

Imran not seeking talks for sake of relief, says PTI

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) The opposition PTI on Saturday said that former prime minister Imran Khan was not seeking relief for himself in ongoing negotiations with the government. Addressing a press conference at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House here, Senator Shibli Faraz, National Assembly Opposition Leader Omar Ayub and Asad Qaiser accused the government of creating an impression that the PTI founder was trying to get relief for himself in the garb of talks. Mr Faraz said PTI is a peaceful political party and would continue its

struggle under the law and the Constitution. The PTI has fixed Jan 31 as a cut-off date for the outcome of these talks. The former ruling party claimed that then-army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa had proposed a dialogue with the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan during a meeting of the National Security Committee. It may be recalled that the military spokesperson on Friday criticised the then PTI government for its 2021 decision to initiate talks with the banned TTP. Mr Ayub said: "On November 8, 2021, while Imran Khan was the prime

minister, all government and opposition lawmakers were taken into confidence by Gen Bajwa, then-DG ISI Faiz Hameed, and ISPR DG Babar Iftikhar." He added that "Gen Bajwa, while replying to questions of the then-opposition members, had said that every conflict and war ends with a dialogue and also shared that negotiations will be held with the TTP." According to the PTI leader, then opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif, Yousuf Raza Gilani, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Khawaja Asif, Naveed Qamar, Ahsan Iqbal, and others also attended the high-level meeting. The PTI leader

claimed that petroleum products to the tune of Rs550 billion were being smuggled into Pakistan every year. He claimed that "local officers" were not sitting at the borders of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so it should be investigated who was involved in this smuggling. Omar Ayub also said that KP was not getting its share. While talking about the May 9 and Nov 26 violence, the PTI leader demanded the formation of a judicial commission to investigate these incidents. He claimed that all workers of PTI would be eventually released because they were "innocent".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the performance of electricity distribution companies, on Saturday

Imran, Nawaz, Zardari should sit together: Sana

LAHORE: (news desk) As talks between the government and the opposition PTI move forward, PML-N stalwarts proposed a comprehensive dialogue involving all stakeholders to find a solution to multiple crises prevailing in the country. Speaking at a seminar on Saturday to mark the death anniversary of Khawaja Mohammed Rafique, PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah proposed a new charter of democracy among PML-N, PPP, and the PTI, stressing the need for politicians to sit together. Khawaja Rafique, father of PML-N leader Saad Rafique, was an activist of Pakistan Movement. "It is very important that political players admit the mistakes they committed (regarding joining hands with the establishment)," he said, adding PML-N President Nawaz Sharif, PPP leader Asif Ali Zardari, and PTI founder Imran Khan should sit together to overcome crises the country is facing today. "...when the supremos of three parties sit together, the crises the country has been in for the last 70 years will be overcome within 70 days," he said at the event. The PML-N leader referred to the 'Charter of Democracy' signed between Nawaz Sharif and PPP's slain leader Benazir Bhutto, saying both leaders had accepted their mistakes to move forward. "Today the PTI claims that its mandate was stolen and should be returned. But why did it not speak the truth about whose mandate it had in 2018?" he said while referring to the 2018 elections.

Soldier martyred in wanton firing by Afghan forces



PESHAWAR: (news desk) A Frontier Constabulary (FC) soldier was martyred and 11 others were injured when Afghan forces launched unprovoked fire on multiple Pakistani border posts in the Upper Kurram district on Saturday morning, sources said. The Afghan forces targeted border posts in Ghozgarhi, Matha Sangar, Kot Ragha and Tari Mengal areas using both light and heavy weaponry, the sources said, adding that Pakistani security forces retaliated, inflicting significant losses on the other side as seven to eight personnel of the Afghan forces were killed in the exchange of fire. Besides, militants made an infiltration attempt late on Friday night, using the posts controlled by the Afghan Taliban to cross into Pakistani territory, but the attempt was thwarted.

PM for swift installation of smart meters to curb overbilling

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said overbilling by power utility companies is "unacceptable" and called for the installation of smart meters to measure electricity use accurately. These meters, he said, would ensure transparency in the billing system and called for concrete steps to prevent electricity theft. The prime minister issued these directives while chairing a review meeting on the performance of power distribution com-

panies (Discos). The meeting discussed the affairs of Lahore Electric Supply Company (Lesco), Peshawar Electric Supply Company (Pesco) and Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco), said a press release issued by the media wing of PM Office. The premier vowed that strict action would be taken against officers involved in overbilling. He expressed concern over the delay in the appointment of chief executive officers of Discos and said recruitment should be done promptly and

transparently. The recruitment of human resources in distribution companies should be merit-based, he further added. PM Shehbaz further said that all available resources should be utilised to meet the targets of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority. The meeting was informed that the recovery rate, one of the targets set by the power regulator, has been improved. The recovery rate in fiscal 2025 up to November was 96.82pc for Lesco, 87.98pc for Pesco and 97.57pc for Fesco.

The transmission and distribution losses in the same period have been reduced to 13.04pc for Lesco, 33pc for Pesco and 6.1pc for Fesco. The meeting was apprised that Lesco had installed 49,470 three-phase smart meters out of the total 223,365. The three power utility companies were also facilitating consumers in addressing their complaints. They are offering these services via call centres, emails, websites, interactive voice response systems and Nepra's mobile and web services.



5.1 magnitude earthquake struck the border district of Chaman and surrounding areas on Saturday, causing panic among residents and forcing many to abandon their homes.

Bilawal slams govt's 'approach' on water management

LARKANA: (news desk) PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Saturday criticised the federal government's "unilateral approach" to water resource management, calling for consensus-driven policies to avoid controversy. Speaking to journalists in Ratodero, Mr Bhutto-Zardari highlighted concerns over recent decisions to construct canals,

likening them to the contentious Kalabagh Dam project. "The unilateral decisions on canals, just like the Kalabagh Dam, disregard the rights of smaller provinces. Resistance to such projects began in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, not Sindh, and we ensured such divisive plans were blocked," he said. He urged the federal government to respect the

1991 accord, warning that bypassing agreements could deepen provincial discord. The PPP chairman accused the PML-N-led government of ignoring provincial rights in its developmental policies. "The federal government must treat all provinces equitably, ensuring fair access to resources like water," he added. He also criticised amendments to the Indus River System Authority

agreement as exceeding the government's mandate and called for inclusive policymaking. Mr Bhutto-Zardari also expressed frustration over slow internet speeds and criticised the government's alleged negligence in addressing the issue. "PML-N's politics revolves around motorways, but for this generation, infrastructure means digitalisation and high-speed internet," he said.

Grand Health Alliance accuses Balochistan CM of 'selling' public hospitals

QUETTA: (news desk) The Grand Health Alliance (GHA) on Saturday accused Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti of selling a government hospital in Dera Bugti in a deal worth Rs850 million and announced that its leaders would appear before the Balochistan High Court on Monday to present their grievances. Speaking at a press conference, GHA Chairman Dr Bahar Shah criticised the provincial government for its alleged attempts to privatise public hospitals. He warned that if their

demands were not met, the alliance would either cordon off the Red Zone or stage a sit-in outside the Balochistan Assembly. Leaders from 14 member organisations of the GHA also attended the press briefing. A two-member bench of the Balochistan High Court had previously directed the secretary and director-general of Health to issue show-cause notices to GHA leaders and employees who continued their strike despite court orders to call it off. Dr Shah expressed con-

fusion over the government's policy of privatising hospitals, accusing officials of attempting to sell facilities to private entities. "We urge the government to show mercy on Balochistan. Officials want to sell hospitals to their own people," he alleged. "The Balochistan chief minister claimed in a ceremony in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh that they would provide employment to every household, but instead, they are making people unemployed here," he lamented.

He also pointed out that while people were being recruited on a contractual basis in the health department, hundreds of doctors and nurses remained unemployed. He added that health department employees had been protesting for over a month, but negotiations had failed because the government was not serious about them. He urged the public to protect their hospitals from the government. Dr Shah mentioned that the Balochistan High Court had summoned



them, but they had not received any official notice, and they only learned about it through newspapers. "I will personally appear in court, and I urge doctors from all districts to come to Quetta and present their issues to the Balochistan High Court," he said. In response to a question, he confirmed that the Grand Health Alliance's protest was ongoing.

Quetta records 65 acts of terrorism in 2024

QUETTA: (news desk) As many as 365 people, including security personnel, have been martyred and several injured in terrorist attacks, targeted killings, bomb blasts, landmine explosions and criminal activities so far this year in the provincial capital. While overall crime rate decreased, those related to motorcycle and car snatchings increased during the year. Quetta DIG Atizaz Ahmed Goraya disclosed these facts at a press conference here on Saturday. SSP Operations Muhammad Baloch, SSP Traffic Behram Mandokhail and other senior police officers accompanied him. At the outset, DIG Goraya explained that Quetta is divided into four police divisions, each led by an SSP. The city has 31 police stations, including a female police station. Approximately 1,000 personnel are serving in various duties besides regular policing. He said that the police arrested 809 people in connection with illegal drugs trade, while the Serious Commission Crime Wing resolved 17 blind cases and worked on 16 others.

Transit of goods from China to UAE via Pakistan begins

GILGIT: (news desk) The transportation of goods, originating from China onwards to Dubai via Pakistan, started on Saturday, according to officials. The National Logistics Corporation (NLC) has launched the Multimodal Transport International Routers (TIR) service linking China to the UAE via the Khunjerab Pass. The TIR, a global transit system, allows for sealed cargo to be shipped from a country of origin to the destination in sealed load compartments, which do not require manual inspection by customs authorities during transit. The first shipment arrived from Kashgar, China, to Sost via the Khunjerab Pass. The cargo has been sent to Gawadar from where it will be shipped to the UAE. The event was attended by Customs Assistant Collector Sost Imtiaz Shigri, representatives of Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar chambers of commerce, traders, customs and NLC officials. The NLC said the successful launch of the multimodal TIR service, linking China to the UAE via Pakistan, would boost regional connectivity. The initiative underscores Pakistan's "importance as a transit hub", officials said. The TIR system is globally recognised for its efficiency and cost-effectiveness as it enables seamless movement of goods across borders with minimal customs intervention. The integration of Pakistan with the multilateral trade framework would position the country as a crucial corridor for regional trade and economic integration, Mr Shigri, the Customs assistant collector, said while addressing the event.

Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission gets licence to build Chashma-5 nuclear plant

ISLAMABAD: (news desk) The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) has been issued the licence to construct the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant Unit 5 (C-5). The Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) issued the licence to build C-5, the largest plant producing electricity through nuclear power with a capacity of 1200 MWe, according to a PNRA press release issued on Thursday. The PAEC applied for the licence in April of this year, along with the Preliminary Safety Assessment Report and other documents about the design and operational aspects of nuclear safety, radiation protection, emergency preparedness, waste management, and nuclear security. After a thorough review and assessment of and fulfilment of regulatory requirements in compliance with the relevant national and international standards, the licence was issued, the PNRA press release stated. C-5 is an advanced third-generation Pressurised Water Reactor of Chinese Hualong design, having active and passive safety features, including a double-shell containment and reactor-filtered venting system. It has a lifespan of 60 years. This is the third nuclear power plant in Pakistan with this design. Two other plants, Karachi Nuclear Power Plants units 2 and 3, are already operating successfully and adding electricity to the national grid.