

# Independent

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Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XVI No. 158, Rabi-us-Sani 18, 1445 AH Friday November 03, 2023, Pages 08, Price Rs.15

## President, CEC agree on Feb 8 as general election date

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan is scheduled to hold its next general elections on February 8, 2024, as announced by both the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the Presidency.

This announcement followed a consultative meeting between the president and ECP authorities in response to the instructions of the Supreme Court.

The statement released by the Presidency stated, "In response to the Supreme Court's directive, the Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan, Mr Sikandar Sultan Raja, along

with the Attorney General for Pakistan, Mr Mansoor Usman Awan, and four members of the Election Commission of Pakistan, met with President Dr Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr to discuss the date for the upcoming General Elections in the country. After a detailed discussion, it was unanimously agreed to hold the General Elections on February 8, 2024."

The Election Commission of Pakistan issued a press release announcing that the general elections would take place on February 8 next year.

the announcement through social networking platform X, erstwhile Twitter.

"Today, the respected members of the Election Commission, led by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, met with the President of Pakistan at the Presidency to discuss the election date. It was unanimously decided that the elections will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2024," the ECP wrote in the post.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court on Thursday directed the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to give the specific date for

general elections by Friday after the consultation with the President. The court instructed the Attorney General of Pakistan to arrange the meeting of ECP officials with the President on the same day. The court said that it expected that all issues would be addressed by this meeting. It directed the respondents to inform the bench on Friday regarding the development and adjourned the case. A three-member bench of the top court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin Ud Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah heard.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi exchanging views with Sikandar Sultan Raja, Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan along with the Mansoor Usman Awan, Attorney General for Pakistan and four members of the Election Commission of Pakistan during meeting held at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Pakistan Broadcasters' Association called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

## Afghan diplomat meets Bugti over immigrants repatriation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Afghan Charge d' Affairs on Thursday called on Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti.

Afghan diplomat Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb discussed issues related to repatriation of Afghan nationals from Pakistan to Afghanistan and other matters of mutual interest.

Interior Minister said that the immigrants illegally staying in Pakistan returning to their countries. "We have issued instructions for respectable treatment with the people returning back to home," Bugti said.

"No legal action being taken against those holding Afghan citizen card, Pakistan's interior minister said. "The government will not tolerate discourteous or

impolite treatment to the immigrants at any cost," he stressed. He said a control center and helpline have been established in the Ministry of Interior. Bugti invited Afghan embassy to



appoint its representative for liaison over complaints, if any reported.

Minister informed the Afghan envoy that the

women and children will be exempted from biometric formality at crossing points to facilitate them.

Afghanistan's Taliban government on Wednesday urged Pakistan to give un-

## PM directs Information Ministry to resolve issue of advertisement dues

Says media plays key role in development of society

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday assured the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) of payment of advertisement dues and directed the Information Ministry to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

He was talking to a PBA delegation, which called on him. During the meeting, matters relating to the media, especially electronic media, came under discussion.

The delegation in-

formed the prime minister about the issue of outstanding dues on account of government advertisements.

Highlighting the importance of the media, the prime minister said that being the fourth pillar of state, the media was of utmost importance for the development of society, and the mental and intellectual training of people.

He said the protection of the rights of the media representatives was also responsibility of the state.

## Governor Balochistan hopes: Gwadar shipyard to become new center of ship making of whole region soon

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the Gwadar mega project has key status in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project and the day is not far away when Gwadar shipyard would become the center of new ships making of the whole region soon.

With completion of the Gwadar shipyard, trade ship making and repair industry would be get boost besides providing golden opportunities of livelihood to dwellers of the port city.

The Governor was speaking to the former federal minister Ms. Zubaida Jalal, who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister Prince Ahmed Ali meeting with Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

## Pashtoon nationalist parties give call for shutter down strike in Quetta today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pashtoon nationalist parties have given call for observing shutter down strike in the provincial metropolis today (Friday). The call for shutter down strike was given by the provincial President of Awami National Party (ANP), Asghar Khan Achakzai while addressing a press conference here at the Quetta Press club on Thursday. Also present on the occasion were PkMAP's leader Nasrullah Khan Zairay and others.

The ANP provincial president alleged that they have given call for shutter down against the "forced" expulsion of the Afghan immigrants from the province, alleged mistreatment and the policy of passport for across border movement

of the people.

He said that while we have been facing the issues of extremism, terrorism and lawlessness for long, the government has taken decision of the expulsion of the Afghan nationals from the country and so from Balochistan. He said that the government did not think about enforcing the policy of passport at the border what he called "Durand line", and now it enforced it all of sudden.

He said that there was an agreement with the Pashtoon Afghan nation that there would be no bar on the trade and across the border movement. He alleged that unfair treatment is being meted out with the Afghan nationals under the garb of illegal foreign nationals.

## Process of repatriation of illegal immigrants being managed well, says caretaker CM

Mir Ali Mardan Domki assures to provide necessary resources to put Balochistan police force on modern lines

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the process of repatriation of the illegal immigrants to their countries is being managed in the bordering areas well.

He said that all necessary arrangements have been made for the respectful expulsion of the immigrants at the border.

He was speaking on occasion of his visit to the data command and control center established in the Central Police Office here on Thursday.

He was accompanied by the caretaker Provincial Minister Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali, Additional Chief Secretary Home besides other concerned high ups.

The Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other police high ups were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister also visited the monument of police martyrs and laid floral wreath there.

The smartly turned out contingent of the Balochistan police presented salute to the Chief Minister.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the role of data command and control center is very important in prevention of the crimes.

He said that the effective mechanism has been formulated for curbing crimes in light of the information updated on the mega dashboard.

Referring the computerized registration system of FIRs in the police stations, Mr. Domki said that it would help provide early justice to the masses approaching the police stations.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki being briefed about law and order situation by Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh during at CPO Office. Caretaker Provincial Home Minister Mir Zubair Ahmed Jalal and Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and other high ups are also present.

## Ayaz Sadiq formally invites Lashkari Raisani to join PML-N

Nawabzada Lashkari says he would make decision about joining PML-N after consultation with companions

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Sardar Ayaz Sadiq formally invited the prominent political and tribal leader and former Senator Nawabzada

PML-N during his meeting with the later as he visited the Sarawan House for the purpose on Thursday.

Also accompanied with him were the provincial leadership of PML-N Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail,

Soon after the meeting, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq addressed a joint press conference along with Lashkari Raisani. On the occasion, Ayaz Sadiq said that he has come to see Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani and invited him to join the party on directives of the central leader of party, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Ms. Maryam Nawaz.

He said that during meeting with Lashkari Raisani, there was discussion on the issues of Balochistan and its people. He said that PML-N leaders Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif have long association with Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani and his family. He said that Nawabzada Lashkari may join the party or not, but the relationship with his and his family would sustain in future.



Lashkari Raisani to join the PML-N.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq invited Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani for joining the

Jamal Shah Kakar, Naseemur Rehman Mulakhail, Chaudhary Naeem Karim besides others.

## Anti-corruption body meeting convened

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Ahmad Irfan Aslam has convened the inaugural meeting of the taskforce on Anti-Corruption. The taskforce expressed its resolve to conduct a comprehensive review of the institutional framework of our Anti-Corruption Institutions. It was also decided that members from the Private sector will also be co-opted in the taskforce.

## Caretaker Chief Minister to inaugurate: Health Card Program due to be launched in Balochistan today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The much-awaited Health Card Programme is scheduled to be launched in the Balochistan province today (Friday). According to the official sources, caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki would inaugurate the programme. It may be mentioned here that the Balochistan Health Card Programme had been planned by the Chief Minister Jamal Kamal Khan in year 2019. The Health department sources informed that some 2.1 million families would benefit from the Health Card facility. Under the Health Card Programme, the patients would be able to get treatment upto the cost of Rs. 1 million annually.

## IMF appreciates Pakistan's commitments to meet Q1 targets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief, Nathan Porter here on Thursday appreciated the government's commitment to meeting the first Quarter targets and commended its efforts and measures taken in some critical areas.

During a meeting with Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue & Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamsah Akhtar, the IMF Mission Chief underscored

the importance of continuation of these efforts for staying on track for economic stability of the country.

Earlier, Dr. Shamsah Akhtar welcomed the delegation and shared progress on the Standby Arrangement (SBA), according to press statement issued by finance ministry.

The Minister briefed the Mission on fiscal measures being taken by the government to improve the economic situation.

## Nawaz, Shehbaz discuss country's political situation

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with his elder brother Nawaz Sharif in Lahore to discuss the country's overall political situation and legal affairs.

Apart from political and legal affairs, the distribution of party tickets, election narrative and matters related to addressing grievances of the Pakistan People's Party and other coalition partners were discussed, the sources said.

The meeting was also attended by PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz and Salman Shehbaz.

## Govt increase MPS salary and incentives ahead of IMF talks

ISLAMABAD (INP): The government has increased pay and incentives of MP scales ahead of the Pak-IMF talks. Following the approval of the caretaker prime minister, the Ministry of Finance issued the notification.

According to the notification, an increase of Rs249,580 in the basic salary and incentive for MPS-I, Rs115,100 for MPS-II and Rs66,255 for MPS-III has been made.

The notification will be applicable from 1st October 2023.

## Jan thrashes negative propaganda about expulsion of illegal immigrants

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information says repatriation of illegal immigrants a big challenge; endeavouring to ensure respectful expulsion; Over 37,000 immigrants repatriated via Chaman border

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the interim government is ensuring expulsion of illegal immigrants from Balochistan respectfully and taking care of their self-respect and dignity.

He flayed the negative propaganda being made by certain elements about the repatriation of illegal immigrants. He said that certain elements are making false propaganda about maltreat-

ment with the immigrants repatriating to their homeland, which is unfair and baseless.

Those spreading negative propaganda about the ill-treatment with the illegal immigrants are working against the state's interest as the foreign elements are behind it, he alleged while speaking to the media persons at the holding camp established for illegal immigrants in Haji camp, western bypass on Thursday morning.



QUETTA: Federal Secretary for Economics Affairs Division Dr. Kazim Niaz, Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Country Director World Bank Najy Benhassine jointly preside over meeting regarding Foreign Funded Projects in Balochistan.

## Daily Voice of Masses Independent

### No respite

Today, Nov 2, is observed worldwide as the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. It is a day when attention turns to the extreme pressures and injustices journalists face in the line of duty. The context in which it will be observed this year in Pakistan is quite grim.

On the eve of the occasion, Absar Alam, former chief of the country's electronic media regulator, made a damning statement before the Supreme Court alleging that a senior ISI officer, as well as his subordinates, attempted to control and coerce the media through Pemra during Mr Alam's tenure. The tactics employed included reducing the visibility of TV channels that refused to toe the state's line and seeking penalties against TV commentators who were critical of the state. There are many in the industry who will attest to the fact that the climate of repression that prevailed during retired Lt-Gen Faiz Hameed's time at ISI's helm was one of the worst experienced by Pakistani media. The former spy chief gained notoriety for pressuring Pakistani media in ways never seen or heard before, including with direct threats. His methods were unusually brutish. At one point, he vowed to "destroy" this publication and made good on that threat by blocking Dawn's circulation and advertisements.

Access to Dawn's sister television channel, DawnNews, was repeatedly disrupted in connivance with cable operators across the country. Other news outlets, such as Geo News, faced persecution in very similar ways.

The financial consequences for ordinary journalists working in these organisations were immense and painful to bear. Unfortunately, Gen Hameed's tactics seem to have found enduring favour under the present regime as well. All of the Pakistani media's challenges can obviously not be attributed to one individual or institution. The government's lack of commitment to journalists' protection deserves equal blame. Though Pakistan became the first country to enact laws for the protection of journalists under the PTI, the Freedom Network noted this week that it has failed to mitigate the prevalence of crimes against journalists despite doing so. Eleven journalists have been slain since the law was passed, while journalists continue to face kidnapping, physical assault and harassment through legal cases. The data available shows that no place in the country is safe for journalists anymore — not even the federal capital. Everywhere, journalists are being targeted for their work with impunity. No murder or disappearance seems to be adequately investigated, and the perpetrators are, therefore, never brought to book. This culture of impunity is what allows the cycle of violence to repeat itself. It is unlikely to stop till the federal and provincial governments provide more means and resources to the various bodies set up to look after journalists' rights and protect them from violence. They must act now.

## Reforming at gunpoint



Khurram Husain

This could be a case study in how not to do things. Common sense tells us that when problems are left to fester for long, they can grow in scale and complexity. Having postponed inevitable adjustments for long periods of time, a moment arrives when the necessary adjustment has to be undertaken in panic, in a short period of time, without the luxury of staggering out its impact, or embedding it within a larger package of reform measures.

This is exactly what has happened with the recent gas price hikes. It is hard to tell whether the hikes applied so far are enough to arrest the growth of the circular debt in the gas sector.

My hunch is no, it is not, and more hikes may need to be applied in the future. But even without that, what has happened in the gas sector is almost a case study in how not to do things.

It has been known since at least the early 1990s that Pakistan's domestic gas supplies would peak somewhere close to the year 2010. By the early 2000s, these were no longer projections, but empirical facts that were coming into view, about the moment when domestic gas supplies would enter their period of decline. That is why the Musharraf regime mobilised to commence LNG imports, arranging a full package involving a long-term contract and a regasification terminal.

We all know what happened with that: the court assumed corruption was involved, halted the deal, and Pakistan had to

wait another decade before another LNG import deal could be signed and activated. The second one was also made the subject of frivolous corruption allegations, but thankfully (for the country) those allegations did not halt LNG imports.

From when they started, in 2015, imports of LNG have grown nearly tenfold, and at the present rates of growth, imported LNG will soon surpass domestic gas in the system. And with this growth comes pricing pressure.

Pakistan's gas reserves went into decline around 2010. The crippling shortages in the years leading up to the commencement of LNG imports are remembered by all those who lived through them. From that point onwards, it was known and clear to all that gas pricing would have to change in Pakistan. For decades, we had been lying to ourselves with our gas pricing.

By pricing it at nearly throwaway values, we had been telling ourselves that gas is abundant and cheap, whereas in reality it was scarce and precious. Having squandered this vital resource, we have been faced with the unpleasant prospect of repricing gas for well over a decade now. But that wasn't done.

There was more than a decade in which to make crucial decisions about natural gas. These included pricing, and in addition, allocations. Who will get how much gas at what price? There were at least five major stakeholders in this decision: fertiliser, power generation, textiles, vehicular CNG and domestic consumers. There was a decade and a half in which to get a new pricing regime in place, and allow that pricing regime to reallocate gas among the various stakeholders.

None of that was done. What happened,

instead, was that fresh supplies via imported LNG were arranged and the vehicular CNG stakeholders were thrown overboard, mainly because they lacked the organised clout that the other industry stakeholders had. For a while, this worked. Then in 2022 the PTI government undertook crucial pricing reform, bringing in what was called the Weighted Average Cost of Gas (WACOG).

The past two years have seen relentless price shocks administered to the economy. There was the withdrawal of the fuel subsidies, the power tariff hikes, the devaluations, the interest rate hikes, and now the gas price increases. It is not yet clear whether these shocks have now ended or more are yet to come.

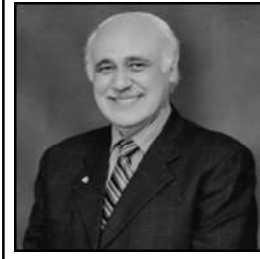
What is clear, however, is that running an economy in constant crisis and firefighting mode means the reform agenda becomes subsumed under the required adjustments.

What ought to have been a reform moment, a time to take stock and devise a package of policies to steer the economy towards a more sustainable direction, has become little more than a moment to swallow one bitter pill after another in an effort to get prices right after a decade of avoiding crucial decisions.

Reforms are not firefighting measures. These relentless price shocks are not setting the economy on the right path. All they are doing is stabilising the ship, and hopefully those running the show can see how difficult that task is. The real reforms come later.

But for that moment to arrive, the country cannot be under an interim government. -- Courtesy Dawn

## 'Death's dominion'



F.S. Aijazuddin

Anyone hoping to understand Pakistan's politics needs to believe implicitly in miracles. He must admit that resurrections can occur and could happen again, and that a sea of adversity was parted once and would divide itself again. The return of Mian Nawaz Sharif to Paktan on Oct 21 is nothing short of miraculous. Every legal obstruction is being removed from his path, hinting at neo-divine intervention.

To his PML-N followers, Nawaz Sharif is akin to a modern Moses promising to lead them into a Promised Land, with his brother Aaron by his side. A Jewish rabbi identified the differences between the two brothers as: "Aaron comforted the people. He spoke soothingly. He was the calm in the wake of the storm. Moses, by contrast, was the thunder within it."

Those with a penchant for parallels will notice how neatly these cloaks fit the brothers — Nawaz, a man with a mission, if only to clear his name; Shabbaz the ambitious surrogate, the conciliator prepared to make peace even with a pharaoh.

Both will need to navigate a course carefully through the foreseeable turmoil leading up to the next elections and, more critically, the predictable mayhem that will follow the declaration of results, whenever.

Before previous elections, the PML-N team studied Theodore White's analysis of the US presidential elections: The Making of the Presi-

dent 1960 (1961), and its sequels on the 1964, 1968 and 1972 jousts. From them, the PML-N culled a strategy of focusing on marginal constituencies. Safe seats were already in the bag. It was the undecided who needed PML-N's help to make up their minds for them.

Today, one is not aware of a similar tactical plan developed by any of the political parties. They are relying on the broad blunderbuss approach to the more specific precision of the rifle.

The elections of December 1970 have been touted as the high-water-mark of 'free and fair' polls. After its waters had subsided, though, the resultant bedlam led to vivisection of a single Pakistan and the emergence of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mujibur Rahman as elected supremos in its residual West and East.

At the time, a victorious Indira Gandhi resisted the temptation to absorb East Pakistan into a larger Akhand Bharat. She had enough Muslims within India to contend with.

Fifty years later, the Indians and Bang-la-desh have collaborated again, this time on a newly released film Mujib: The Making of a Nation, an Indian-Bangladeshi co-production directed by Shyam Benegal. It has been sponsored by Mujib's daughter, the current PM Sheikh Hasina.

Like Gurinder Chadha's eminently watchable Viceroy's House (2017) — a cinema-drama recounting the events of 1947 — Benegal's biopic is unlikely to be shown in Pakistan. Neither Bangladesh, nor Pakistan, nor India have fully exorcised the demons in their common past.

The crowd that greeted Mujibur Rahman when he stood with Bhutto in Shalimar Gardens, Lahore, during the Islamic Sum-mit of 1974,

is in its dotage. It can hardly remember Bhutto, leave alone Mujib.

In 1995, a post-apartheid South Africa taught the world the cathartic benefit of forgiveness. Its Truth and Reconciliation Com-mission enabled black, white and coloured South Africans "to come to terms with their past on a morally accepted basis".

In 1945-46, the vengeful Allies gave the world the Nuremberg trials. Their purpose went beyond conviction of Nazi-tainted defendants. It was "to offer a history lesson to the defeated Germans, and delegitimise the traditional German elite".

As no war is one-sided, "the judges were aw--are that both the Allies and the Axis had pl--anned or com--m--itted acts of ag--gression". They wrote "the verdict careful--ly to avoid discrediting either the Allied governments or the tribunal". The verdict declared the plotting and waging of an aggressive war "the supreme in--ternational crime" because it contained "wi--thin itself the accumulated evil of the whole".

Will Israel, after it has obliterated the last particle of Palestine, submit itself to international accountability? Unlike the Jews who survived World War II to savour the cold revenge of the Nuremberg trials, the Palestinians have only the ghosts of their dead to draw upon to indict Israel.

Poets like Dylan Thomas sing what victims can only stutter: "Though they be mad and dead as nails, / Heads of the characters hammer through daisies, / Break in the sun till the sun breaks down, / And death shall have no dominion." Death continues to exercise dominion — now over Palestine, where harvests are drip-fed with the blood of Abraham. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Commerce News

### Brunei Darussalam can take benefit from Pakistan's investor-friendly policies: Sanjrani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, said on Thursday that Pakistan's investor-friendly policies make it an attractive prospect for potential investments from Brunei Darussalam in various sectors such as energy, agriculture, and education.

The chairman expressed these views during a meeting with the High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam who

paid a courtesy call to the Chairman of the Senate, as stated in a news release.

During the meeting, both sides called for further strengthening existing relations, particularly in the areas of trade, business, investment, and the economic sector.

Sanjrani, expressed his confidence that this appointment would contribute to the strengthening of relations between the two nations.

During the comprehensive discussion,

ties between the two countries.

The meeting was marked by a strong sense of optimism and hope for an enhancement in diplomatic ties between Pakistan and Brunei Darussalam.

Sanjrani, expressed his confidence that this appointment would contribute to the strengthening of relations between the two nations.

During the comprehensive discussion,

the two sides delved into the prevailing regional situation and addressed issues of mutual interest.

Pakistan and Brunei Darussalam's strong bilateral relations, deeply rooted in shared religious values and cooperation, were also highlighted.

Both dignitaries emphasized the need to further bolster these relations, particularly in areas of trade, business, investment, and the economic sector.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Tauqeer Hussain Shah, the Executive Director (designate) World Bank called on the Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at the Ministry of Finance to bid fare-well upon the end of his assignment in the country.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Group of AJK Businessmen from UK led by Raja Naveed Akhtar Goga and Chairman District Council Mirpur during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

### Mobilink Bank witnesses a 38% growth in lending to MSMEs

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank exhibited significant growth in the first three quarters of 2023, as evidenced by the Q3 financial statements. This milestone highlights the Bank's dedication to supporting Micro, Small, and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs), supported by substantial deposit growth and improvements on multiple indicators. Mobilink Bank's Q3 2023 growth trajectory exemplifies its commitment to embracing a holistic approach that goes beyond profitability, focusing on providing innovative, value-driven solutions tailored to foster

economic well-being and prosperity for all while addressing the evolving needs of its borrowers.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services across seven countries.

As part of its digital operator strategy, VEON is transforming people's lives by creating opportunities for increased digital inclusion and by driving economic growth across countries that are home to more than 8% of the world's population.

Mobilink Bank's total revenue surged by 64% in Q3 2023,

demonstrating its strong customer attraction and retention capabilities. During this period, the Bank's Profit Before Tax (PBT) experienced a growth of 299% compared to 2022, solidifying its standing as a leading digital microfinance institution.

The Bank's deposits experienced a 16% increase from FY 2022, reaching PKR 75 billion.

The core banking deposits grew by 12% compared to the previous year, reaching PKR 23 billion, while JazzCash segment deposits powered by Mobilink bank increased by 19%, reaching PKR 52 billion in Q3 2023.

### 10 million employed in cottage industry need to be protected: Irfan

**Independent Report**  
KARACHI: Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, President FPCCI, has emphasized that the government policies should protect, emancipate and enable cottage industry in Pakistan as it employs 10

million people in the country — bridging a massive employment gap left out by other sectors and industries.

It is pertinent to note that FPCCI's Standing Committee on Cottage Industry organized a high-profile meeting on the burning issues of cottage industry, which was well-attended and well-represented from across Sindh province.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh explained that, as matter of fact, there are many developed and quickly developing economies in the world who built their socio-economic transformation; import substitution capacities and GDP per Capita growth on the basis of a

### Dr. Umar urges Saudia to facilitate Pakistani IT companies in travel, visas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar on Thursday urged the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki to facilitate Pakistani IT professionals and business persons in travel and issuing of visas.

The minister expressed these views during a meeting with the ambassador who called on him. Matters of mutual interest and related to IT and Telecommunication

were also discussed, said a news release.

The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in the IT and telecom sectors between the two countries.

Dr. Umar Saif said that the Government of Pakistan wanted to boost relations with Saudi Arabia in the IT and telecom sectors.

Saudi Arabia is a very attractive market for Pakistani IT companies, he added.

He said as Pakistani IT companies scale up their presence and businesses in

Saudi Arabia, it's important to facilitate their travel and issuance of visas.

The minister said that there was great potential for IT and Telecom professionals in Pakistan and the environment for investment in the country was conducive, urging the Saudi tech companies to invest in Pakistan.

Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki said that Saudi Arabia will fully cooperate with Pakistan in the IT sector and Telecom.



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### UAF to launch wheat campaign from Nov 7

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) in collaboration with Punjab Agriculture (Extension) Department will launch eight-day wheat campaign from November 07 to November 14, 2023.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan while chairing deans committee said that more than 330,000 UAF students would visit farmers' fields in six divisions of the Punjab as the drive would be started to disseminate experts' recommendations to increase per acre productivity.

### WAPDA signs Rs705m agreement for consultancy services of Naulong Dam

ISLAMABAD (INP): Aker on behalf of WAPDA Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Thursday signed an agreement valuing Rs. 705 million for consultancy services of Naulong Dam project with a joint venture comprised of two firms — Dolsar of Turkey and Mott MacDonald of Pakistan. The agreement was signed by General Manager (Projects) South Muhammad Masood Ahmed Soomro and International Projects Coordinator of Dolsar Cem

Project. The consultancy contract relates to review and update the detailed design, prepare procurement documents, and update the safeguard documents of the project, said a statement issued. As per the contract, these tasks will be completed in 28 months. The Asian Development Bank was providing financial assistance for consultancy services of Naulong Dam Project.

## Naqvi imposes ban on cleaning of schools by students across Punjab

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi conducted a comprehensive inspection at the Government Junior Model High School Model Town. The conditions observed were deeply concerning; several classrooms lacked furniture, forcing students to study on the bare floor. The washrooms were unclean and devoid of water, and the electric water coolers were malfunctioning. Broken furniture, damaged whiteboards, dilapidated doors and windows without glass and grilles

further contributed to the dismal state of the classrooms. Similarly, there was only one sweeper available for a student population of 750. In addition to these issues, sports activities were suspended, classrooms exhibited peeling paint and cobwebs, lighting was inadequate, and some fans were inoperable. Both the computer and science labs were found to be non-functional and in poor condition, respectively. The CM went to every classroom, engaging with the students to understand their concerns.

The students voiced grievances about the absence of clean drinking water, insufficient water in washrooms, broken furniture, and damaged whiteboards. They also highlighted issues such as dim lighting, non-functional fans, the absence of sports activities, and the necessity to purchase textbooks from the market. The chief minister also interacted with nursery class children, expressing his commitment to providing them with essential educational facilities and instructing for their prompt provision.

The CM expressed dissatisfaction upon witnessing the deplorable conditions and summoned Education Minister Mansoor Qadir, secretary schools, secretary C&W and the CEO district education authority to the school to rectify these issues. Acknowledging the gravity of the situation, CM Naqvi took stringent action and prohibited students from undertaking the responsibility of cleaning schools across Punjab, directing the secretary school education department to issue a notification for strict compliance today.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with participants of 7th International Health Professions Education Conference at University of Lahore.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates main campus site of the University of Technology adjacent to motorway near Rashkai Interchange in Nowshera.

## Governor lays foundation stone of APS Martyrs University of Technology

PESHAWAR (APP): Addressing the ceremony, the governor said that he was pleased to inaugurate the varsity that would prove to be milestone in educating youth in new emerging fields of technologies. He said that location of university in proximity to Rashakai Industrial Zone would provide students ample chances to experience working of various types of technologies practically. Ghulam Ali also directed to complete the project at the earliest and said that the design should be modern.

## First phase of Raiwind Tablighi Ijtima begins

LAHORE (APP): The first phase of the annual congregation, 'Raiwind Tablighi Ijtima' started on Thursday, amid tight security arrangements. The Ijtima 2023 will continue from Nov 2 to November 5. According to Ijtima administration, districts and areas participating in the first phase are Kark, Bannu, Lucky Marwat, Dir, Bajaur, Timargarah, Chitral, Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Attock, Tala Gang, Chakwal, Sargodha, Khushab, Bhakkar, Mianwali, all districts of Kashmir and all districts of Sindh province, except for Karachi.

## World cannot remain indifferent to the plight of Palestinians: Governor

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that all human beings are connected to one another. The world can not remain indifferent to the plight of Palestinians. The way innocent men, women and innocent children are being martyred in Gaza by bombing at refugee camps, hospitals, and civilian population is not only sad but shameful. The international

community should play a role in stopping the oppression of innocent Palestinians. He expressed these views while speaking as a special guest at the Health Professions Education Conference at University of Lahore today. In the conference, the Caretaker provincial Health Minister, Prof. Dr. Javed Akram and vice chancellors of medical universities and foreign delegates were present.

## PUC appeals to observe 'Children's Martyrs Day of Palestine' nationwide

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) on Thursday appealed for the observance of 'Children's Martyrs Day of Palestine' throughout the country on Friday, underscoring the importance of addressing the Palestinian issue through the establishment of a free and independent state. Addressing a press conference at Jamia Manzoor-ul-Islamia, PUC Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, clarified to the United Nations that the issue of

Palestine would not be resolved through ceasefire and aid but rather through the establishment of a self-determined Palestinian state. He said in a notable meeting with the Palestinian ambassador, Chief of Army Staff, General Syed Asim Munir affirmed Pakistan's commitment to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Palestinian people, emphasizing that the government, armed forces, and the general populace of Pakistan were resolute in their support for the Palestinian people.

He commended the Saudi government's initiative to establish official funds for aiding the Palestinian population, reflecting the strong stance of Saudi Arabia in supporting their Palestinian brethren. He urged Pakistan to follow suit and establish special funds at the government level to assist the Palestinian people. Ashrafi who is also the Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries.

## Smog may cause throat, lungs, respiratory system complications: Minister

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare Dr. Jamal Nasir has warned that smog can lead to diseases of throat, lungs, and respiratory system, and urged the public to take preventive measures. He advised citizens to wear masks to protect themselves from smog and also recommended frequent hand, face, and eye washing to mitigate its harmful

effects. In case of a scratchy throat, he suggested gargling with lukewarm water. The Punjab government has taken action to combat smog by making it mandatory to spray water near construction sites and development projects. Furthermore, farmers have been encouraged to refrain from burning crop residues and dispose of them in an environmentally friendly manner.

## Brother in law shoots Basharat Dogar

BUREWALA (APP): Well-known political and social personality Basharat Ali Dogar was allegedly shot dead by his brother-in-law over financial matters in the limits of Sheikh Fazal police station on Thursday. Police sources said that the accused managed to escape from the scene after shooting his brother in law. According to the details, Sardar Basharat Ali Dogar, a well-known political and social figure resident of Chak no 104/E-B was present at his house.

## KP Minister pledges financial support to Mental and General Hospital

MANSEHRA (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Transport, Communications, and Construction, Ahmad Jan Khan Thursday has pledged to contribute 50,000 rupees from his monthly salary to the Mental and General Hospital in Daddar, Mansehra. This financial support is aimed at enhancing the hospital's services and providing better healthcare to the public. The minister expressed these views during his visit to the Mental and General Hospital in Mansehra, where he inaugurated several essential facilities. These facilities included a solar system, a labor room, a dental clinic, and a new X-ray machine, all funded by the hospital management committee.

## International News

## Red hands raised in Congress as US seeks more funds for wars

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: As US secretaries of state and defence began to brief the Senate Appropriations Committee on Tuesday on the Biden administration's request for more money to fund the wars in Israel and Ukraine, a line of anti-war protesters got up and raised red-stained hands in the air. They shouted: "Ceasefire Now, Protect the Children of Gaza and Stop Funding Genocide" before they were removed from the room. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin testified to the Senate Appropriations Committee

on the Biden administration's request for an additional \$106 billion, which includes \$14.3 billion for Israel, \$9 billion for humanitarian relief—including for Israel and Gaza. A press release sent to various media outlets said the protesters were from an organisation called CODEPINK. The organisation said multiple members, including 29-year US Army veteran and former diplomat Col. Ann Wright and peace activist David Barrows, were arrested for their actions. CODEPINK said the red-painted hands of the silent audience members were meant to symbolise blood.

The protesters also said they attended the hearing to denounce the Biden administration's support for "genocide" against Palestinians in Gaza. Secretary Blinken did not respond to the protesters, but when he was asked later about the possibility of a ceasefire, he said that would only help Hamas regroup. A pause, however, for humanitarian reasons can be considered, he added. Also on Tuesday, a prominent Jewish intellectual and New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in his column, "Israel, it's time to consider a ceasefire".



WASHINGTON: US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin testifies as protesters calling for a ceasefire in Gaza raise their hands, painted in red, during a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Austin.

## Bolivia cuts ties with Israel over Gaza crisis

**Monitoring Desk**  
LA PAZ: Bolivia said on Tuesday it was severing diplomatic ties with Israel over its "disproportionate" attacks in Gaza, as two other Latin American countries recalled their ambassadors over the mounting humanitarian crisis. Bolivia "has decided to cut diplomatic relations with the State of Israel, in repudiation and condemnation of the aggressive and disproportionate Israeli military offensive being carried out in the Gaza Strip," deputy foreign minister Freddy

Mamani told a press conference. Minister of the Presidency Maria Nela Prada also announced the country was sending humanitarian aid to Gaza. "We demand an end to the attacks" in the Gaza Strip "which have so far caused thousands of civilian deaths and the forced displacement of Palestinians," she said at the same press conference. The government of leftist Luis Arce is the first in Latin America to cut ties with Israel since October 7.

## Putin signs bill revoking Russia's ratification of a global nuclear test ban treaty

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin on Thursday signed a bill revoking Russia's ratification of a global nuclear test ban, a move that Moscow said was needed to establish parity with the United States. Putin has said that rescinding the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, also known as the CTBT, would "mirror" the stand taken by the U.S., which has signed but not ratified the nuclear test ban.

## Saudi Arabia tells US it still wants 'normalisation' with Israel, but links talks to 'ceasefire'

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: Saudi Arabia has reassured the Biden administration that it's still interested in pursuing a potential agreement to normalise relations with Israel after the crisis in Gaza ends, the White House said. The visiting Saudi Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman met White House National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan on Monday and their talks focused on the crisis in Gaza as sides affirmed the urgent need to increase humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians, the White House said. "Without getting into specifics — we came away from those discussions confident that we have a path to get back towards

normalisation and that there is an interest on the Saudi side to pursue that," US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters in Washington on Tuesday evening. The Saudi defence minister, however, said in a tweet that he stressed to Mr Sullivan the need for an immediate 'ceasefire' in Gaza, protection of civilians, allowing humanitarian aid and resuming the peace process. Mr Kirby acknowledged that the Gaza situation makes it harder to discuss long-term peace plans but said "we are still committed to it, and it is clear to us that the Saudis are still committed to it." The White House said that the Saudis also

"emphasised the importance of working towards a sustainable peace between Israelis and Palestinians, building on the work that was already underway between Saudi Arabia and the United States over recent months." The recent talks between the United States and Saudi Arabia have revolved around the ongoing crisis and the pursuit of potential normalisation of relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel. The later part of the talks is based on the 2020 Abraham Accords, which marked a historic diplomatic breakthrough, normalising relations between Israel and several Arab nations, including the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco.

## Iran, Turkiye call for 'regional conference' to avert spread of unrest

**Monitoring Desk**  
ANKARA: Turkiye and Iran on Wednesday called for a regional conference aimed at averting the spread of unrest into the Middle East. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan met counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian a day after Iran's top diplomat met Hamas leaders in Qatar. Fidan said Turkiye was pushing for an immediate ceasefire because "it is not difficult to predict that this spiral of violence will grow" without a permanent solution to the Israel-Palestine issue. "We do not want the human tragedy in Gaza to turn into a war that affects

the region's countries," Fidan said. The Iranian foreign minister "shared with us that there are strong indications that other armed elements in the region may intervene in the conflict if conditions do not change", Fidan said. "A ceasefire and peace have become more essential," Amir-Abdollahian said a peace conference involving "Muslim and Arab" countries should be held "as soon as possible". Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei urged Muslim countries to halt trade with Israel, including oil exports, in response to its bombardment of Gaza.



A man reacts as Palestinians search for casualties a day after Israeli strikes on houses in Jabalia refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip.

## Sheikh Mohamed orders treatment of 1,000 Palestinian children at UAE hospitals

**Monitoring Desk**  
DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates said on Thursday it planned to treat 1,000 Palestinian children from Gaza, without saying how they would leave the Israeli-occupied enclave for the Gulf state. Israel has tightened its blockade and bombarded Gaza for nearly four weeks in retaliation for the Oct 7 attack by Hamas that Israeli authorities say killed 1,400. The Gaza health ministry says 8,796 Palestinians, including 3,648 children, have been killed in Israeli strikes since Oct 7.

Gaza's border with Egypt — the only exit point apart from the closed border crossings with Israel — has largely been shut since Oct 7, although several hundred foreign nationals and a small number of injured Palestinians, to be treated in Egyptian hospitals, have crossed into Egypt since Wednesday. Qatar brokered that deal to allow some people to leave Gaza, and a diplomatic source has said some 7,500 foreign passport holders would leave Gaza over the course of about two weeks.



Brazil's president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva looks on during a press conference at the Planalto Palace in Brasilia, Brazil.

## Over 400 evacuated to Egypt from Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
ISMAILIA: Seventy-six wounded Palestinians and 335 foreigners entered Egypt from the Gaza Strip on Wednesday in first such crossing since the Oct 7 Hamas raid that triggered an ongoing episode of hostilities by Israeli forces in the besieged enclave. A day after an Israeli air strike killed about 50 people and wounded 150

## United States troubled by imminent attack on North Darfur

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: The United States is troubled by reports of an imminent attack on El Fasher, North Darfur, and is calling on the warring parties in Sudan to immediately cease further attacks, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday. "The United States calls on the warring parties to immediately cease further attacks."



KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Special Service Group and Qatari Naval Special Forces demonstrating Counter Piracy Operation during Joint Naval Exercise MUHARIB AL-BAHR VI, held in Karachi.

## Battles rage in Gaza as Israeli strikes on refugee camp kills more than 195 people

### Monitoring Desk

GAZA: More foreigners prepared to leave the besieged Gaza Strip on Thursday as the Palestinian authorities said at least 195 Palestinians died in Israeli attacks on the Jabalia refugee camp, strikes that Israel claimed killed Hamas commanders. The Gaza health ministry said at least 8,796 Palestinians in the narrow coastal enclave, including 3,648 children, have been killed by Israeli strikes since October 7.

At least 320 foreign citizens on an initial list of 500, as well as dozens of severely injured Gazans, crossed into Egypt on

Wednesday under a deal between Israel, Egypt and Hamas. Passport holders from Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, the United Kingdom and the United States were evacuated.

Gaza officials said the Rafah border crossing would reopen on Thursday so more foreigners could exit. A diplomatic source said some 7,500 foreign passport holders would leave Gaza over about two weeks.

Explosions were heard in the early hours of Thursday around the al-Quds hospital in densely popu-

lated Gaza City, the Palestinian Red Crescent said. Israeli authorities had previously warned the hospital to evacuate immediately, which UN officials said was impossible without endangering patients.

Gaza's media office said on Thursday that at least 195 Palestinians were killed in the two Israeli attacks on Jabalia, with 120 missing. At least 777 people were wounded, it said in a statement.

Palestinians on Wednesday sifted through rubble in a desperate hunt for trapped victims. "It is a massacre," said one witness.

UN human rights officials said strikes on the camp could be a war crime.

"Given the high number of civilian casualties and the scale of destruction following Israeli air strikes on Jabalia refugee camp, we have serious concerns that these are disproportionate attacks that could amount to war crimes," the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights wrote on social media site X.

The Israeli military announced the death of another soldier in Gaza fighting, bringing to 17 the number killed since ground operations were expanded on Friday.

## President advises youth to play productive role in exponential growth of Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday called upon the youth and fresh graduates who were about to enter their professional lives, to play their productive role in the country's exponential growth. He said the country at this stage, badly needed the exponential growth rather than linear growth as it was already far behind the region in many sectors including education.

Addressing the 26th Convocation ceremony of the COMSATS University here, the president believed that if the students in their professional lives, ensure justice in the society, con-

tribute productively in the country's development, and learn to share their resources with the poor, the country would see new heights of prosperity and development.

Today, he said Artificial Intelligence or Computer Science was the second leg of every profession. "The world is running very fast so we must have to run with same pace as the world do." Otherwise, he said the country would lag further behind the region and the world.

The president said the world was growing exponentially, however Pakistan's growth pace was

relatively slower in the region. He said 9% of total intermediate students manage to get admissions in the higher education while in the region, the ratio was over 25%. The universities should increase enrollments of the students to achieve exponential growth in the country, he added. He maintained lack of timely decision was one of the major reason behind slow growth.

We lacked vision for example, he said, adding we could not foresee the electricity requirement before time and when the time came, we took emergency decision to install power plants that cost much higher.

## Discipline key part of students' character-building alongside education: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday terming the role of teachers significant in the reformation of society said their specific focus on the character-building of students could lead to the progress of the nation.

PM Kakar said besides education, training of discipline among the youth was of prime significance in shaping their character. Experienced teachers can play a vital role in mentoring the

youth, he added.

The prime minister expressed these views in a meeting with his former teacher Nisar Ahmed, whom he warmly received here at the Prime Minister's House. He mentioned that Quaid-e-Azam in his golden principles also laid emphasis on discipline in addition to unity and faith.

"Only a disciplined and organized nation can contribute to the development of itself and the world," he said.

## No discrimination in status of AJK ministries as all enjoy equal significance: AJK PM

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that all departments and ministers were of equal importance.

Talking to a public delegation that called on him at Jammu Kashmir House in the federal metropolis late Wednesday, the PM said that there was no size of all of the ministries vis-a-vis portfolios since all ministries enjoy the same size and status but it was the hard work and devotion of the people at the helm of affairs that matters the most, he emphasised.

He said that it was high time that the youth

should focus on IT instead of wasting time on useless activities. The Prime Minister said that idleness fosters anxiety and chaos in society. The PM said that he had issued special instructions to the minister for IT to use all available resources to attract the educated youth towards IT and skill development. He said that there was a dire need to focus on agriculture and livestock. He said that his government would use all its resources on public welfare projects. He said that the government was going to launch a great welfare project worth 5 billion rupees for widows, orphans, disabled and divorced women.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Central Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Sardar Shahid Ahmed Leghari meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki.

## FO says: Repatriation of illegal foreigners to continue without any reconsideration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday, calling the policy on repatriation of illegal foreigners consistent with domestic laws and international norms, reiterated that the process would continue in an orderly and phased manner without any reconsideration.

"The policy is very clear... Individuals who are illegals, who do not possess legal documents, who have overstayed their visas will be repatriated. So, there is, at this point, no reconsideration of the policy," Foreign Office Spokesperson Murtaza Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing a day after the policy came into effect over the expiry of the October 31 deadline.

She explained that the Illegal Foreigners Repatria-

tion Plan (IFRP) applied to all foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan, irrespective of their nationality and country of origin. However, it was not applicable to individuals enjoying refugee status.

Asked about the number of countries whose nationals were being repatriated, the spokesperson said it could be approximately a dozen, or maybe slightly fewer.

She said the government was in contact with those countries and the lists provided by such countries were under discussion between the two sides.

She said the government was also engaged with a number of countries, including the United States, with respect to Afghan individuals who were to be resettled in third countries.

## Pak-Qatar Navy Special Forces bilateral exercise ends

KARACHI (INP): The 6th edition of bilateral exercise MUHARIB-AL-BAHR between Pakistan Navy Special Service Group (SSG(N)) and Qatari Naval Special Forces (QNSF) concluded at Karachi.

The exercise is conducted annually alternatively at Pakistan and Qatar. The two-week exercise comprised of various operations such as Frogman Ops, coordinated Maritime Interdiction Operations, Ship Visit- Board-Search and Seizure (SVBSS) Procedures, Sniper Weapon Firing, Day and Night Counter Terrorism Training, Close Quarter Combat (CQC) at Ship in a Box Mockup.

## Lasbela police arrests bike lifter, recover stolen m/c

LASBELA (APP): In-charge CIA Lasbela, Muhammad Amin Lassi, with his team on Thursday carried out an operation and arrested a bike lifter along with the stolen motorcycle.

The operation was done on the special instructions of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Lasbela Captain (ret) Naveed Alam. The motorcycleist was stopped at the check post who was coming from Karachi at the RCD Road Vayaro Othal.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf in a meeting with Mayor of the London Borough of Hounslow Councilor Afzal Kiyani.

## Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visits Sarawan House, meets Lashkari Rasiani

Independent Report

QUETTA: The senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Sardar Ayaz Sadiq visited the Sarawan House here on Thursday. During the visit, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met the prominent political and tribal personality and former Senator, Nawabzada Lashkari Rasiani.

Also accompanied with Ayaz Sadiq were the provincial president of PML-N, Sheikh Jaffar Mandokhail, Jamal Shah Kakar, Chaduhary Naeem Karim and others.

During the meeting, they discussed about the political situation of the country and province.

Later, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also had one-to-one meeting with Nawabzada Lashkari Rasiani.

Needless to mention here is that the senior PML-N leader arrived in Quetta on Wednesday to meet the political leaders and obviously to invite them to join the party.

Many political leaders and former parliamentarians had also met Sardar Ayaz Sadiq the other day.

## Dashti directs to accelerate works of ongoing projects

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Kamber Dashti on Thursday directed that works of ongoing development projects should be speeded up to provide better connectivity to people of Quetta city, as the densely populated city was in dire need of wide roads and flyovers.

Dashti was reviewing the ongoing development projects in Quetta city including Gahi Khan Chowk

Flyover, Customs Chowk Flyover, Raisani Road to Sabzal Road and Sardar Munir Ahmad Mengal Road.

Chief Engineer Design Dr. Sajjad Baloch gave a detailed briefing regarding the progress on ongoing projects.

Dashti said that the development projects of Quetta city have been stalled due to various reasons, but due to strict monitoring, the projects were now in the final stage of completion.

## NADRA contradicts false propaganda

ISLAMABAD (INP): NADRA has released an official statement addressing the recent video circulating on social media featuring a NADRA mobile registration van (MRV).

According to the NADRA spokesperson, MRVs are deployed to provide vital services to citizens residing in remote areas, often in response to requests from local communities and social and political figures.

The video in question is approximately four months old, capturing an MRV parked in a building near Khyber Chowk in the Baldia Town area of Karachi, dated July 20, 2023.

## FIA arrested fake Ministers from Mardan

PESHAWAR (APP): FIA Mardan and anti-corruption in a joint operation, arrested two fake ministers famous for making fake ID Cards for Afghans.

According to details given by the official of the FIA Mardan, Muhammad Shafiq and his son Modaat Ali were arrested from Mardan Kachri Chowk, involved in fake documents, scams, and have a connection with the international Mafia.

The FIA official said, the arrested accused used to make fake ID cards, Pakistani identity cards, Afghanistan Taskara, Pakistan domicile, and other documents and have a connection with the international mafia. For making such documents they charged huge amounts of money, FIA officials said.

Both suspects were arrested red-handedly by the authorities during the joint operation, FIA officials said.

## Domki pays surprise visit to Quaidabad Police Station

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister, Mir Ali Mardan Domki paid surprise visit to the Quaidabad Police Station here on Thursday.

The Chief Minister was accompanied by the Provincial Minister Home, Captain (Retd) Zubair Jamali besides other concerned high ups.

He checked the roznama and record room of the police station.

The SSP Operation, Jawad Tariq briefed the Chief Minister about the working of police stations and law and order situation.

The Chief Minister on the occasion directed the police high ups to provide maximum relief and easiness to the general public approaching the police for their complaints.

He also directed them to maintain the environment of trust between police and public.



QUETTA: Afghan families gather at Afghan Consulate to register themselves for returning to their homeland, in Quetta.

## Pakistani Diaspora's role in progress of country, an irrefutable reality: Raja

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Thursday said that Pakistani Diaspora around the world had always played pivotal and substantiated role for progress and development of country.

He expressed these views during meeting with the delegation of Pakistani Diaspora under leadership of Mayor of the London Borough of Hounslow Councilor Afzal Kiyani, said a press release issued here.

He also said that ensuring participation of Pakistani Diaspora in development and progress of country had been principle stance of Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

"The proactive role played by Pakistani Diaspora in Pakistani development and progress of the country is an undeniable reality," he added.

While underscoring the significance of high-

lighting positive image of Pakistan across the world, he said, "Pakistani Diaspora must be committed to ensure high-lighting positive image of country."

The speaker also emphasized the need to encourage and enhance the positive and proactive role offered by Pakistani Diaspora for their inclusion in progress of every socio-economic segment of country.

Further, Raja Pervez said that Pakistan people had always proven their talent and potential in diverse fields.

He stressed to resolve challenges faced by Pakistani Diaspora on priority.

"Highlighting positive image of Pakistan is the prime responsibility of Pakistani media and media can play positive image of country as Pakistan is enriched in every aspect," he added.

## Solangi for collective efforts to protect planet earth from negative impacts of climate change

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Thursday called for collective revolutionary measures to avoid the damages caused climate change.

Delivering his speech at the "Pre COP28: Paris to Dubai" seminar here the minister said that the future of the coming generations must be secured.

The minister urged the international community to play its role in the countries being badly affected by climate change.

The planet, he added faced the dangers of climate change and the government, or any department alone could not solve this problem.

"We need a strategic vision to tackle the challenge of climate change," Murtaza Solangi maintained. The whole society has to realize about climate change issue, Murtaza Solangi said adding:

"We are facing many social problems to deal with climate change".

Solangi said without bringing about change in society, the dangers of climate change could not be addressed. Parents, teachers, film, television drama writers, poets, elders in the society must discuss the harms of climate change and there was a need to change the whole culture system.

He also said that media must play its role in highlighting climate change

issue. For combating climate change, every body will have to actively participate in plantation campaigns as climate change was a threat to the human existence. He said that Pakistan was one of the most affected countries by climate change although it had very small role in causing climate change. The minister said that the present generation had a responsibility to take urgent steps to protect the planet from the negative impacts of climate change for the sake for future generations.

"Do we want to be known in human history as the generation that was so selfish and self-centered that we want to deplete and destroy planet earth.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Health Ameer Muhammad Khan Jozegai inaugurates Cardiac Ward at Civil Hospital.