Russia at least several years to be ready for a full-

scale offensive, and that Western countries should use the time to intensively arm themselves. The German tabloid Bild reported earlier this month, citing a classified document, that Germany is preparing for a scenario in which Russia launches an "open attack" on NATO in mid-2025, following major victories in Ukraine. Moscow mocked the prediction as a "zodiac forecast." Russian President Vladimir Putin has dismissed claims that Russia could attack NATO as "complete nonsense," arguing that Moscow has "no geopolitical, economic... or military interest" in doing so. Still, the Kremlin has for decades voiced concerns about the US-led military bloc's expansion towards Russian borders, viewing it as an existential threat.

## India tracking Chinese research vessel heading for Maldives

New Delhi (Agencies): New Delhi is tracking a Chinese research vessel that has entered the Indian Ocean region and is heading for the Maldives to reportedly run a survey operation, Indian media reported on Monday, citing Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) observers and maritime tracking portals. The vessel - Xiang Yang Hong 03 - was expected to dock in Sri Lanka but changed course after Colombo announced a year-long moratorium on foreign research vessels in December last year amid repeated requests from India and the US. A report in the Economic Times describing the Chinese ship as a "spy vessel" said India is tracking



its activities, including any attempts to gather data on resources in the region. The ship is expected to reach the Maldives next week, according to reports. Sources in the Indian military told the News18 network that the Navy is aware of the vessel's presence and has been monitoring its movement.

## Tesla sales 'booming' in Ukraine - Le Figaro



KYIV (Agencies): Ukraine is experiencing a "surprising boom" in electric vehicles that has seen purchases surge almost tenfold compared to pre-conflict levels, Le Figaro reported on Monday. Tesla vehicles are particularly popular among Ukrainians, the data shows. At the end of 2021, only 8,541 electric cars were registered in the country, whereas by January 2023 this figure had skyrocketed to 46,830, the outlet said, citing industry data. Despite the ongoing military operations, this "frantic" growth continued last year, as by November the number of EVs had nearly doubled, reaching 83,116, the outlet noted. "For the first time, we have experienced a significant increase in demand for loans for electric cars, amid a shortage in fuel supplies and rising fuel prices," Anton Tiutun, the deputy CEO at Ukraine's state-run Oschadbank, said.

## Lithuania, Poland Planning to Conduct Exercises in Suwalki Gap in April

MOSCOW (Agencies): Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda said on Monday that Lithuania and Poland plan to hold military drills in the Suwalki Gap in April. "I am very glad that the President of Poland quickly responded to the desire to conduct general exercises on this piece of land called the Suwalki Gap. We are already discussing a specific date, perhaps it will be April. But let's not forget that the Suwalki Gap is also an integral part of NATO's strategic plans, and it is certainly not the case that we are the only ones here talking about the Suwalki Gap and its protection," Nausėda was quoted as saying by the Delfi news agency. The 100-kilometer (62-mile) long Suwalki Gap is a narrow stretch of Polish and Lithuanian territory that separates Belarus from the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad. Lithuania and other Western countries regularly speak of some kind of threat in connection with the Suwalki Gap, noting that in the event of its hypothetical closure, the Baltic republic would find itself completely isolated from its NATO partners.

## Tunisia bans lawyer representing Palestine at the ICJ

MOSCOW (Agencies): Tunisian authorities prevented lawyer and former head of the Anti-Corruption Authority, Chawki Tabib, from leaving the country as he was heading to The Hague to represent Palestine in the genocide case filed against the Israeli occupation. Local media reported that Tabib, who is representing Palestine against the occupying state before the ICJ in The Hague, was prevented, by a judicial decision, from leaving Tunis-Carthage Airport and heading to Kuwait to attend a coordination meeting related to the case against Israel. Last month, Chawki Tabib announced that he had filed a lawsuit with the Prosecutor at the ICJ in The Hague against the Israeli occupation, after being commissioned by the Palestinian Bar Association.

## US and UK announce new strikes on Houthis

WASHINGTON (Agencies): American bombers struck Houthi installations in Yemen again on Monday, the US Central Command (CENTCOM) has said. It is the second time British bombers have taken part in the operation, now known as 'Poseidon Archer'. Royal Air Force (RAF) jets based in Cyprus had been involved in the January 11 attack, while the US used cruise missiles and aircraft from the USS Eisenhower. Since then, the US has carried out six more strikes on its own, reportedly targeting Houthi missiles as they prepared to launch. US and UK forces "conducted strikes on 8 Houthi targets" in Yemen just before midnight on Mon-

day, CENTCOM said on X (formerly Twitter). "The targets included missile systems and launchers, air defense systems, radars, and deeply buried weapons storage facilities." According to CENTCOM, the strikes were carried out "alongside UK Armed Forces, and with the support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, and the Netherlands." Although the countries named have all pledged to take part in the US-led Operation Prosperity Guardian, aimed at ensuring the safety of international shipping, the US military insisted that the strikes were "separate and distinct from the multinational freedom of navigation" operation.

## China develops hypersonic 'smart shell' - media

BEIJING (Agencies): Chinese naval scientists claim to have created a so-called 'smart shell' that is capable of delivering a precision strike to a target at hypersonic speeds, the South China Morning Post (SCMP) reported. The shell, which Beijing says can travel at Mach-7 speed, or seven times the speed of sound, is capable of changing its flight plan with the use of satellite navigation systems, the outlet said on Monday. The state-of-the-art weapons delivery system can also deliver a warhead to a target with a margin of error of less than 15 meters, it added. Its precision-strike capabilities may make it insufficient to attack smaller

mobile objects like tanks, but it would theoretically be ideal for larger, static targets such as warships, or ports. The development of the military technology, the SCMP said, builds on the US Navy's proposed development of the 'dream shell' - a similar weapons system that was theoretically intended to navigate at a speed of Mach 5 and be guided by GPS satellite signals. The US military first proposed the concept in 2012, indicating its intention to test-fire the 'dream shell' within five years, the SCMP said, but that deadline passed in 2017. By 2021, the US military had abandoned research and development of the weapons system, the report adds.

## Egypt rejects Ethiopia-Somaliland port deal

CAIRO (Agencies): Egyptian President Abdel Fatah el-Sisi has declared support for Somalia in the Horn of Africa nation's dispute with landlocked neighbor Ethiopia. Tensions have escalated since the start of the year, when Addis Ababa struck a deal with breakaway Somaliland to gain access to the Red Sea and build a marine force base. During a joint press conference with Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mahmoud in Cairo on Sunday, Sisi suggested that Ethiopia should use ports in Somalia and Djibouti for its maritime trade, rather than attempting to "control" another country's territory. "We will not allow anyone to threaten Somalia or infringe

upon its territory. No one should attempt to threaten Egypt's brothers, especially if our brothers asked us to stand with them," Sisi told reporters. Under the January 1 agreement, Somaliland - which declared independence from Somalia in 1991 but has not been internationally recognized as an independent state - offered to rent 20km (12 miles) of coastland around the port of Berbera on the Gulf of Aden to Ethiopia for 50 years. This would allow the landlocked country, which has relied on Djibouti's port for the majority of its maritime trade for more than three decades, to gain access to the sea while also constructing a military base.

## World's oldest and biggest iceberg 'battered' by waves as it heads north



PARIS (Agencies): It was impossible to see through the snow and fog on the Antarctic seas but expedition leader Ian Strachan knew his ship was approaching a true behemoth: the world's biggest iceberg lay somewhere ahead. "Then the clouds lifted and we could see this expansive - almost abstract - white line that extended each way across the horizon," he told AFP. As the ship got closer during its visit on Sunday, huge gaping crevasses and beautiful blue arches sculpted into the edge of the iceberg came into focus. Waves up to four meters (13 feet) high "smashed" and "battered" its wall, breaking off small chunks and collapsing some arches, Strachan said.

He compared sailing along the endless jagged edge to looking at sheet music. "All the cracks and arches were different notes as the song played." The tooth-shaped iceberg named A23a is nearly 4,000 square kilometers (1,550 square miles) across, making it more than twice the size of Greater London. After three decades stuck to the Antarctic ocean floor, the iceberg is now heading north on what could be its final journey. It contains an estimated one trillion tons of fresh water that is likely to melt off into the ocean along way. The iceberg, which is up to 400 meters thick in places, is currently drifting between Elephant Island and the South Orkney islands.

## Africa needs permanent seat on Security Council - UN chief

NEW YORK (Agencies): The fact that Africa lacks a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is an injustice, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday. The UN chief insisted that the present structure of the UNSC is paralyzed by geopolitical divisions and does not reflect the reality of today's world. The Security Council has 15 members, five of which are permanent - Russia, China, the US, UK, and France - and which have the right to veto any resolution. Guterres made the remarks during an engagement with reporters after addressing the Third South Summit of a group of developing countries known as the G77 plus China in Uganda's capital, Kampala. He said that while most African countries were not independent



when UN institutions were established, the fact that the continent does not have a single permanent member of the Security Council constitutes a "flagrant injustice." According to Guterres, all five permanent members of the council have been "favorable" to the demand for Africa to have proper representation in the body.

## Nearly 5,000 Brits froze to death last year due to heating costs - study



LONDON (Agencies): Nearly 5,000 people died in the UK last winter due to living in cold and damp homes as they could not afford the rising energy costs, the latest report from the End Fuel Poverty Coalition has claimed. The surge in excess deaths underscores the need to upgrade the UK's housing stock and implement measures to bring down energy bills, the coalition has warned. The End Fuel Poverty Coalition includes Greenpeace, WWF, Green Alliance, Save the Children, and Age UK, among others. Meanwhile, a study by the Warm This Winter campaign noted that excess winter deaths climb when the temperature in the UK drops below four degrees Celsius. According to Simon Francis, coordinator of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition, as many as 8.3 million adults in the UK are living in poorly insulated, cold, damp homes and, as temperatures drop, conditions go from being uncomfortable to "downright dangerous."

## Russia Completes Tests of New Anti-Drone Missiles - Source



MOSCOW (Agencies): Anti-drone technology is a rapidly evolving field aimed at countering the growing threat posed by unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These systems utilize various methods such as radio frequency jamming, signal interference, and physical destruction to neutralize drones in the air. Russia is finalizing tests of anti-drone mini-missiles that will soon be put into service with anti-aircraft missile systems (SAMS) in the special operation zone in Ukraine, an informed source told Sputnik. "Enterprises of the defense industrial complex in cooperation with the military are completing tests of anti-drone mini-missiles. It is expected that in the near future they will be put into service with anti-aircraft missile systems, carrying out combat duty in the zone of the special military operation," the source said. The new missiles, the source noted, have a standard layout for the Pantsir complex - upper stage plus trailing stage, but with significantly reduced dimensions both in terms of diameter and length. As a result, a Pantsir-SM combat vehicle can be equipped with 48 anti-drone missiles instead of 12 standard missiles.

## Houthi Attack US Military Cargo Ship in Gulf of Aden



SANAA (Agencies): Yemen's Ansar Allah movement, also known as the Houthis, attacked a US military cargo ship in the Gulf of Aden on Monday, Houthi military spokesman Yahya Saree said. "The naval forces of the Yemeni Armed Forces carried out a military operation targeting an American military cargo ship (OCEAN JAZZ) in the Gulf of Aden, using an appropriate naval missile," Saree wrote on X (former Twitter). Back in November, 2023, the Houthis vowed to attack any Israel-linked ships until Tel Aviv halts the invasion of the Gaza strip. In January, the US and the UK began airstrikes on Houthi positions in Yemen to degrade their fighting capabilities. Russia condemned both the Houthi actions in the Red Sea and the Western aggression against Yemen, characterizing the latter as "another example of the Anglo-Saxons' distortion of UN Security Council resolutions and complete disregard for international law".

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