



## Former Premier Imran Khan and Ex-Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Sentenced to 10 Years in Cipher Case

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In a recent development, a special court, established under the Official Secrets Act, sentenced former premier Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to 10 years in prison in the cipher case. The case revolves around a diplomatic document that, according to the Federal Investigation Agency's charge sheet, Imran never returned. The PTI has consistently claimed that the document contained a threat from the United States to remove Imran from his position as prime minister. The verdict was delivered just nine days before the general elections scheduled for February 8, which the PTI is contesting amidst a state crackdown and without an electoral symbol. Both Imran and Qureshi have been incarcerated in the lead-up to the elections. While Imran's candidacy was rejected, Qureshi was approved to run for a National Assembly seat from Thar. However, today's conviction disqualifies both of them from contesting elections for the next five years. This marks Imran's second conviction, as he was previously convicted in the Toshakhana case and sentenced to three years' imprisonment. Although the Islamabad High Court initially suspended his sentence, a division bench later dismissed Imran's petition seeking the suspension of the conviction. This is Qureshi's first conviction. Special Court Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqarnain announced the verdict. At



the beginning of the hearing, Imran and Qureshi were given a questionnaire under Section 342 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. After Imran recorded his statement, the court inquired about the location of the cipher, to which he responded that he did not know and that the cipher had been in his office. Following the announcement of the verdict, the judge exited the courtroom, prompting Qureshi to protest that his statement had not been recorded. The PTI has denied the trial as a sham and plans to challenge the verdict in the Islamabad High Court. In a statement, a PTI official declared that Pakistan stands with Imran and Qureshi, who defended Pakistan and stood for true freedom. The statement urged the public to vote on February 8 and expressed confidence that the sentence

would be overturned on appeal. The Cipher case is one of more than 150 pending against Khan, a former cricketer turned Islamist politician. Other charges range from contempt of court to terrorism and inciting violence. Khan is alleged to have waved a confidential document during a rally after he was toppled as premier, claiming that it was proof he was being threatened and that his ousting was a US conspiracy, allegedly executed by the military and the government in Pakistan. Washington and Pakistani officials have denied the claim. The document he waved, nicknamed Cipher, has not been made public by either the government or Khan's lawyers but was diplomatic correspondence between the Pakistani ambassador to Washington and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Islamabad.

## US to provide Ukraine with new long-range munition

WASHINGTON (Agencies): The US military is planning to provide Ukraine with its first shipment of a new, longer-range munition recently developed by Boeing, according to Reuters and Politico. The bombs can achieve a maximum range of 90 miles (145km), and will be "a significant capability for Ukraine," one of the officials said. Developed jointly by Boeing and Saab, the ground-launched variant of the new bombs has not yet reached the US arsenal, which currently contains an air-fired version only. The weapon is said to have twice the range compared to the US-supplied High Mobility Artillery

Rocket System (HIMARS) already used by Ukrainian troops. Testing for the weapon was only recently concluded, and it has yet to reach Washington's own inventories. The US military declined to confirm the exact date of the shipment, though Pentagon spokesman Major General Pat Ryder said the bomb would be provided at some point under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI). He added that Washington would "defer to Ukraine" as to the details of the delivery. The weapon could reach Ukraine as soon as Wednesday, and would be brought to the country by air transport.

## New Delhi to hold social media companies accountable for deepfakes

NEW DELHI (Agencies): New Delhi is taking a proactive stance against AI-generated deepfakes and will hold social media companies accountable for any such content on their platforms, according to Rajeev Chandrasekhar, minister of state for electronics and IT. The Indian government is deeply concerned about the impact of "cross-border actors" spreading disinformation through deepfakes ahead of the general election scheduled for April or May in the world's most populous nation. The government issued an advisory in December mandating that digital and social media platforms communicate content prohibited under IT rules "clearly and precisely" to users. New Delhi has also warned that platforms could lose 'safe harbor immunity' and be liable to criminal and judicial proceedings if they fail to implement the prescribed measures. "Our approach to deepfakes after the prime



minister drew attention to it is to tell the intermediaries, to draw their attention to the fact that the law of the land prohibits any user on their platform from hosting misinformation, including deepfakes," Chandrasekhar told the Financial Times. New Delhi is creating a form of tech regulation that is "in between" the US and Europe. "The US leaves it completely to markets; Europe does it completely citizen-oriented; and we are basically saying 'We love innovation, we will encourage innovation, but we want to protect our small businesses and users,'" he added.

## Palestine charity takes Biden to court for 'complicity in genocide'



The Biden Administration was put on the dock on Friday as rights groups accused it of "complicity" in Israel's genocidal bombing of Gaza. Defence for Children International - Palestine (DCIP) claims US President Joe Biden, Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin have backed Israel's ongoing bombing campaign in Gaza in which more than 27,000 Palestinians have been killed, the vast majority children and women. The plaintiffs are demanding the federal court declare that the US has failed to prevent genocide and is aiding and abetting genocide and to end American military and diplomatic support for Israel's genocidal campaign in Gaza. The hearing, which lasted more than four hours and which was held in Oakland, California, included testimonies from a doctor working in Gaza, four Palestinian-Americans who have lost family members in the relentless bombing campaign, as well as a DCIP official and an expert on the Holocaust. The Palestinians outlined how their lives have changed since 7 October, when Israel began bombing Gaza. The hearing, which lasted more than four hours and which was held in Oakland, California, included testimonies from a doctor working in Gaza, four Palestinian-Americans who have lost family members in the relentless bombing campaign, as well as a DCIP official and an expert on the Holocaust. The Palestinians outlined how their lives have changed since 7 October, when Israel began bombing Gaza.

## Israel 'hit squad' kills three in West Bank hospital operation

WEST BANK (Agencies): In a covert operation, Israeli forces, disguised as civilians and medical staff, neutralized three Palestinians at the Ibn Sina Hospital in the city of Jenin, located in the occupied West Bank. The operation was carried out by undercover agents while the men were asleep in the hospital, as reported by both the Palestinian Ministry of Health and the Israeli army on Tuesday. The Ministry of Health in Ramallah stated, "This morning, three young men were neutralized by the Israeli forces who stormed the Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin." The Israeli army confirmed that their troops had neutralized the men, who were hiding in the hospital and were identified as members of a Hamas terrorist cell. Online security camera footage showed approximately a dozen undercover personnel, including three dressed in women's clothing and two as medical staff, moving through a hospital corridor armed with assault rifles. The Israeli military



identified one of the neutralized men as 27-year-old Mohammad Jalamneh, who they alleged was planning an imminent attack and had been distributing weapons and ammunition to other members. The other two men, brothers Basil and Mohammad Ghazawi, were also hiding in the hospital and were implicated in attacks, according to the military. The army statement added, "A firearm was discovered on a wanted individual and was seized by the forces." Hamas confirmed that Jalamneh was a member of their organization.

## Saudi, Egypt, Jordan and PA intelligence officials secretly met to discuss Gaza's future

Intelligence officials from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority (PA) secretly met this month to discuss the future of the Gaza Strip's governance following the end of Israel's ongoing bombardment and invasion of the besieged territory, a report has revealed. According to The Jerusalem Post, which cited several anonymous sources, Saudi Arabian National Security Adviser, Musad Al-Aiban, organised a meeting in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, around a week ago which was attended by Palestinian General Intelligence chief, Majed Faraj, Egyptian intelligence chief, Abbas Kamel, and Jordanian intelligence chief, Ahmed Hosni. The officials reportedly discussed the future of Gaza after Israel's war on it and Palestinian Resistance group, Hamas, ends, particularly regarding ways in which a

"renewed Palestinian Authority" can take part in the management of the Strip. Two sources familiar with the contents of the meeting were cited as revealing that the Saudis, Egyptians and Jordanians urged the Palestinian intelligence chief, Faraj, that the PA must carry out reforms in order to pave the way for a renewal in its leadership ranks. That renewal would apparently include the transfer of certain powers from PA President, Mahmoud Abbas, to a newly-appointed prime minister. During the meeting, the Saudis also reportedly emphasised their interest in continuing normalisation talks with Israel, while reiterating that such a deal would be conditional upon practical and irreversible steps by Tel Aviv and the international community to ensure the establishment of an independent Palestinian State.

## China, Thailand sign mutual visa exemption agreement; to come into effect on March 1

BEIJING (Agencies): China and Thailand sign mutual visa exemption agreement that will come into effect on March 1, 2024. The agreement is expected to enhance tourism, foster trade, and facilitate exchanges between the two countries. The number of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand is expected to increase significantly, and Thai friends are warmly welcomed to visit China and experience the vitality of China and the warmth and friendliness of the Chinese people. Chinese nationals holding passports for public affairs or ordinary passports, and Thai nationals holding ordinary passports are allowed to enter each other's countries without a visa for a single stay of up to 30 days, accord-

ing to the agreement. During a media briefing after attending the signing ceremony in Bangkok with his Thai counterpart Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the agreement would not only benefit tourism in Thailand and Chinese tourists but also enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples. Wang praised the vast potential of China-Thailand cooperation, vowed to import more agricultural products from Thailand and support more Chinese companies to invest in Thailand, especially in electronic vehicles, digital economy and green development cooperation. The Chinese foreign minister also vowed to enhance law enforcement cooperation to crackdown telecom fraud and other cross-border crimes.

## China, Thailand sign mutual visa exemption agreement; to come into effect on March 1

BEIJING (Agencies): China and Thailand sign mutual visa exemption agreement that will come into effect on March 1, 2024. The agreement is expected to enhance tourism, foster trade, and facilitate exchanges between the two countries. The number of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand is expected to increase significantly, and Thai friends are warmly welcomed to visit China and experience the vitality of China and the warmth and friendliness of the Chinese people. Chinese nationals holding passports for public affairs or ordinary passports, and Thai nationals holding ordinary passports are allowed to enter each other's countries without a visa for a single stay of up to 30 days, accord-

ing to the agreement. During a media briefing after attending the signing ceremony in Bangkok with his Thai counterpart Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that the agreement would not only benefit tourism in Thailand and Chinese tourists but also enhance mutual understanding between the two peoples. Wang praised the vast potential of China-Thailand cooperation, vowed to import more agricultural products from Thailand and support more Chinese companies to invest in Thailand, especially in electronic vehicles, digital economy and green development cooperation. The Chinese foreign minister also vowed to enhance law enforcement cooperation to crackdown telecom fraud and other cross-border crimes.

**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.





## Caretaker PM underlines need for effective criminal justice system

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that under the constitution, only parliament was mandated to legislate and stressed further reforms in the criminal justice system. Expressing his views on a private TV (Aik) news morning show, he opined that the conviction rate under the contemporary criminal justice system was very low, reflecting deficiencies and efforts to be made to plug the

loopholes through effective legislation. To a question about terrorist groups in Balochistan province, the prime minister said that non-state actors had no right to unleash violence and the State had the responsibility to counter such terrorist acts. About 90,000 people in the country had lost their lives in waves of terrorism, he said, adding whether it was not the onus of political parties and the parliamentarians to improve upon the

criminal justice system to expedite the conviction rate! The prime minister maintained that he was speaking about the whole justice system, especially its lower tiers. "Whose responsibility was to improve it? Carrying out legislative business under the constitution is the onus of parliament," he reiterated. Elaborating his viewpoint, he said that Baloch, Pashtuns and different settlers had been living in Balochistan for decades.

## APHC-AJK condemns India's brutal policies in IIOJK, urges UN intervention

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter has unequivocally rejected the Hindutva BJP regime's brutal policies in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and called for the UN intervention to prevent worsening human rights situation in the territory. According to Kashmir Media Service, in a joint statement issued in Islamabad, APHC-AJK Convenor Mehmood Ahmed Saghar and General Secretary Shaikh Abdul Mateen stressed the urgent need to settle the longstanding Kashmir dispute in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The leaders deplored India's alleged intensification of atrocities,

harassment, house raids, cordon and search operations and arbitrary arrests in the occupied territory. They urged India to abandon its oppressive policies and instead work towards a resolution recognizing the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. Despite the detentions of Hurriyat leadership and thousands of Kashmiri youth, the APHC-AJK leaders expressed confidence that the sacrifices made by Kashmiri martyrs would not be in vain. They called on the United Nations to take notice of the alleged atrocities committed by Indian troops, emphasizing that the implementation of UN resolutions remains the only viable solution to the Kashmir dispute.

## Commissioner for timely completion of Digital Girdawri process

SARGODHA (APP): Commissioner Sargodha division Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti on Tuesday directed all the Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners (ACs) of Sargodha district to accelerate work to complete the task of digital Girdawari within stipulated time frame. Presiding over a meeting here, he reviewed the performance of all the DCs, ACs on digital Girdawari and operations against profiteering. The Commissioner said that digital Girdawari started in 1657 mouzas all tehils of the division. It includes 193 mouzas of Sargodha, eight mouzas of Khushaaba, nine mouzas in Mianwali and 10 Mouzas in Bhakkar. He

directed the ACs to personally visit all the areas in the field to review the process of digital Girdawari. He instructed the DCs and ACs to start work of digital Girdawari in all such areas as soon as possible where the process could not be started keeping in view the legal requirements. Muhammad Ajmal Bhatti said that strict measures were being taken against profiteers and 270 profiteers were arrested in the division during January 13 to 29 while 13 FIRs were also lodged besides imposing fines amounting to over Rs 1.4 million on rules violators. He said that the ACs should continue their raids to control the prices of food items.

## Citizens to get civic facilities at Fatima Jinnah Park: ICT Spokesman

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Tuesday initiated the provision of convenient basic services to simplify the tedious process of vehicle registration and acquiring essential documents. The citizens hailing from nearby areas of Fatima Jinnah Park Bolan Gate F-9 can get civic facilities through a dedicated van from 03:00 to 05:00 pm today, offering a hassle-free experience for residents seeking to register, transfer, or pay token tax for their vehicles, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said. On the directive of DC, the excise staff will be stationed at the park's parking lot, streamlining the procedures related to vehicles. This initiative aligned

with the commitment to make essential services more accessible to the public. He said that adding to the convenience, the 'Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle' will also be available on-site. This doorstep service encompasses a variety of essential documents, making it a one-stop solution for residents, including domicile certificates and birth certificates to power of attorney and international driving permits, the ICT Doorstep Service aimed to cater for the diverse needs efficiently, he added. He further said that whether you need a fuel permit for domestic or commercial use, or looking to register your motor vehicle seamlessly, the on-ground service will ensure a swift and straightforward process.

## DC orders fuel price inspection drive in capital

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): In response to Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon's directives, the Assistant Commissioner City conducted a thorough inspection of key areas, focusing on G-6, G-7, Blue Area, F-7, F-6, areas aimed at ensuring compliance with OGRA's fixed fuel rates. Excitingly, the Assistant Commissioner made impactful moves during the operation. Moreover during the operation one pump owner and four individuals found guilty of overcharging faced immediate arrest. Additionally, two

people were apprehended for using faulty measuring instruments, adding another layer to the crackdown. Dr. Abdullah Tabasum, the ICT spokesman on Tuesday confirmed the swift action, highlighting the importance of adhering to regulated prices. As a stern warning, the authorities addressed concerns about poor sanitation, signaling a comprehensive approach to uphold standards in the city. This proactive initiative underscores the commitment to fair practices and consumer protection.

## Death anniversary of renowned film actress Neelu Begum observed

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Renowned actress of the film industry Neelu Begum was remembered on her third anniversary on Tuesday. Neelu Begum started her professional career in 1956 and gained popularity from the song "Aaye Mosam Rangeley Sohaney" from the super hit film 'Saat Laakh'. She received Nigar Award for her outstanding performance in the super hit film Zarqa. Neelu Begum was awarded



Sitara-i-Imtiaz in 2022. She died in Lahore on January 30, 2021.

## Police goes under training for general elections duties

BATTAGRAM (Agencies): In a bid to ensure foolproof security and conduct of peaceful general elections 2024 Battagram police Tuesday conducted a training for police officials who have been deputed for elections duty. Battagram police spokesperson revealed that intensive training sessions have commenced to foster a conducive environment for democratic processes following the directives of Inspector General of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Hayat Khan, and the Regional Police Officer Hazara, Muhammad Ajaz Khan. The training session was conducted under the supervision of District Police Officer (DPO) Battagram while the DSP Headquarters, Sajid Nawaz Khan, and DSP Circle, Ali Manir Khan, ensured the effectiveness of the training program.

## DC for strict implementation of code of conduct during polling

ATTOCK (APP): On the recommendation of police and other law enforcement agencies, the district administration in consultation with the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorised as many as 47 polling stations, out of 1017 to be set up in Attock district for the upcoming February 8 general elections, as sensitive. The official sources said that out of these 1017 polling stations, 24 had been placed in a category of "highly sensitive" whereas 47 had been declared "sensitive" and put in Category-B while 946 had been declared as normal. Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza while briefing the participants informed that a control room has already been established to monitor the polling process besides other matters like security situations when the polling material will be transported to the polling stations. He said there are two National Assembly and five provincial assembly seats in the Attock district.

## PMLN holds corner meeting in Shah Nikdar

SARGODHA (Agencies): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) District General Secretary and candidate for PP-78 and NA-85 Rana Munawar Ghouse Khan holds a 'corner meeting' at Shah Nikdar here on Tuesday, in connection with his election campaign for the upcoming polls. He said the PML-N was the only party that had a solution to people's problems. "Under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the party is united and canvassing with determination. General elections will bring democratic stability and elected candidates would be able to play their role in a better way," he added. Party activists including Yousaf Shah Qureshi, Chaudhry Mumtaz Aziz, Chaudhry Nisar, PML-N Tehsil Sillanwali youth coordinator and other local representatives were also present.

## Motorcycle-truck collision claims woman's life in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): A woman was killed and her husband sustained critical injuries when the motorcycle was struck by a recklessly driven truck near Water Pump Flyover Karachi. According to police, the rescue teams, swiftly responded to the scene and transported the deceased and her injured husband to the hospital for further medical attention, said a private news channel on Tuesday.

## Elections: Training Session held at Bahawalpur Police Lines

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A training session of police officials of Bahawalpur police was held at Police Lines here who will perform duties in connection with Elections 2024. Official sources said that District Police Officer, Bahawalpur, Syed Muhammad Abbas supervised the training program organized for retired police officials at a hall of Bahawalpur police lines. The training program focused on equipping the participants with knowledge and skills to perform duties in connection with Elections

2024. DSP (Legal), Abdul Rauf Javed and District Incharge, Security, Khurram Zaka delivered their lectures at the training session. "Training of police officials and personnel of Bahawalpur for performing duties in connection with Elections 2024 is held in the light of SOPs of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), said DPO Bahawalpur. He added that the officials and personnel of Bahawalpur police would perform their election duties as per protocol and SOPs of ECP.

## Murder convict sent to gallows, four other sentenced in different cases

ATTOCK (Agencies): A murder convict was sent to gallows, while four other convicts were sentenced in two different cases by respective courts of Attock district on Tuesday. In the first case, a court in Attock on Monday sentenced a convict to death for murdering his cousin for refusal his marriage proposal in Qabla Bandi village in the limits of Hazro Police station on January 1, 2023. The judge also imposed fine over the convict as damages. According to the FIR registered under sections 302 and 311 of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) at Hazro Police station, the accused Muhammad Murtaza had shot dead his cousin for not accepting his marriage proposal. The suspect

fled however police later arrested him from his hideout through human and digital intelligence. Later during the trial, the prosecution produced substantial evidence against the accused which established involvement of Mr Murtaza in the cold blood murder of the girl and subsequently sent the convict to gallows. The convict was also ordered to pay Rs 0.5 million as damages. Meanwhile in Jand town of Attock, the judicial magistrate Ghulam Shabbir has sentenced three years imprisonment to each three members of the thieves' gang and they found guilty in the theft case registered against them at Bassal Police station on June 9, 2023.

## AJK gears up for Kashmir Solidarity Day: A renewed pledge to end Indian occupation

MIRPUR (Agencies): As the calendar inches closer to February 5, the residents and authorities of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) are preparing to commemorate Kashmir Solidarity Day with heightened determination this Tuesday. Kashmiri rights advocate Sardar Amjad Yousaf remarked, "Kashmir Solidarity Day holds immense significance for the Kashmiri people on both sides of the Line of Control and worldwide. It serves as a reminder of the unbreakable connection between the people and government of Pakistan and their Kashmiri brethren, showcasing unwavering support for their struggle for liberation." This annual observance extends across Pakistan and AJK, symbolizing solidarity with the residents of Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) in their rightful and principled pursuit of freedom from India's illegitimate control. Despite grappling with a challenging situation since the Indian government's revocation of Article 370 and 35-A on August 5, 2019, the inhabitants of



IIOJK continue to exhibit resilience in their quest for self-determination. On this momentous day, AJK stands united in its endorsement of the Kashmiri people's right to freedom, a cause acknowledged by the international community. Yousaf underscored the necessity of resolving the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan, emphasizing its status as a pivotal issue and regional flashpoint. Since its establishment in 1975, Kashmir Solidarity Day has been designated as a public holiday in Pakistan and AJK, reaffirming the commitment to bring an end to India's unlawful and coercive occupation of Kashmir.

## ECP to complete ballot paper printing till February 2

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will complete the printing of ballot papers till February 2, while the delivery of ballot papers has already continued in all four provinces. "After the announcement of general elections across the country on February 8 and allocation of election symbols, the ECP has started the printing of ballot papers from January 16," the spokesman told APP. He said the preparations for holding the general polls are rapidly progressing towards completion and the printing of ballot papers is progressing satisfactory while printing of papers is going on in three

government presses. The ongoing printing process involves 270 tons of special paper, he said, adding that printing for Balochistan and Sindh constituencies is continuing in Karachi, while for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, and Islamabad constituencies, the ballot papers are being printed at the government printing office in Islamabad. The spokesman said the distinctive watermarks will embellish the ballot papers, which are slated to be printed using three different machines. Stringent security measures have been implemented at the Printing Corporation premises throughout the ballot paper production process.

## EU delegation held meeting with Sindh Home Minister to discuss election arrangements

KARACHI (APP): A four-member delegation of the European Union called on Sindh Caretaker Minister for Home and Prison Brig. (R) Haris Nawaz here on Tuesday and discussed 8n detail the arrangements for the February 08 elections. Home Secretary Sindh Iqbal Memon was also present on the occasion. The meeting also discussed the measures with special reference to law & order and administrative arrangements to ensure free, fair and transparent polls. The Home Minister briefed the delegation about the security measures and said that full cooperation was being extended to the Election Commission of

Pakistan in transparently conducting the elections. He reiterated the government's resolve to fulfil its duty of ensuring timely, free, fair and transparent elections, stressing that the caretaker setup would remain fully impartial. He added that it was the constitutional responsibility of the caretaker government to provide full security to the voters and contesting candidates and the government had been taking measures to this end in a proper manner. The EU delegation hoped with a positive note that the caretaker government, ECP will be able to hold free and fair elections by the constitution of Pakistan.

## Benazir Kafaalat stipends amount increased up to Rs 10,500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has increased the amount of the quarterly stipends of Benazir Kafaalat programme up to Rs 10,500 for this year, in order to provide financial relief to the beneficiaries. "The first quarterly payment of this years will be Rs 10,500 which will be issued during the current month (February). For any information and query, the beneficiaries can contact the BISP offices and toll free number 080026477", Secretary BISP, Amir Ali Ahmad said. The quarterly Benazir Education Stipends will be issued from the month of March including Rs 2500 (Primary), Rs. 3500 (Secondary) and Rs 4500 (higher secondary) for the girl students. While for

the boy students, Rs. 2000 (Primary), Rs. 3000 (Secondary) and Rs. 4000 (Higher Secondary) will be issued during the period. The special bonus of Rs 3000 will be given to the girls at the completion of primary education. Under the Benazir Nashonuma scheme, the quarterly stipend of Rs 2500 will be issued to per Pregnant and Lactating Mother (PLW) and boy child while Rs 3,000 will be given to the girl child. However, in the flood affected areas, Rs 3500 will be issued to PLW and boy child each while Rs 4,000 will be given to the girl child. The Nashonuma programme aims to address stunting among PLW and their children of less than two years of age through the provision of these stipends.

## Minister discusses peaceful conduct of General Elections

SUKKUR (Agencies): Caretaker Minister for Law and Human Rights Sindh, Barrister Muhammad Umar Soomro has held a meeting with concerned officers to discuss the peaceful conduct of upcoming general elections and review the preparations here. Minister in his remarks, assured full support from the Sindh government for the seam-

less execution of the election process. He emphasized the implementation of the Election Commission's code of conduct, and measures will be taken to ensure compliance. The minister further stated that law enforcement, including the police and other security agencies, will play a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law during the electoral process.

## PPP public welfare manifesto attracts opponent voters: Zardari

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari said that his party's election campaign was attracting voters of political opponents due to public welfare manifesto. PPP chairman Bilawal has started a vigorous election campaign in Punjab and the results in the province would be surprising, Zardari told a private news channel. The former president emphasized the need on constructive criticism during election campaigns instead of blaming their rivals. He expressed his views on various po-

litical matters, including the performance of key political figures and the challenges facing the nation. Zardari expressed his concern for Balochistan's future within Pakistan, emphasizing the need to care for the Baloch people and address their issues with affection. The PPP co-Chairman noted that political turmoil is expected to decrease after the elections, suggesting that negotiations and discussions can pave the way for a more stable political environment. Asif Zardari hinted at talks with various political par-

ties, highlighting his commitment to dialogue and collaboration for the greater good. He advised all the political parties to reach out people across the country, from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Balochistan to win their confidence in upcoming elections. Describing Bilawal Bhutto as a reflection of PPP's ideology, he stressed his party's commitment to pushing forward its agenda. Zardari expressed confidence that the PPP will achieve favorable results in the general elections without relying on independent candidates.

## Hardware factory material gutted

FAISALABAD (Agencies): Material in a hardware factory was reduced to ashes in the area of Saddar police station. Rescue 1122 said here on Tuesday that fire erupted in a factory situated at lower canal road, D-huddiwala and engulfed the entire surroundings which burnt material worth millions of rupees present on the spot. Receiving information, fire fighters of Rescue 1122 reached the spot and brought the fire under control after hectic efforts. However, no loss of life was reported in this incident, he added.

## Fire erupts at Metropole Cinema Lahore

ISLAMABAD (APP): A devastating fire erupted on Tuesday at the iconic Metropole Cinema situated on Abbot Road in Lahore was brought under control, averting any potential casualties. A rapid response from ten fire brigade vehicles and rescue teams participated in the operation. According to rescue officials, the cause of the fire was attributed to a short-circuit. Fortunately, no injuries or fatalities were reported in connection with the incident, according to a private news channel. Despite the absence of human casualties, the blaze caused substantial damage to valuable items and cinema equipment within the premises.

## AC arrests 15 accused over price hike

ISLAMABAD (Agencies): Following the directives of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Potohar Sub Division on Tuesday raided various areas of the Division to ensure price lists of edible commodities. During the raid at a vegetable market, police arrested 15 accused over the violations of price hikes. The accused were involved in overpricing and for not showing price lists of edibles. He also served notices and warnings to rule violators. On the occasion, AC warned that strict compliance with the government price of edibles would be ensured and no one would be allowed to violate the rules. It is pertinent to mention here that the crackdown against encroachers and price hikes is being continued daily

## Muzaffargarh gets four women candidates for general elections

MUZAFFARGARH (APP): In a pleasant twist appeared around local politics, four women are set to contest elections from different constituencies in the upcoming elections scheduled to be held on Feb 8. Nazia Jamshed Dasti, wife of Jamshed Dasti who has emerged as potential candidate, is ready to contest as an independent candidate but potentially as PTI's candidate in NA-176. Shaesta Kanwal, another woman candidate, is also contesting independently from NA- 175. Former MPA Farooq Khar's daughter Nadia Farooq Khar is a PTI-backed candidate from PP-277. Shehrbanu, daughter of former MNA Basit Sultan Bukhari, is contesting on PML-N ticket from NA-177. His mother and wife of Basit Sultan Bukhari, Zahra Basit Bukhari, is contesting as an independent candidate from PP 274. Expressing content on increasing number of participation of the women, locals of the opinion that it's manifestation of breakout self-confidence and political consciousness among women of district Muzaffargarh.

## Arrangements reviewed for general elections in Dera

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (Agencies): Deputy Commissioner Mansoor Arshad has underlined the need for making effective arrangements to ensure a secure and peaceful environment for the upcoming general elections. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting to review arrangements for the general elections scheduled to be held on Feb 8. The meeting was attended by officials and representatives from the health, education, local government, livestock, C&W, fisheries, water management, agriculture, Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA), traffic police, Gomal University, Gomal Medical College, Regional Transport Authority (RTA),

and other relevant departments. The meeting was given detailed briefings about the arrangements by each department. The deputy commissioner emphasized that all departments should fulfill their responsibilities efficiently to ensure a smooth election process, leading to transparent and fair polls in the district. He also directed for adhering to the prescribed SOPs and Code of Conduct for the upcoming elections, including compliance with specified sizes for advertisements, refraining from hanging banners on worship places and government buildings, obtaining NOCs for rallies or corner meetings and avoiding provocative speeches etc.

## Tourists advised to get weather updates before visiting Murree

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Murree district administration has advised the tourists to get weather updates and traffic-related information prior to traveling to Murree. According to a Murree district administration spokesman, the administration on the special directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Murree, Zaher Abbas Sherazi had finalized all arrangements for snowfall season. The tourists were being given information about weather updates and travel advisories at all entry points of Murree, he added. He said that the tourists had been advised to take all due precautions. The tourists had also been requested to follow the instructions being given at the entry

points, he said adding, that strict action by the law was also being taken against parking rules violators. Murree District Administration had set up a special control room to facilitate the people, particularly tourists, he added. The control room was working round the clock under the supervision of senior officers. In case of any difficulty, the tourists could get help and guidance from the tourist facilitation centers. The citizens were also advised to follow the traffic rules to ensure the flow of traffic on the roads. The tourists could contact Emergency Service, Rescue-1122, Tourism Helpline-1421, or PDMA Helpline-1129 in case of emergency, he added.

## Candidates face penalties for violating election rules in KP

ISLAMABAD (APP): District Monitoring Officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are issuing notices and fines to candidates for violating election rules, as per the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) instructions. According to the social media post of ECP spokesman, District Monitoring Officer Sahiwal, Paigham Ghani, has fined Rana Aamir Shahzad Tahir, a candidate

of NA-141, Rs. 50,000 for breaching the code of conduct. District Monitoring Officer in Mardan has imposed a fine of Rs. 50,000 on Jamate Islami candidate Aqib Ismael of NA-23 for erecting king-size hoardings. The Deputy Commissioner in Mardan has instructed the candidate to deposit the receipt after paying the fine into the national exchequer.



## Saudi Aramco maintains MSC at 12m bpd in accordance with ministry directive

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Aramco announced on Jan. 30 that it will maintain its maximum sustainable capacity at 12 million barrels per day, following the directive from the Ministry of Energy. The oil giant has emphasized its commitment to this directive, choosing not to further increase the MSC to 13 million barrels per day, as stated in a press release. The determination of the MSC aligns with the regulations set forth by the state, as outlined in the Hydrocarbons Law through Royal



Decree M/37, dated Dec. 20, 2017, the release added. Saudi Aramco plans to update its capital spending guidance when revealing its full-year 2023 results in March. Amin Nasser, CEO of Aramco, mentioned

in October 2023 at the Energy Intelligence Forum that the company has the capability to increase oil production capacity "in a couple of weeks" in response to the rising global demand. The petroleum refineries company has reported an 8.31 percent increase in net profit in the third quarter of 2023, reaching SR122.19 billion (\$32.6 billion) compared to the previous three months. This increase was primarily driven by higher crude oil prices and improved refining margins.

## Toyota sets new global record for annual vehicle sales

TOKYO (Agencies): Japan's Toyota said Tuesday that it sold a record 11.2 million vehicles in 2023, cementing its position as the world's top-selling automaker for the fourth successive year thanks to a recovery in demand in all regions and easing semiconductor shortages. The figure, which represents units shifted by the firm and its subsidiaries, represented a jump of 7.2% on-year and compares with 9.2 million for Germany's Volkswagen Group, whose unit sales soared 12%. South Korea's Hyundai



ai-Kia retained third place in 2023 with 7.3 million units sold, up 6.7%. In terms of market value, however, Elon Musk's US electric automaker Tesla remains number one ahead of the Japanese giant. Toyota on Tues-

day credited for its performance "solid demand in each region, in addition to easing semiconductor shortages in each region." "We will continue to carefully monitor the parts supply situation and make every effort to deliver as many vehicles as possible to our customers at the earliest date," a statement added. Tuesday's figure combined sales for the Toyota, Lexus, Daihatsu and Hino brands, and beat its own previous record of 10.7 million set in 2019, the year before it overtook Volkswagen.

## Aramco ordered to halt plans to boost capacity in major U-turn

RIYADH (Agencies): Saudi Arabia has ordered energy giant Aramco to maintain its oil production capacity at 12 million barrels per day, abandoning a planned increase, the firm said on Tuesday. "Aramco announces that it has received a directive from the ministry of energy to maintain its maximum sustainable capacity (MSC) at 12 million barrels per day" instead of ramping it up to 13 million bpd, the firm said in a statement. "The company will update its capital spending guidance



when its full-year 2023 results are announced in March." Saudi Arabia is the world's largest crude exporter and Aramco is the jewel of the Gulf kingdom's economy. Aramco's profits are expected to finance Crown

Prince Mohammed bin Salman's sweeping economic and social reform programme known as Vision 2030, which aims to lay the groundwork for an eventual post-oil future. Riyadh announced the planned production capacity increase in October 2021, the same month it pledged to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2060 — drawing intense scepticism from environmental activists. Aramco has pledged to achieve "operational net-zero" carbon emissions by 2050.

## Amazon scraps US\$1.7bil iRobot buyout after EU objections

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Amazon on Monday said it was dropping its plans to buy the iRobot vacuum maker after the EU's antitrust authority objected to the plan over competition concerns. The news sent shares in iRobot into a tailspin, and the device maker followed the announcement of the failed deal with a restructuring plan that would see 350 jobs, or 30% of the company, laid off and the departure of its CEO. "We're disappointed that Amazon's acquisition of iRobot could not proceed," said David Zapolsky, Amazon



SVP and General Counsel. The EU in July opened an antitrust investigation into Amazon's US\$1.7 billion purchase of iRobot, which is best known for its Roomba self-operating vacuum cleaners. Brussels at the time said it was probing whether the

acquisition would allow Amazon to "restrict competition" and "strengthen its position as an online marketplace provider." The EU said it was especially concerned that Amazon's role as the world's preeminent internet retail hub would allow it to crush competition from other vacuum-makers seeking online buyers. The European Commission also pointed to questions over how Amazon would use the data collected by iRobot's self-driving devices that upload detailed information about the user's personal home.

## Boeing withdraws bid for safety exemption

WASHINGTON (Agencies): Boeing BA.N confirmed late on Monday it is withdrawing a request it made to the Federal Aviation Administration last year seeking an exemption from a safety standard for its 737 MAX 7 that is awaiting certification. Senator Tammy Duckworth, who chairs an aviation subcommittee, said last week she opposed Boeing's exemption request that would "prematurely allow the 737 MAX 7 to enter



commercial service." She noted the exemption Boeing had sought "involves an anti-ice system that can overheat and cause the engine na-

celle to break apart and fall off. This could generate fuselage-penetrating debris, which could endanger passengers in window seats behind the wing." Boeing said late on Monday "while we are confident that the proposed time-limited exemption for that system follows established FAA processes to ensure safe operation, we will instead incorporate an engineering solution that will be completed during the certification process."

## Neuralink installs brain implant in first patient, says Musk

SAN FRANCISCO (Agencies): Elon Musk on Tuesday said his Neuralink startup had installed a brain implant in its first human patient with "promising" initial results. The neurotechnology company co-founded by Musk in 2016 aims to build direct communication channels between the brain and computers. The ambition is to supercharge human capabilities, treat neurological disorders like ALS or Parkinson's, and maybe one day achieve a symbiotic relationship between hu-



mans and artificial intelligence. "The first human received an implant from Neuralink yesterday and is recovering well," Musk said in a post on X, formerly Twitter. "Initial results show

promising neuron spike detection," he added. The start-up last year said it won approval from US regulators to test its brain implants in people. Neuralink's technology will mainly work through an implant called the "Link" — a device about the size of five stacked coins that is placed inside the human brain through invasive surgery. According to data company Pitchbook, last year California-based Neuralink had more than 400 employees and has raised at least \$363 million.

## CNN Philippines to close due to financial losses

MANILA (Agencies): CNN Philippines will stop operations from January 31 due to "significant financial losses", its owner announced Monday, in the latest blow for the media industry in the Southeast Asian nation. The broadcaster began operating in the Philippines in 2015 as a franchise of CNN, delivering mainly English-language news on free-to-air, cable and pay television. Staff were told Monday of the decision to shut down news and production operations on all platforms. "The decision follows significant financial losses sustained over the past years, despite rig-



orous efforts to adapt and innovate in a rapidly evolving and challenging media landscape," CNN Philippines-owner Nine Media Corporation said, without providing details. "We are aware of the impact of this closure on our valued employees and talents, we assure

all affected staff will be provided with severance packages." The closure will affect around 300 employees, a member of staff told AFP on the condition of anonymity. The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines said the closure meant "one less source of reliable information for the public at a time when disinformation and misinformation are rampant". Broadcasting giant ABS-CBN — a critic of then president Rodrigo Duterte — was forced to slash its operations in 2020 after advertising revenues were ravaged by the loss of its free-to-air licence.

## French economy grows 0.9% in 2023, stagnant in second half

PARIS (Agencies): The French economy grew 0.9% in 2023 but stagnated in the last two quarters of the year, official data showed on Tuesday. The annual growth figure in the eurozone's second biggest economy was just under the government's forecast of 1% and down from 2.5% in 2022. France recorded zero growth most of the year except in the second quarter when the economy expanded by 0.7%, according to the INSEE statistics agency. Household consumption, a key driver of the economy, slowed



to 0.7% overall in 2023, falling slightly in the last three months of the year. France, however, has performed better than Germany, the eurozone's biggest economy, which is expected to be in recession in 2023 and 2024.

## Singapore investment pledges almost halved to US\$9.5bil in 2023

SINGAPORE (Agencies): Singapore said investment commitments last year slowed to S\$12.7 billion (US\$9.5 billion) from a record S\$22.5 billion in 2022, with authorities viewing the performance as a show of confidence in the city-state in a tough global business environment. The commitments are expected to create 20,045 jobs over the next five years, according to the Economic Development Board, the country's investment promotion agency. About 58% of those jobs are likely to be in services, 26% in research and development and the remaining 16% in manufacturing. "The flow of investment commitments demonstrate confidence in Singapore as a



trusted hub for business, innovation and talent, and a gateway to a growing Asian region," the EDB said in a statement Tuesday. While the latest investment pledges pale in comparison to 2022's record showing, authorities weren't expecting to repeat that performance amid mounting global headwinds. The EDB said the 2023 commitments were still better than its medium- to long-term goals.

## Yuan transactions hit one-third of total Russian export payments

MOSCOW (Agencies): Use of the Chinese yuan to pay for Russian exports has increased 86 times to 34.5% of total payments over the past two years, Russia's Central Bank governor Elvira Nabiullina told Russian state news agency RIA in an interview published on Tuesday. The comments were Nabiullina's first public remarks after she cancelled several scheduled appearances and amid media speculation about her health. She said use of the Chinese currency in Russian imports payments had also risen sharply, up eightfold to 36.4% over the same period. "Our foreign economic activity is very actively switching to the use



of other (than dollar) currencies, primarily the yuan," Nabiullina said. It was not clear when the interview was conducted but any news suggesting Nabiullina may be back at work is important for investors, given the power the central bank wields over the rouble rate through its capital controls, and over the economy in general with banking regulations and interest rates.

## Renault slams brakes on listing of Ampere EV division

PARIS (Agencies): French automaker Renault said Monday that it was halting the initial public offering of its EV unit Ampere, saying market conditions were unfavourable to list the company's shares. In a sweeping overhaul unveiled in 2022, Renault decided to split off its electric vehicle unit into Ampere, hoping that running it as a separate company would make it more agile in the rapidly developing sector. Ampere launched in November 2023 and plans were to list the unit's shares on the stock exchange in the first half of 2024 at an estimated valuation of eight to 10 billion euros, or as much as Renault. Although leading European and US stock indices are flirting with record



highs, the carmaker said it was pulling the IPO. "Renault Group considers that the current equity market conditions are not met to optimally pursue the IPO process in the best interests of Renault Group, its shareholders and Ampere," the company said. "Therefore, considering both current equity market conditions and stronger cash generation, Renault Group has decided to cancel the Ampere IPO process," it added.

## Dollar keeps tight ranges ahead of Fed meeting, jobs data

TOKYO (Agencies): The dollar held narrow ranges against its major peers on Tuesday, as traders awaited the Federal Reserve's monetary policy decision for clues on when the US central bank might cut rates. In the meantime, jobs opening data from the US Department of Labor Statistics due later in the day will act as a preview to the closely watched payroll report to be released on Friday. The dollar was steady in the Asian morning, with market participants moving cautiously ahead of the two-



day FOMC meeting that kicks off on Tuesday. While the Fed is expected to hold interest rates, the focus on the tone that Fed Chair Jerome Powell strikes at the press conference on Wednesday and any hints of rate cuts in the near future.

## New post-Brexit customs checks spark UK border worries

LONDON (Agencies): The UK will finally roll out post-Brexit border checks Wednesday on food, plant and animal products imported from the EU, fanning fears of more price hikes, empty shelves and even Valentine's Day flower shortages. The long-awaited move will affect dinner-table staples from across the

Channel, such as ham, sausages and cured meat, as well as butter, cheese and cream. It will also affect cut flowers. The changes have been delayed five times because of fears about the knock-on effect on the sluggish UK economy and inflation, which remains elevated amid a broader cost-of-living crisis.

## Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva suspended four years for doping

LAUSANNE (Agencies): Russian figure skater Kamila Valieva received a four-year ban from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) on Monday for failing a doping test prior to the 2022 Winter Olympics. A Russian Anti-Doping Agency (RUSADA) investigation had found the teenager bore "no fault or negligence" for a failed test before the 2022 Winter Olympics, where she won team gold aged 15. But on Monday, CAS upheld an appeal by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). "A period of four years ineligibility is imposed on Ms Valieva," CAS said. "All



competitive results of Ms Valieva from 25 Dec. 2021 are disqualified, with all the resulting consequences." WADA welcomed the ban but took aim at those who had doped Valieva, now 17. "The doping of children is unfor-

givable," WADA said in a statement, urging "governments to consider passing legislation — as some have done already — making the doping of minors a criminal offense." By contrast, the Kremlin slammed what it called a "politicized" decision. "Of course, we don't agree with it... From my point of view, of course, it's politicized," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian news agencies. Russia's Olympic Committee (ROC) said the decision proved that "war has been declared on Russian sport and, as we see, all methods are good."

## 'Football isn't easy', Australia's Ryan tells critics

AL RAYYAN (Agencies): Australia captain Mat Ryan has dismissed criticism of the Socceroos' Asian Cup campaign as "outside noise" while admitting that the team can improve ahead of the quarterfinals. Australia's 4-0 win over 146th-ranked Indonesia drew only faint praise in home media while fans lamented the team's lack of fluidity in attack. The victory came after coach Graham Arnold defended his squad's performance after an unconvincing 1-1 draw with Uzbekistan in the group stage. Ryan said results were all that mattered. "There can be a lot of outside noise and all that about, you



know, the team should be doing this and doing that," he said. "But you know football isn't easy... Everyone claims that it is from the outside. "When you're out here and you're a professional footballer and you take on another team that's trying to do everything that they can to

win a game, it's not easy. "All due respect to Indonesia, they gave it a good crack." Australia, the 2015 champions, will play either Saudi Arabia or South Korea in the quarterfinals. Australia will hope to have forward Craig Goodwin ready to start after he came off the bench against Indonesia around the hour-mark, having missed the Uzbekistan game with a hamstring strain. "I feel like we've still got a lot of improvement in us and I think that's a good sign going forward," said Ryan. "We're a tight-knit group of boys. We all treat each other like brothers and it's like a family in here."

## Simon Yates to go 'all guns blazing' at the AIUla Tour

ALULA (Agencies): Simon Yates, leader of Team Jayco AlUla, says he is ready for the AlUla Tour taking place from Jan. 30 to Feb. 3, after some disappointment in previous racing. "The Tour Down Under was an OK week," he said. "We were close on many occasions, aggressive and assertive where we rode, but unfortunately, we didn't get the result we hoped for." Yates outlined the team's goals at AlUla, em-



phasizing the importance of the general classification. "There are some

tricky stages to navigate for me," he said. "Being a smaller guy, I am not the strongest in the crosswinds, which there could be here. But once we get to the climbing stage, it's all guns blazing and all-in for me." Preparation includes adapting to the heat, with Yates adding: "The heat was one of the reasons to go to the Tour Down Under first. That was the idea: to be well adapted to any heat here in AlUla."

## WTA roundup: Top seed falls in Thailand

BANGKOK (Agencies): Diana Shnaider knocked out top-seeded Magda Linette of Poland 6-4, 1-6, 6-1 on Monday in a stunning start to the Thailand Open in Hua Hin, Thailand. The 19-year-old Russian saved six of nine break points against the 2020 tournament champion, finishing the match in two hours and nine minutes. Up next for Shnaider is Spain's Paula Badosa, who rallied to beat Thai teen Lanlana Tararudee 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 in just under two hours. No. 3 seed Xinyu Wang and No. 5 Xiyu Wang of



China both advanced. Japan's Nao Hibino overcame a 5-0 deficit for a 7-6 (4), 6-0 win against Kamilla Rakhimova of Russia. Hungary's Dalma Galfi and Switzer-

land's Viktorija Golubic both won their openers in straight sets. Upper Austria Ladies Linz England's Katie Boulter saved all five break points she faced and cruised to a 6-2, 6-2 upset of No. 6 seed Jasmine Paolini of Italy in first-round action in Austria. Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova saved all three break points in a 6-4, 6-0 win against Martina Trevisan of Italy. Latvia's Jelena Ostapenko is the No. 1 seed. Russia's Anastasia Potapova is the defending champion and the No. 5 seed.

## Sens come back from 3 down, top Predators in OT

NEW YORK (Agencies): Claude Giroux's overtime winner gave the Ottawa Senators a stunning 4-3 comeback victory over the visiting Nashville Predators on Monday. The Senators trailed 3-0 after the first period but stormed back thanks to a revived offense and a perfect relief effort from goaltender Joonas Korpisalo. Starter Mads Sogaard was pulled after allowing three goals on 11 first-period shots, and Korpisalo then stopped all 17 shots he



faced the rest of the way. Brady Tkachuk and Tim Stutzle each had a goal and an assist, with Stutzle's helper set-

ting up Giroux during a two-on-one rush in overtime. Drake Batherson scored Ottawa's other goal. Monday's result ended a two-game (0-1-1) skid for the Senators, who are 4-1-2 in their past seven games. The Predators are 0-1-1 in their past two games, and 1-3-1 in their past five. Philip Tomasino had a goal and an assist, and Roman Josi had two assists. Michael McCarron and Yakov Trenin also scored for the Predators.

## Saudi Arabia's Yara Al-Hogbani set for Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open bow

ABU DHABI (Agencies): Saudi Arabia's Yara Al-Hogbani is gearing up for the next significant step in her tennis career when she takes part in the Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open from Feb. 3-11 at Zayed Sports City. The 19-year-old received a wild card for the second edition of the tournament in the UAE capital and will step on the court for her qualifier this weekend. The identity of her opponent will be announced after Friday's draw. The Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open will represent the highest profile tourna-



ment yet that Al-Hogbani has taken part in, with likes of Tunisian star and crowd favorite Ons Jabeur, former world No. 1 Naomi Osaka and US Open winner Emma Raducanu — also a wild card —

part of a strong line-up. Having turned professional at the age of 14, Al-Hogbani became the first-ever Saudi woman to win a professional tennis event in 2022, defeating Tamara Ermakova to claim the J5 Isa Town tournament in Bahrain. "I'm very happy to have been awarded a wild card for the qualifiers at this year's Mubadala Abu Dhabi Open and I'm looking forward to testing myself against some great players," said the Saudi starlet last week after the announcement of her participation.

## Ivory Coast stun AFCON holders Senegal, Cape Verde into quarterfinals

ABIDJAN (Agencies): Hosts Ivory Coast stunned Senegal at the Africa Cup of Nations on Monday, knocking out the reigning champions on penalties in the last 16 to keep their hopes of winning the title on home soil alive. A week ago it looked as if the Ivorians were set for a humiliating group-stage exit from their own AFCON, but now they are into the quarterfinals after beating Senegal 5-4 on penalties following a tie that finished 1-1 at the end of extra time. The Elephants scraped into the knockout phase with the worst record of the four best third-placed sides to advance, after finishing the first round with a humiliating 4-0 loss to Equatorial



Guinea, their heaviest ever home defeat. They followed that by sacking veteran French coach Jean-Louis Gasset and trying unsuccessfully to bring in former boss Herve Renard on a short-term deal. But instead former player Emerse Fae was appointed on an interim basis, hoping to rouse a shell-shocked team for a daunting tie against the holders.

## Nuggets down Bucks to spoil Rivers opener; Wolves roll back Thunder



LOS ANGELES (Agencies): Nikola Jokic scored a 25-point triple double as the Denver Nuggets handed new Milwaukee coach Doc Rivers a 113-107 defeat Monday in his first game in charge. The heavyweight showdown between the reigning NBA champions and the 2021 champion Bucks did not disappoint, with two-time Most Valuable Player Jokic dominating at both ends of the floor. The Serbian star finished with 25 points, 16 rebounds and 12 assists to seal his 14th triple double of the season while

making three steals and two blocks. He was given scoring support from Jamal Murray, who led with a game-high 35 points. The Bucks, who appointed Rivers last week following the shock sacking of Adrian Griffin, were led by 29 points from Giannis Antetokounmpo while Damian Lillard finished with 18 points. Despite the loss, Rivers was encouraged by Milwaukee's performance. "Overall I was very happy," Rivers said. "That fight is there. That's something really encouraging moving forward." In the top-of-the-table clash in the Western Conference, Shai Gilgeous-Alexander's 37-point display was in vain as the Oklahoma City Thunder fell 107-101 to the Minnesota Timberwolves. The two sides went into Monday's game with identical 32-14 records having spent most of the season battling it out for first place in the West.

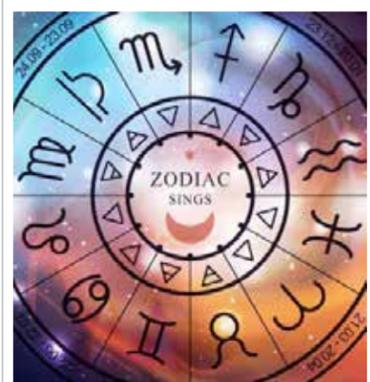
## Swift at Super Bowl could be a game time decision

MISSOURI (Agencies): Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce is sure to be in Las Vegas for the Feb. 11 Super Bowl showdown with the San Francisco 49ers but whether his girlfriend, mega-pop star Taylor Swift, will also be present to add some stardust to the occasion is looking like a game time decision. Swift was in the stands cheering and was then caught on camera congratulating her boyfriend with a hug and kiss after the Chiefs 17-10 victory over the Baltimore Ravens on Sunday, immediately sparking speculation whether one of the world's biggest selling recording artists will be at Allegiant Stadium. A regular at Chiefs games all season, Swift could miss the biggest game of all due to scheduling conflicts with her "Eras Tour" which has her performing in Tokyo on Feb. 10, the



night before the Super Bowl. With the time difference Swift could get to Las Vegas for kickoff on Sunday but will then have to quickly get back on a plane for three concerts in Melbourne, Australia starting Feb. 16. Some fans will be flying Air Swift to the Super Bowl, with United Airlines on Monday adding additional direct flights to Las Vegas from Kansas City with specially themed Swift related flight numbers.

## DAILY HOROSCOPE: JANUARY 31, 2023



been missing. It's a great time to take a fresh look at old problems and see what has changed.

– **VIRGO**: See if you can dig a little more deeply into today's big questions. You've got the right kind of energy for ferreting out clues and pursuing new leads as far as they can take you.

– **LIBRA**: It's time for you to push yourself somewhat harder and go in a little deeper, no matter what you find yourself doing. It's a good time for you to get your family to really confront that one big issue.

– It's a general reading which may differ from person to person because of time date and year.

– **ARIES**: Your emotional life is more intense than usual, and while that might cause some minor troubles in your daily routine, you should find that certain insights make life more enjoyable in the long run.

– **TAURUS**: Your emotions are much stronger than usual, which could be good or bad. If it all seems hopeless or overwhelming, try to turn it all around so you can get a fresh start sometime in the near future.

– **GEMINI**: Try not to worry too much about your health, though you may be feeling extra weird in a way that suggests you should. Get a checkup if you like, but a little stress relief may be all you need.

– **CANCER**: Life is a little crazy right now, but you get a sense that it's all for the best. You may need to get through a rough patch, but you can tell that you're up to it, even if you can't see very far ahead.

– **LEO**: Small details pop up from beneath the surface today and make you wonder what else you may have

– **SCORPIO**: You don't have to try to attract people (or ideas, money, or whatever else you want). Your magnetic energy does all the hard work for you, so see if you can point it in the right direction!

– **SAGITTARIUS**: Just because you're moody, it doesn't mean you're making any mistakes or anyone close to you needs to be punished. Dive deep into that dark place if you want to come out any time soon!

– **CAPRICORN**: Try not to worry too much about the latest shenanigans at work or home. You are more detached from it all than you realize, and things should start to go your way soon anyway!

– **ACQUARIUS**: Your deepest emotions are rising to the surface and making you wonder about what comes next for you and maybe for your love life too. Doubt doesn't work for you, so try to move beyond it!

– **PISCES**: Making decisions is tough now, at least for you. It's a good time to defer to others and make sure that they have all the information they need from you. Enjoy the good spiritual vibe too!

