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COAS expresses satisfaction with troops' operational preparedness.

Top military brass reaffirms full support to national security, regional peace

Reaffirms unequivocal diplomatic, political support to Palestinians; Military commanders also express concerns over continued repression of people in India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir; Pay rich tribute to supreme sacrifices of martyrs; Forum urges the people to stay determined and united.

RAWALPINDI (APP): The 82nd Formation Commanders Conference on Thursday resolved to fully support government's initiatives in various domains for sustainable recovery of the economy and curbing illegal activities including smuggling, hoarding, electricity theft, implementation of One Document Regime, dignified repatriation of illegal foreigners and safeguarding of national database etc.

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir presided over the 82nd Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, which was attended by Corps Commanders,

Principal Staff Officers and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Pakistani Citizens.

The participants were briefed on professional matters, national security challenges and measures being undertaken to counter traditional and non-traditional security threats.

The forum took a holistic view of the ongoing counter-terrorism operations and resolved that all

terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on the behest of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan will be dealt with full might of the state.

The COAS expressed satisfaction over operational preparedness and high standards of training and morale maintained by formations to deal with the emerging threat paradigm.

The forum expressed unequivocal diplomatic, moral and political support to the people of Palestine and reiterated Pakistan's principled stance supporting the two-state solution, based on pre-1967 borders with Al Quds Al Sharif as the capital of Palestine.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir addressing 82nd Formation Commanders Conference

PM stresses media role to highlight outcomes of drive against smuggling, power theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday urged the media to play its role for creating public awareness on the outcomes of the government's initiatives like drive against smuggling and power theft and its benefits for the common man.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society, also emphasized the media to highlight the importance of the strategy for economic stability, formulated under the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

He said that the media had a key role to play in promoting good governance, besides creating awareness among the masses.

Being the fourth pillar of the state, the media's

contribution towards society's progress and intellectual development of the people, was of crucial importance, he added.

He also assured the delegation of the government's support for the resolution of the issues confronting the newspaper industry.

He instructed the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to ensure the payment of advertisement dues payable to the newspapers by immediately coordinating with all relevant ministries and departments.

The delegation comprised APNS President Naz Afreen, Secretary General Samad Ali and Finance Secretary Shahab Zuberi.

Caretaker Information and Broadcasting Minister Murtaza Solangi, Federal Information Secretary and relevant senior officers also attended the meeting.

Pakistan firmly supports two-state solution of Palestine issue: President Arif Alvi

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Dr Arif Alvi has reiterated that Pakistan firmly supports a just and peaceful resolution of the Palestine issue, based on the two-state solution. He said that the world must realize the pain of the Palestinian people and play its role in ending the Israeli atrocities in Gaza that had killed thousands of innocent people, including women and children.

The President expressed these views while talking to Imam Khatib at Masjid Al-Haram and Advisor at Saudi Royal Courts of Saudi Arabia, Dr Saleh bin Abdullah Humaid, who called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today.

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Mr Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, also attended the meeting. The meeting exchanged views on the situa-

tion in Gaza, Islamophobia, and other challenges being faced by the Islamic World.

Welcoming the Imam Khatib, the President said that Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) enjoyed excellent brotherly relations, based on common faith, shared history, and people-to-people contacts.

Dr Saleh bin Abdullah Humaid stated the Muslim World had adopted a unanimous stance on the Palestine issue that the Palestinians should be given their due rights based on the two-state solution.

He remarked that joint efforts by the Muslim World were needed to end the ongoing violence and atrocities in Palestine and extend humanitarian and diplomatic support.

The President appreciated the role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(KSA) for important Muslim causes. He emphasized the need for unity and solidarity among Muslim nations to address the common challenges being faced by them.

The President lauded the leadership of KSA for the recent Saudi-Iran normalization of relations and termed it a major breakthrough that would bring peace and security in the region, besides promoting trade and development. He also appreciated the Saudi initiatives for peace and stability in Yemen, Syria, and Sudan. The President deeply thanked KSA for its economic support to Pakistan in difficult times as well as for extending humanitarian aid and supporting development projects, especially in the education and healthcare sectors in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of All Pakistan Newspapers Society calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

Balochistan most suitable region for international investment, CM tells Turkish Ambassador

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that Pakistan and Turkey enjoy longstanding religious and cultural relations, however, the mutual cooperation can be boosted in different sectors further between the two countries.

The Chief Minister said that there would be positive impacts on economy of both countries by increasing trade volume.

The Chief Minister was speaking to the Ambassador of Turkey to Pa-

kistan, Mr Mehmet Pacaci, who called on him on Thursday.

During the course of meeting, they exchanged views on the matters of mutual interests besides the relations between Pakistan and Turkey.

The Chief Minister said that there is great potential of investment in different sectors in the province saying that it is the suitable region for investment. He said that he honours the desire of the Turkish government for investment in the province.

The Chief Minister appreciated the services of

Turkey educational institutions are commendable for promotion of quality education in the province.

Speaking to the Chief Minister, Turkish Ambassador said that 10 quality educational institutions are working in the country to impart quality education to more than 13,000 students.

He announced that more scholarships would be given to the students of Balochistan.

Mr. Mehmet on the occasion said that we are delirious of making investment in different sectors including culture and tourism in the province.

Those who were present in the meeting were included vice chancellor of Balochistan university, Dr Shafiqur Rehman, vice

Governor committed to provide chances of online business & employment to jobless youth

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that we would provide opportunities of making online business and employment to the unemployed youth by imparting them the training of information technology and artificial intelligence. He said that our youth can earn money without making investment while sitting at home.

He said that we can achieve our target with wholehearted cooperation and partnership of the public sector universities of the province. The Governor expressed these views while presiding over the meeting about Balochistan IT initiative digital here at the Governor House on Thursday.

Those who were present in the meeting were included vice chancellor of Balochistan university, Dr Shafiqur Rehman, vice

chancellor of Balochistan university of IT, Engineering and Management Sciences, Dr Khalid Hafeez, vice chancellor of Loralai university, Dr Ehsanullah Kakar, principal Secretary to Governor, Hashim Khan Ghilzai, Dean of NUST Balochistan, Dr Waseem Khaliq, besides other concerned high ups. The meeting reviewed procedure of written and online test for the candidates selected for training, preparation of course outline, its duration and other related matters.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor said that we have targeted to impart modern IT training to some 10,000 unemployed youngsters. In the preliminary stage, there can be some less or more, however, we would overcome our weaknesses gradually and would succeed in achieving the target set in interest of the province.

Campaign to begin in remaining districts from 27th: Special anti-polio vaccination drive due to begin in three high risk districts today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The special anti-polio campaign is scheduled to begin in three polio high risk districts of Balochistan including Quetta, Pishin and Killa Abdullah from today (Friday).

However, the campaign would be started in remaining 33 districts of the province from November 27, 2023.

During the campaign, over 2.596 million children below five years of age would be administered anti-polio drops all over the province.

This was informed by

the Coordinator of Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradication, Syed Zahid Shah on Thursday.

According to the EOC Coordinator, around 11,000 teams would take part in the anti-polio campaign being launched in the province.

He informed that all the polio teams would be provided necessary security during the immunization campaign.

He noted with contentment that no fresh polio case has been reported for last two years in the province.

EC nullifies PTI intra party election orders to hold election again

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) while nullifying intra party election of PTI has ordered to hold election within 20 days.

According to EC intra party election of PTI were not transparent. Election will be conducted within prescribed time.

The EC while announcing September 13 reserved judgment on PTI intra party election nullified the intra party election besides ordering for holding election again within 20 days.

It has been said in the EC's order that EC has conducted five hearings on the matter of PTI intra party election. It has been decided after it that election symbol of bat will remain with PTI and if intra party elections are not conducted within 20 days then election symbol will be withdrawn.

According to EC decision PTI has failed to conduct transparent election. Despite it we are not giving extreme decision.

Govt to provide maximum facilities to ECP for holding free, fair elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said the caretaker government was committed to conduct free, fair and transparent elections and it would provide all possible facilities to the Election Commission of Pakistan for conducting elections.

He said this during a meeting with the delegation of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), which was led by its President Major General (retired) Raza Muhammad.

The current political and economic situation of the country, elimination of fake news and disinformation, upcoming general elections, social media issues, and elections in other countries of South Asia were discussed in the meeting, a press release said.

The delegation informed the minister about the IPRI's latest research on the political scenario of the country, and appreciated the caretaker government's

commitment for conducting free, fair and transparent elections.

"Equal opportunities are being provided to all political parties, there will be no discrimination against anyone," Murtaza Solangi said.

He said for improvement of the political environment in the country, development of consensus among all political parties was indispensable.

The minister said the world was facing the problems of misinformation, disinformation and fake news, while the latter was the biggest challenge on social media.

All stakeholders would have to play their role in ending fake news, he maintained. The role of media in the upcoming general elections was also discussed in the meeting.

Solangi said the media would be provided a conducive environment during the elections. Equal coverage was being given to all political parties on state media, he added.



QUETTA: Ambassador of Turkiye Mehmet Pacaci meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Passing out parade of 15th batch of ATF jawans: Ours' ultimate goal is to establish sustainable peace in Balochistan: Jamali

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has stated that the provincial government has taken certain steps for increasing capacity of police force as ours' ultimate goal is to establish sustainable peace in the province.

He said that the Balochistan police is playing the lead role in fight against terrorism and the ATF personals have the capacity and capability to fight against terrorists.

The restoration of peace has been our topmost priority from the day one.

The Minister Home was addressing the passing out parade of 15th batch of Anti Terrorist Force (ATF) at the ATF training school here on Thursday.

The Provincial Minister for Women Development, Ms. Shahina Khan, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh, Commandant of ATF School, Colonel (Retd) Asad Farooq, Additional IGP, Jawad Ahmed Dogar and other high ups were present at the passing out.

In all 300 jawans of ATF passed out at the passing out after completion of basic anti-terrorist training at the ATF school.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar presiding over a review meeting regarding IT Initiative Digital Balochistan

When nothing found against me I was removed on receiving salary from my son: Nawaz

MURREE (Online): PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif has said when nothing was found against him then he was removed on receiving salary from his son.

"Who brought the country to this situation where our country stands now. The era after our era ruined culture of the country. I did good that I did not receive 5 billion dollars and conducted nuclear blasts. We bade good bye to IMF. I did not seek even penny from any one. Today who is earning Rs 25000 will spend his life how, he said this while addressing party workers along with Maryam Nawaz here Thursday.

We have plundered our home with our own hands. Send my message to entire nation if they are understanding what I am saying. We should reform ourselves.

These people have done big injustice with the country. You have been listening tales and still are listening them.

I live in Lahore but Murree is my second home, he remarked.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Temporary ceasefire

On the 48th day of Israel's war on Gaza, more than six weeks of a settler-coloniser state having massacred thousands, displaced even more and destroyed and flattened a city to unrecognizable levels, finally a ceasefire agreement has been reached between Israel and Hamas. Unfortunately, the agreement is not for a cessation in violence by Israel but really a 'four-day pause' in the air strikes and raids and killing. Both sides have for now agreed to this arrangement which includes Hamas releasing 50 of the 237 Israeli hostages it currently holds captive. Israel has agreed to release 150 Palestinian women and children from its prisons. For context, around 237 people were reportedly captured by Hamas during its October 7 attack; there are 33 children among the hostages. Israeli forces arrested 3000 Palestinians in daily raids across the occupied territories of West Bank and East Jerusalem, adding to the 5200 Palestinians already in Israeli jails; nearly 150 of the Palestinians in Israeli prisons are children. As part of the ceasefire deal, humanitarian aid will also be allowed inside Gaza.

Since October 7, the Israeli army has killed more than 14,000 Palestinians; 6000 of these are children. According to reports, around 1.7 million Palestinians have been displaced. The ceasefire demand had been growing in the past two weeks, as report after report showed Israel committing war crimes openly, with the blessings of Western world powers like the US and UK. It has been said that Qatar had been mediating between Israel and Hamas and this ceasefire is seen as a result of these efforts. Not insignificant was also the fact that on Tuesday, BRICS countries had called for an end to Israel's war on Gaza while on Monday Arab and Muslim ministers too had demanded an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, as they visited Beijing for solely this purpose: how to get a pause in the violence and mayhem being unleashed by Israel on more than two million Palestinian lives.

In an interview with Al Jazeera after news broke of the ceasefire, which is supposed to start today, Hamas official Abu Marzouq said that Hamas seeks a permanent ceasefire, is agreed to a prisoner swap but is worried Israel could target those Palestinians released from Israeli prisons, and that the whole world has been asking for a ceasefire except the US. The attitude of the US, in particular US President Joe Biden, can in the politest terms only be called an open support for a genocide. In fact, till Wednesday night, at least, Israel had not curbed its violence. This is in keeping with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stance: we agree to a four-day 'ceasefire' but it is only temporary. What does this mean? According to some analysts, Israel is smarting from the loss of face it has had to contend with as a result of its unrestrained campaign of terror in Gaza.

When the pie shrinks



By Khurram Husain

The state, the economy and the people pull the resource envelope of the country in different directions. This is especially the case when periods of macroeconomic adjustments get going, meaning when an IMF programme is being implemented.

The state needs revenue. The economy requires liquidity. The people want incomes. Each of these can come from different sources, and they are finite. When the economy is growing, these resources grow in tandem and, for a moment, it seems as if everybody is getting what they want.

These are the feel-good years. But when the growth stops, a tug-of-war ensues between the state, big business and 'the people' to secure their respective shares of the pie.

Each episode of adjustment looks substantially the same, but differences of detail do emerge. Growth stalls, interest rates rise, the currency is devalued, utility prices rise, taxes are applied. But look at where the resources flow during these times, and you'll get a better idea of who is getting how much when the pie shrinks.

An episode of adjustment began in July this year, when the country signed onto its latest IMF Stand-by Arrangement, and its first review just ended successfully. Now look closely at where the resources have gone during these months. Banks declared record-high profits all year.

Between July and September of the year, the whole corporate sector

saw the "highest-ever quarterly earnings" (post tax) according to a report put out by Topline Securities. Listed companies raked in Rs417 billion in post-tax profits in these months, of which Rs149bn were taken by the banks alone.

Make sure you understand this before moving on. Banks took in more than one-third of the total profits of all listed companies in the first three months since the IMF programme began. All sectors in the listed companies' universe saw their quarterly profits rise in the same period, even if by varying amounts. Cement, fertiliser and automobiles saw the highest quarterly profits they have made in almost two years.

Each sector paid out a rich harvest of dividends to their shareholders. According to the same report, Rs97bn were paid out in dividends, of which Rs51bn was by banks alone. The amount was higher by 13 per cent from the same period last year. A small number of people were made very rich in these months.

At the same time, small and medium enterprises issued SOS calls for survival. After all, these are months in which demand in the economy is collapsing, large-scale manufacturing is registering near zero growth, high interest rates are weighing on debt service costs of corporates, and the state is thirsting for revenue. Partially out of this thirst, the government imposed a 'windfall tax' on the banks for the outside profits they made last year on their foreign currency dealings, aiming to capture up to Rs58bn of these banking sector profits for itself, according to calculations presented by Arif Habib Ltd.

In two years, the banks raked in close to Rs145bn foreign exchange income, so the government seems to be capturing a fairly large chunk of this for itself

through this (supposedly) one-off tax levied earlier in November.

Meanwhile the government's tax revenue collection recorded an increase of 24pc from the same quarter last year. Much of this was due to inflation. A small amount would be due to nominal GDP growth. Suffice it to say, the IMF was left deeply satisfied with the fiscal performance in the first quarter.

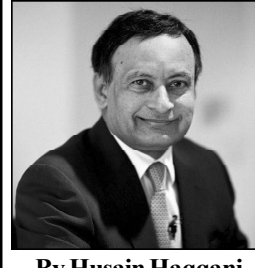
The primary balance registered a surplus of 0.4pc of GDP (which sounds small but is actually quite large), and it is possible the government may have over-performed on the fiscal side compared to the quarterly targets set in the programme.

So business is shutting down. Imports continue to face restrictions, which is what accounts for the current account deficit shrinking so rapidly—as always happens in the first few months of an IMF programme. Small and medium size businesses are on the verge of shutting down.

Confidence in the economy, according to a recent survey by Ipsos, is near rock bottom, with nine out of 10 people surveyed saying the economy is moving in the wrong direction.

Yet big business is raking in profits and dishing out the dividends. Government is getting its revenues, slashing its expenditures, and jumping all the hoops set for it by the IMF programme in what is without doubt the smoothest IMF review we have had since 2019. So the question is, who exactly is suffering here? Why does confidence still remain so low? he answer is simple. The poor, the working poor, the salaried classes are all suffering. Their incomes have not moved in tandem with inflation, nor with devaluation. Their savings have eroded. Their costs are seeing one shock after another, with an unending series of utility price hikes.—Courtesy Dawn

Anti-Americanism: rhetoric and reality



By Husain Haqqani

Imran Khan's PTI rushed to condemn the recent meeting between former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and the US ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, as "a significant intrusion into Pakistan's internal matters."

But the party failed to express similar indignation over a letter by eleven US members of Congress belonging to President Biden's Democratic Party, calling for suspension of security assistance to Pakistan pending an inquiry into human rights abuses inside Pakistan. The letter specifically included Imran Khan's name amongst those whose human rights were allegedly being violated.

The fact is that there is nothing unusual about either the US ambassador meeting a major political figure in the country where he is posted or American Congressmen expressing their views on the human rights situation of any country. The conduct of foreign relations between nations requires diplomats' meetings with politicians and public figures of all shades. Blome's meeting with Nawaz Sharif is no more an indication of US preferences in Pakistan's politics than his earlier meetings with other party leaders amounted to endorsing anyone for high office.

Furthermore, US foreign policy is primarily conducted by the president and his team in the executive branch of government not through letters by small groups of Congressmen and women. Members of the US Con-

gress have control over the government's budget, and they sometimes use this power to withhold funding for what they deem to be undesirable policies abroad. But it takes a majority of 100 senators and 435 members of the House of Representatives to approve or cut funding.

A letter by 11 members of Congress is nothing more than the expression of their views, not a policy or budget decision. Although the PTI keeps blaming the US for removing its leader, Imran Khan, from the office of prime minister, it maintains contracts with lobbying and public relations firms in the United States. The members of Congress who signed the latest letter are not known for their knowledge or interest in Pakistan. They most likely acted in response to lobbying.

Last year, official documents revealed that the PTI had hired lobbying firm Fenton-Arlook at a cost of \$25,000 per month. In March this year, a contract to manage the PTI's ties with the US government and media with Washington-based firm, Praia Consultants, came to light. Lobbyists often take advantage of Congressmen's perpetual need for donations and votes to persuade them to speak out on issues in accordance with their client's desires.

The members of Congress who recently wrote to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, to describe the arrests of PTI members and leaders, including Imran Khan, as human rights violations either have Pakistani-American voters in their constituencies or are recipients of the community's financial contributions.

The PTI's current lobbying effort is in the range of two to three hundred thousand dollars per year, which is no more than a drop in the bucket for the

four billion dollar-a-year lobbying business in the US. It is unlikely that it will change American policy and seems geared more towards raising hopes of demoralized party supporters at home. Cult-like fans are expected to forget that the US allegedly caused the removal from power of their hero and start believing that is about to intervene to get him released from prison.

Just so that we are clear, I do not think the US played any role in the political events in Pakistan last year and I believe it has no intention of playing a role in this year's developments either. Ambassador Blome's meeting with Nawaz Sharif and the US Congressmen's letter are important to Pakistanis only because of a widely believed conspiracy theory: that major decisions in Pakistan are subject to American control.

Almost every major Pakistani political party has, at one time or another, popularized that conspiracy theory. As a result, it is not unusual for Pakistanis to look for signals from the US in trying to make sense of the country's bewildering politics. Pakistani politicians engage in anti-American rhetoric while privately assuring Americans of their friendly disposition towards the United States. Declassified records of Pakistani leaders' interaction with their American counterparts serve as the historic record of that pattern.

Every politician seems to understand that reality dictates pragmatism towards the United States, which is a global superpower and wields considerable influence in world affairs. It was Pakistan's major foreign aid provider for years, remains a significant security partner, and is the country's largest export market.—Courtesy The News

Commerce News

Dr. Saif unveils first ever national IT Export Strategy to increase IT Exports, up to \$ 10 bln

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif Thursday unveiled the nation's first ever national IT Export Strategy to increase Pakistan's IT exports, up to \$ 10 billion in the next three years.

Speaking as a chief guest at the launching ceremony, he said that the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB) under Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT) in collaboration with PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), and other international partners, including faculty from the University of Oxford, developed the strategy

closely aligned with the government's vision.

The minister said that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was the only key that opens the door to stabilizing and strengthening the country's economy.

He said that Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had a significant role in enabling the sector and removing departmental bottlenecks. The minister hoped the forum of the SIFC would attract more Foreign Direct Investment in Pakistan.

Highlighting about the strategy to increase ICT exports, Dr. Umar Saif said that according to the official figures, IT exports were \$

2.6 billion, the government would add another 200,000 skilled people to the existing IT workforce, which would increase exports to \$ 5 billion.

Similarly, allowing IT companies to keep dollars (Dollar retention facility) will increase exports by one billion dollars, while the establishment of The Pakistan Startup Fund will increase the total volume of IT exports by another \$ 1 billion to help it meet the target of \$ 10 billion.

Dr. Umar called for the strategy's potential, presenting a vision that prioritizes human resource development, capacity building, the implementation of a freelancers' facilitation program.



RIYADH: SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik meets Ahmad Al-Yamani, CEO Takamol.

Chinese envoy, Gohar Ejaz discuss economic cooperation especially in trade, investment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of Commerce & Industry Gohar Ejaz and Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong in a meeting on Thursday discussed Pakistan-China Economic cooperation, especially in the fields of trade and investment.

The focus of the discussions revolved around the implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which has now entered its second stage, said a press release issued here.

Dr. Ejaz informed the Ambassador that the first phase of CPEC is at an advanced age at an inter-governmental level which has helped Pakistan to develop the infrastructure, road network, and power plants to meet energy needs and now the time has come for the private sectors of both countries to gear up to realise the benefits of the ground that has been prepared by the two governments. Minister heralded the start of a new relationship initiated by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar on the second stage of CPEC.

He urged the Chinese private sector to invest in Pakistan, with particular attention to SEZs in Lahore and Karachi.

He also informed the envoy that he met Ambassador Sha Zu Kang, President of Pak China Friendship Association, in China and they also agreed that this was the way forward.

SNGPL is committed to ensure adequate gas supplies to its valued customers

PESHAWAR (6 AM Report): SNGPL Peshawar Region is supplying gas to its esteemed consumers at appropriate pressure and delivers its services round the clock for satisfaction of the consumers. SNGPL is committed to ensure adequate gas supplies to its valued customers prioritizing domestic consumers during peak cooking hours especially. However, in some areas of our network, low pressures are being faced by our valued customers due to gap between demand and supply being a seasonal impact in winter season.

Therefore, in order to facilitate our valued consumers during the current winter season, SNGPL Peshawar has established special situation rooms where a senior level officer will be available from 0800 hrs to 2300 hrs for in time resolution of low gas pressure issues.

Apart from that, in order to redress the low-pressure issues, SNGPL

has successfully carried out replacement of 223 KMS Old network during FY 2022-23.

Further, SNGPL has laid and commissioned various major operational phases of 16" dia, 12" dia, 8" dia, 6" dia and 4" dia for Peshawar interior city, Cantonment, Warsak Road, Hayatabad, Pabbi and Kohat areas FY 2022-23.

Similarly, in the current Fiscal Year, SNGPL is carrying out several mega projects for ensuring smooth supply of gas to our esteemed consumers specially during cooking hours. These include laying of 10" dia x 20.8 Km Charsadda-Peshawar line transmission line, laying of 16" dia x 11.2 KMS operational phase line in Kohat, laying of 6" x 10.5 KM operational phase line in Charsadda. Apart from these, work on operational phases for further augmenting the network of walled city, Peshawar are also in progress. After completion of these mega projects, gas availability of Peshawar.

Switching to renewable energy way forward for Pakistan: Energy Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali on Thursday said the future of renewable energy in Pakistan holds great promise as the country seeks to address its growing energy demands while mitigating the environmental impact of traditional energy sources.

While addressing a seminar titled Renewable Energy the Way Forward, jointly organized by Information Service Academy and Alliance for Good Governance Foundation, the minister said with abundant sunlight and wind resources, Pakistan has significant potential for solar and wind energy

generation, said a press release. Muhammad Ali said that the government's commitment to increasing the share of renewable in the energy mix, coupled with international support and investment was paving the way for a sustainable energy future. Initiatives such as the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) and the implementation of supportive policies and incentives for renewable energy projects are driving the transition, he said and added, a diversified renewable energy not only enhances energy security but also contributes to reducing carbon emissions, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Energy, Power and Petroleum Muhammad Ali addressing during seminar on "Renewable Energy, The Way Forward" at Information Service Academy.

LESCO detects 29,244 power pilferers in 76 days

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 29,244 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts - Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara - during 76 days of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Thursday that the

company has so far submitted FIR applications against 28,883 electricity thieves, out of which 27,877 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 13,219 accused have been arrested. The spokesman said that all the electricity thieves have been charged so far with 51,678,581 detection units amounting to Rs 2,070,720,552.

Gold price drops by Rs 650 per tola

LAHORE (APP): The price of per tola gold decreased by Rs 650 rupees in the country on Thursday. All Pakistan Gems and Jewelers Association (APGJA) sources told APP that the price of 24-karat gold has decreased by Rs 650 to settle at Rs 215,850 per tola. The association said after a decline of Rs 557, 10 grams of 24-karat gold has settled at Rs185,057. The price of gold in the

Gold imports decrease by 1.1% to \$8.8 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of gold decreased by 1.11 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The gold imports during the July-October (2023-24) were recorded at \$8.883 million as compared to the imports of \$8.983 million during July-October (2022-23), according to PBS data.

In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 189 kilograms of gold during the period under review as compared to the imports of 156 kilograms last year,

showing growth of 21.12 percent. On year-on-year basis, the gold imports decreased by 35.62 percent in October as compared to the same month of last year. The gold imports during October 2023 were recorded at \$1.584 million compared to imports of \$2.461 million. In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 9.81 percent to 35 kilograms in October 2023 as compared to 39.2 kilograms during October 2022.

Meanwhile, on month-on-month basis, the gold imports during October 2023 decreased by 31.96 percent when compared to the imports of \$2.328 million.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where two ships scheduled to load/offload 40,770 tonnes of Cement and 59,170 tonnes Coal, berthed at Multipurpose Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Wednesday. Meanwhile three more ships, carrying 56,607 tonnes Coal, 58,950 tonnes Wheat and 54,798 tonnes Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours. A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, an oil tanker Al-Soor-II left the port on Thursday morning and another ship VTC Phoenix is expected to sail.

Punjab's anti-smog strategy: CM Naqvi declares school closures on Friday & Saturday

LAHORE (APP): The Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Anti-Smog at the Chief Minister's Office today. Important decisions were made based on the recommendations of environmental and health experts. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman attended the meeting through video link. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi briefed the media about the meeting's decisions, stating that educational institutions in 6 divisions, including Lahore, will

remain closed on Friday and Saturday. Markets, restaurants, and businesses will open at 3 pm on those days, with all establishments closed on Sundays in six Divisions. If suitable clouds for rain are present on November 29, artificial rain will be induced in Lahore. In Lahore, 10 thousand students will receive electric bikes with subsidies, and government employees will be provided electric bikes on lease. The Chief Minister announced the closure of vehicle entry on Main Mall Road on Sundays, allowing only bicycles. These measures

are applicable to Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Multan, and Sahiwal divisions due to increased smog effects. Mohsin Naqvi stated that an MoU for installing air filter towers in Lahore has been signed, and a special committee will propose recommendations for providing subsidized electric bikes to students. Steps are also being taken to offer electric bikes on lease to government employees. If conditions permit, artificial rain will be attempted on November 29, contingent on suitable cloud cover.

Information minister launches LWMC mobile app for fee collection

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir has said the ongoing digitalization of administrative institutions is proving instrumental in curbing corruption and enhancing their efficiency. He was addressing the inaugural workshop for digitalization of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) and the launch of a mobile application for fee collection here on Thursday. He highlighted the role of digitalization in making the mu-

nicipal system more transparent. Computerization of workshops, maintenance of complex garbage collection machinery, and fee collection through a mobile application are anticipated to reduce costs and boost revenue. The provincial minister commended the LWMC for justifying its existence through diligent work. Regardless of festive seasons or adverse weather, the company's staff consistently demonstrated dedication. Amir Mir acknowledged the visible improvement in the city's cleanliness.

MDA seals six unapproved commercial buildings

MULTAN (APP): Multan Development Authority (MDA) has raided against unapproved commercial constructions and sealed six illegal commercial buildings. The MDA enforcement teams under the directions of Director General MDA Zahid Ikram, raided Piran Ghaib road and sealed Mitho commercial hall, Anwar milk shop, Shobhan petrol pump unit and four illegal shops owned by Muhammad Afzal. The team also stopped the under-construction work at a shop owned by Dr Iqbal and Muhammad Bilal's under construction hall.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Rasheed Ahmed addressing 7th Convocation of University of Malakand.

Punjab Governor says: Consortium formed for the education & empowerment of women in universities

Independent Report
LAHORE: The scholars from University of Bolton UK under Pak UK Education Gateway Mobility Project with the support of Higher Education Commission and British Council called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor's House Lahore, here today. The delegation of students was led by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Shafiq Naz and Project Lead Engineer Dr. Aqsa Shabbir. Project co-lead, Dr. Amina Moazzam, Dr. Naveed Iqbal and students from Lahore College for Women University who successfully completed the educational tours of British universities under the project were also present. Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the exchange program in the field of education gives students opportunities to learn about modern trends in education. He said that the education of female students and empowering them is very important. Governor Punjab said that a consortium has been formed for the education and empowerment of women in universities. He appreciated the efforts of Project Lead Engineer Dr. Aqsa Shabbir for the promotion of research activities and student exchange programme with British universities.

KP Caretaker Cabinet advances key social welfare initiatives

PESHAWAR (Online): A meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah was held at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar on Thursday. The meeting was attended by caretaker cabinet members, Chief Secretary, and the Additional Chief Secretary Interior, related administrative secretaries, and other pertinent officials. The meeting commenced with the recitation of Fatihah for the late Muhammad Azam Khan, former Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In a significant move, the caretaker cabinet

approved the extension of the monthly stipend program for female students in classes VI to XII within the newly merged districts, extending support until the year 2025. The initiative aims to provide scholarships to 32,833, 37,758, and 43,422 female students in the years 2023, 2024, and 2025, respectively, with a total estimated project cost of 940.5 million rupees. Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed the proposal to link scholarship disbursement with student performance and examination results, requiring a minimum attendance of 70%. Additionally, approval was granted for allocating 2

kanals of land in Tehsil Jamrud, Khyber District for building offices and residential structures of Federal Government Institutions. In a move toward social welfare, the cabinet sanctioned the establishment of a welfare fund for prisoners and prison employees, with a focus on skill development. Under this initiative, 30% of the income generated from products made in jails will be allocated to inmates, enabling them to acquire skills and achieve financial independence upon release. The fund, established from prisoners' and prison employees' contributions, incurs no cost to the government.



LAHORE: The scholars from University of Bolton UK under Pak UK Education Gateway Mobility Project with the support of Higher Education Commission and British Council called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor's House.

ANF recovers 44 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 44 kg of drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday. He informed that 2.4 kg of heroin was recovered from a parcel at a courier office located in Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi. The heroin was soaked in six pants, booked for the UK. 230 grams of weed was recovered from a

parcel sent from Canada at a courier office in Multan. The spokesman informed that 1174 grams hidden in a passenger's trolley bag was recovered at Sialkot airport. The accused was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-769. 7.2 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle on Shangla Hill Road, Faisalabad. 2.4 kg hashish and 150 grams of Ice drug were recovered from a motorcycle rider intercepted on Lahore Road, Faisalabad.

FCCI inks MoU with FAC for promotion of art and culture

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and Faisalabad Arts Council (FAC) have joined hands to promote art and culture in this division on scientific lines. In this connection, a Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) was inked in FCCI where President FCCI Dr Khuram Tariq and Abrar Alam Director FAC signed the MoU on behalf of their

Round-the-clock free food facility at Data Darbar

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has fulfilled yet another promise by introducing the 24/7 'Langar' [free food] facility at the Data Darbar complex within 48 hours. The Auqaf Department took the initiative, in partnership with the Madina Foundation, to feed round-the-clock influx of devotees. The step marks a significant development,

ensuring that devotees and the homeless have continuous access to free food. Auqaf's Secretary and Mian Rasheed of Madina Foundation briefed the media about the arrangements. While chairing a meeting at his office, the CM emphasised the importance of maintaining cleanliness and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the area around Data Darbar.

International News

UN chief pushes for ceasefire as he welcomes deal to free hostages, 'pause' in Gaza bombardment

UNITED NATIONS (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "welcomed" the temporary truce deal reached hours ago between Israel and Hamas, but said it was not enough, with his spokesperson emphasizing that he stands for a humanitarian ceasefire in besieged Gaza. "I welcome the agreement reached by Israel and Hamas. It's an important step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done," the UN chief said in a statement read out at the regular noon briefing at UN Headquarters in New York. For weeks Guterres has been advocating for an indefinite ceasefire for humanitarian reasons, in line with most of the international community, but it has been opposed by Israel and its ally the United States, which say that such a truce would serve to rearm Hamas. "The secretary-general is still pushing for a ceasefire" Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters in response to questions. In his statement, Guterres added that the UN "will

mobilize all its capacities to support the implementation & maximize positive impact on the humanitarian situation in Gaza," which after six weeks of relentless Israeli attacks is in ruins and its 2.3 million population traumatized. The temporary humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas has been welcomed by the international community, from neighbouring Arab countries to multinational organizations. It is expected to come into force on Thursday and in a first phase, Hamas will hand over at least 50 hostages, almost all of them women and children, of the more than 240 it seized on Oct. 7, and Israel will release a first batch of 150 Palestinian prisoners. The agreement includes a temporary truce of at least four days, which may be extended to a maximum of 10, in which the fighting will be completely paused and will involve the entry into the Strip of between 100 and 300 trucks of food and medical aid and fuel.



A child looks at the rubble of a house after an Israeli strike in Khan Yunis

China and Uruguay upgrade ties as leaders meet in Beijing

News Desk

BEIJING: China is Uruguay's largest trading partner, in line with Beijing's steadily growing influence in Latin America, where it has poured billions of dollars of investment into infrastructure. "The strategic partnership between China and Uruguay has been elevated," Xi said according to state broadcaster CCTV, as he announced the establishment of a "comprehensive strategic partnership". China has targeted Latin America as part of its global quest for natural resources, with many countries joining China's decade-old Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure project. On Wednesday the Uruguayan presidency said Xi and Lacalle Pou had agreed to "continue efforts to accelerate the construction of a Free Trade Association" between the two countries. Uruguay is part of the South American trade bloc Mercosur along with Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.



Montevideo's desire to negotiate a commercial deal with China independently has in the past sparked opposition from fellow members and even rumours that the bloc could break up. Brazil has recently reaffirmed strong ties with China under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. But Argentina's president-elect Javier Milei had threatened to cut ties with China during his campaign, and Paraguay maintains diplomatic ties with Taiwan. On Wednesday Xi said he was committed to making China-Uruguay relations "a model of solidarity and cooperation", CCTV reported.

Afghan government is a victim of disorder, under Taliban rule

KABUL (Online): Afghanistan's government system is a victim of corruption, since the Taliban came to power in August 2021, Afghanistan has been at the top of human rights violations, women have been banned from working in human rights organizations and the United Nations. According to the United Nations report, the violations of women's rights in Afghanistan have gradually increased to an alarming level. It has also been banned from working in organizations and the United Nations. Other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, physical integrity, access to justice and minority rights were also systematically destroyed. In Afghanistan, civil society, human rights activists, journalists and even peaceful protesters are being illegally arrested. According to the United Nations report, in November 2022, the Taliban government implemented mass executions and other inhumane punishments. Between November 2022 and April 2023, 74 men, 58 women and 2 boys

were publicly flogged. The Taliban government's claim of adherence to Islamic laws and the positive opinion of the people about them is completely false, more than 85 percent of the population in Afghanistan is living at the lowest level of poverty and the Taliban has made it impossible for aid to reach them. In 2023, a budget of just \$744 billion was provided for the welfare of the people of Afghanistan, compared to \$1.49 billion in 2022. Due to the Taliban's ban on lady doctors and aid workers, the health situation across the country is also very alarming. The cause of the crisis in Afghanistan is poor governance, drought, climate change, earthquakes and the suspension of direct development aid. The Taliban government is also involved in supporting many terrorist organizations around the world. The peace situation is also getting worse day by day. It was believed that stability will come in the region after the Afghan Taliban took over, but their support to the terrorists has worsened the situation.

Car blast near Niagara Falls shuts down US-Canada crossing, kills 2

Niagara Falls, Canada, (AFP/APP): A car erupted into a fireball at a US-Canada checkpoint near Niagara Falls on Wednesday, killing the two occupants, triggering border closures and sparking a massive security alert on the eve of a major holiday. New York Governor Kathy Hochul confirmed the two fatalities in the blast at the checkpoint 400 miles (640 kilometers) northwest of New York City and said nothing pointed to a "terrorist" attack. "There is no evidence at this time that this was terrorist activity," Hochul

told a briefing. "It was a horrific incident, a crash, an explosion... but at this time no known terrorist connection." While the two victims' identities were not yet public, she suggested their vehicle may have been from western New York state. Witnesses described seeing a car traveling at high speed before it crashed into a checkpoint barrier and exploded into flames. The explosion happened at the major Rainbow Bridge crossing near Niagara Falls with nothing left of the vehicle which Hochul said was incinerated except for the engine. Authorities on both sides of the border activated emergency responses and images showed access roads to the crossing swarming with emergency service workers and vehicles. The White House said President Joe Biden had been briefed and was closely following developments. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told parliament "this is obviously a very serious situation." "We've seen this car coming down towards the border and he was flying—over 100 miles an hour," Mike Guenther, a Canadian visiting the United States

Wildfire engulfs homes in Western Australia

SYDNEY (INP): Australian firefighters Thursday battled a runaway bushfire that has incinerated 10 homes and forced scores of people to evacuate in the northern outskirts of Perth during a fierce heatwave. Fire services issued emergency warnings for fire-swept areas north of the Western Australian capital, urging people to flee their homes if they can, or shelter in place if it is already too late to move. More than 500 emergency workers backed by

aircraft were trying to tame the out-of-control, fast-moving flames, which were being fanned by warm winds, officials said. The blaze has destroyed 10 homes, four sheds and a number of vehicles including caravans, said Western Australia Deputy Premier Rita Saffioti. "The forecast today is unforgiving," she told a news conference, predicting that thermometers would hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) during the day. "It is crucial now that everyone involved continues to be alert as this bushfire emergency continues to unfold. Today is a day that everyone has to stick together." Firefighters in one truck struggled to navigate smoke-shrouded streets as red-hot embers flew through the air, television images showed. At one point, they were confronted by trees engulfed in towering orange flames, just a few steps from the roadside pavement.

PM for national-level disaster management strategy with teamwork of NDMA, PDMAs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday asked the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to collaborate with provincial disaster management bodies in order to formulate a national-level strategy. During his visit to the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC), he lauded the measures taken by NDMA and NEOC in coping with natural disasters. However, he also stressed steps to enhance the capacity of Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs).

The prime minister emphasized benefiting from the research of foreign and Pakistani experts on climate change and the ways to re-

duce its disastrous effects. The prime minister, who is due to participate in the 28th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP-28) in the United Arab Emirates on December 1-2, said Pakistan would update the world about its experiences in the wake of climate change.

Chairman (NDMA) Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik briefed the prime minister about the national strategy for disaster management. Federal Ministers Jalil Abbas Jilani and Shahmshad Akhtar attended the meeting. The meeting was told that NDMA had formulated a strategy for coping with disaster management, making a two-month advance forecast.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar interacting with team members and officers during his visit to National Emergency Operation Centre.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki being briefed by Project Director Quetta Development Package Rafique Baloch regarding under construction Western Bypass.

Satisfied with pace of Quetta Development Package: Caretaker CM directs to remove hurdles in way of smooth completion of projects

Domki says no excuse acceptable in construction of roads after release of funds; equally no compromise to be made on quality of work on development projects

Independent Report
QUETTA: Expressing satisfaction over the pace of work on Quetta Development Package, the caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has directed the concerned authorities to find solution to the disputed matters and remove hurdles coming in way of smooth completion of the projects under the Quetta Package.

The Chief Minister also directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to expedite the work on the roads' projects it is engaged in Quetta. He asserted that no compromise would be made on quality of work of the projects and as such the quality of work should be ensured in the projects.

He also said that no excuse is acceptable in construction of the roads under Quetta Development Package after release of funds for them. The Chief Minister

was speaking on occasion of the visit and briefing about the progress of ongoing development projects under Quetta Development Package here on Thursday. It may be mentioned here that it was fourth visit of Chief Minister Domki to the development projects since assuming his office.

The Chief Minister inspected the work continued on Spinnay road, Sariab road, Link Badini road, Ra-

dio Tower road, Western bypass and Ansonb road. The Project Director Quetta Development Package, NHA and NLC high ups briefed the Chief Minister about the projects.

The Project Director QDP informed that the release of approved funds for the projects is being made without any delay. He also informed that all the projects are heading towards completion as speed of work has been expedited.

Governor sees bright chances of cementing more relations between Pakistan-Turkey

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that Pakistan and Turkey are two brotherly countries, which enjoy historical, cultural and economic ties.

The Governor believed that there are bright chances of cementing these relations further. The Governor was speaking to the visiting Ambassador of Turkey based in Islamabad, Mr Mehmet Paecaci, who called on him at the Governor House here on Thursday.

The Governor and Turkish Ambassador discussed the matters of mutual interests besides the brotherly relations between the two countries and political changes taking place in the region. The Governor appreciated the Turkish cooperation in the difficult time of floods and earthquakes in Pakistan saying that it (Turkish) has always helped the Pakistani people every time. He particularly thanked the Turkish president and Ambassador to Pakistan for relief and rehabilitation activities during disasters in Balochistan.

In the end, they exchanged commemorative shields.

Pak issues 3,000 visas to Sikh pilgrims for Guru Nanak birthday celebrations

NEW DELHI (APP): The Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on Thursday issued around 3,000 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India enabling them to attend the 554th birthday celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji scheduled to be held in Pakistan from

November 25 to December 4, 2023.

During the visit, the pilgrims, inter alia, would go to Dera Sahib, Panja Sahib, Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur Sahib, according to a press release issued by

the high commission. Expressing his views on the occasion, Pakistan's Charge d'Affaires in India Aizaz Khan extended his heartfelt felicitations to the pilgrims and wished them a safe journey.

The issuance of visas is covered under the framework of the Pakistan-India Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines of 1974.

Every year, a large number of Sikh Yatries from India visit Pakistan to observe various religious festivals and occasions.

Ashrafi stresses on comprehensive training for Hajj, Umrah pilgrims for seamless spiritual journey

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Thursday stressed on the Hajj Group Organizers (HGOs) to launch an extensive training programme to ensure Hajj and Umrah pilgrims were well-prepared for a smooth and hassle-free religious experience.

Addressing the 'Tazeem Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference' here at a local hotel, he said that

this initiative would equip pilgrims with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate the sacred rituals while prioritizing their safety and well-being.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, said the pilgrims must receive comprehensive spiritual guidance from qualified scholars, covering the significance of each ritual and the historical context of Hajj and Umrah. This would not only deepen their understanding but also foster a sense of connection to the religious roots of the pil-

grimage, he added. He said the pilgrims must be addressed the practical aspects of the pilgrimage, including transportation details, accommodation guidelines, and essential information about the holy sites. He said it would help ensure that pilgrims were well-informed about the logistics, minimizing confusion and stress during their journey. He said the HGOs should educate pilgrims on the diverse cultural backgrounds of fellow participants, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding as it would promote tolerance.

Durable, sustained Gaza ceasefire critical for relief to Palestinians: FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Thursday said that like the rest of the world, Pakistan impatiently awaited the truce expected to come into effect on Friday and that a durable and sustained ceasefire was critical for bringing the much-needed relief to the Palestinian people.

"Like the rest of the world, Pakistan impatiently awaits the truce that is expected to come into effect tomorrow. It presents an opportunity to establish a humanitarian corridor facilitating the de-

livery of food, water, fuel and other humanitarian aid to the besieged people of Gaza," the spokesperson said in her weekly press briefing. She said Pakistan believed that a durable and sustained ceasefire was critical for bringing much-needed relief to the Palestinian people and to responding to the immense humanitarian needs in Gaza including extensive and robust humanitarian supplies, urgent medical aid to the injured and shelter to those who have been displaced as a result of an indiscriminate and inhumane bombing campaign by Israeli forces.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), led by its President Major General (ret'd) Raza Muhammad called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi.

Farewell party arranged for Dr. Noor Qazi; Abdullah pays tribute

Independent Report
QUETTA: The farewell party was held in honour of the Director General Health Services, Dr Noor Qazi on his retirement here at the conference room of Health Department on Thursday.

The Secretary Health, Abdullah Khan paid rich tributes to the retiring Director General Health on the invaluable services rendered by him in education sector.

He said that Dr Noor Qazi served the health sector for 32 years with dedication and extra zeal.

The Secretary said that everyone in the department liked Dr Noor Qazi because of his friendliness and way of working.

He also expressed best wishes for future of Dr Noor Qazi.

Pakistan can earn Rs, 150bln annually in export of meat, dairy products: Qadir

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir on Thursday said that Pakistan could earn foreign exchange of 150 billion rupees annually from the export of meat and dairy products.

Talking to APP, he said that more than 100 billion rupees are earned from halal meat and dairy products, while there are opportunities to get more than 50 billion rupees from the export of live sacrificial animals to Saudi Arabia. There are big markets available for Pakistan in the USA, UK, and China. The size of the global market for halal food is more than 3 thousand billion dollars in which Pakistan's share is less than one percent.

"No Islamic country including Pakistan is in the top five exporters of halal meat, although halal meat is

mostly found in Islamic countries", he added.

He said that Saudi Arabia is first, Malaysia is second, the United Arab Emirates is third, Indonesia is fourth among the countries that import halal meat and Egypt is in fifth place among the countries that export halal meat to Islamic countries.

The Chairman Standing Committee further said that the world's high-quality livestock and dairy products are available in Pakistan in order to earn more foreign exchange it should give immediate and special attention to the sector and the global market.

Pakistan can become the first country to export these products and halal meat, he said adding that it has to take immediate and effective measures at the micro level to promote exports of halal meat.

Religious Ministry working to reduce cost of Hajj: Aneeq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed on Thursday asserted that the ministry was working significantly to reduce the cost of Hajj this year through various strategic measures.

Speaking at the 'Tazeem Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference' held at a local hotel, he highlighted that the cost of Hajj had already been reduced by Rs 100,000 compared to the previous year.

Minister Aneeq elaborated on ongoing efforts to secure discounts on air tickets, aiming to provide additional financial relief to prospective pilgrims. He emphasized that if airfare discounts were attained, the overall cost of Hajj would

witness a further reduction. Turning his attention to the Gaza crisis, Minister Aneeq expressed his earnest desire for the leaders of all 57 Muslim countries to unite on a common platform and decisively address the challenges confronting the Islamic world, including the Palestinian issue, with a view towards achieving a permanent resolution. In the meantime, Chairman of the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Jamal Khan Tarakai conveyed heartfelt appreciation to the Saudi government and Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki for their unwavering support and continual enhancement of facilities and services for pilgrims on an annual basis.

FIA freezes Moonis Elahi's bank accounts, seals properties

LAHORE (Online): Bank accounts and properties of Moonis Elahi son of former chief minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervez Elahi have been frozen in money laundering case.

FIA froze the bank accounts of PTI leader Moonis Elahi on court's order in money laundering case. As per documents 8 bank accounts of Moonis Elahi have been frozen in Lahore. Over Rs 48 core and 76 lac amount came into his different bank accounts. He withdrew the entire amount from these bank accounts.

It has been said in documents that bank accounts which have been used by Moonis Elahi in depositing money and transferring money have been frozen.

Kyrgyz delegation meet Education Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-powered delegation led by the Ambassador of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuiaev called on the Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi in his office on Thursday.

Madad Ali Sindhi welcomed the Kyrgyz delegation and said that the two countries have cultural, linguistic and people-to-people love for each other, said a press release.

The minister discussed the exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding Vocational and Technical Training.

He said that the two countries can benefit from the experience of each other. He acknowledged and praised the long-standing cordial relationship between the two countries.

Madad Ali welcomed the exchange of teachers and students to further mutual cooperation. He said that there is significant potential for cooperation between the two countries.

Controller of BBISE visits examination centers of FA, FSc in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): Controller of Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BBISE) Abida Kakar paid a surprise visit to the ongoing FA and FSc supplementary examination centers in Quetta along with board officers.

During the visit of Islamia College Shafiq Ahmed Khan and Sandman High School, she caught more than 20 duplicate students with copies and started action against them while a warning letter was

issued to the duty staff on the occasion. While talking to media during the visit to the examination centers, Controller of BBISE, Abida Kakar said that the Balochistan Board has gradually shifted from the manual system to digitization and people would get better facilities in the future.

"Imitation is a canker that is pushing the new generation of the country into the darkness of ignorance and the Balochistan government is leaving no stone unturned.



QUETTA: Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem presiding over a meeting regarding resolving the issue of gas.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani addressing the youth representatives along with tribal elders from Balochistan at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Pakistan exploring debt for nature swaps with global agencies: Shamshad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr Shamshad Akhtar, said that amid growing international fiscal constraints, the country is exploring debt-for-nature-swap with global agencies to enhance its market competitiveness as foreign direct investment is harder to fetch in these testing times.

She was speaking at a high-level plenary titled: "Reforms for a Brighter Future" on the last day of the 26th Sustainable Development Conference organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute here on Thursday.

Dr Shamshad Akhtar said after months of hard work, the interim leadership has successfully reached a staff-level agreement with IMF for a standby \$3 bil-

lion loan grant. She added that the interim regime was committed to the IMF program which should be a homegrown agenda of Pakistan. "Marco's economic stability has become more difficult in the last decade due to delay in structural reforms, surge in global commodity prices, and tightening of financial restrictions," she said. She also highlighted the country's rising vulnerability to climate shocks that had increased manifolds. She expressed her optimism for the forthcoming COP-28 international climate moot and hoped to have a positive discourse at the forum. Dr Abid Qayyum Suleri, SDPI Executive Director, said Pakistan's economic problems were diagnosed some 70 years ago and we all are aware of the problems.

It was not disputed by the Attorney General that, under Article 48(5) of the Constitution, the duty to 'appoint' a date was imposed upon the President while the announcement was to be made by the Commission as required under section 57(1) of the Act of 2017.

SC issues Justice Minallah's note about elections date verdict

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court on Thursday issued a 41-page note of Justice Athar Minallah in the judgment about the date of general elections. Justice Athar Minallah, in his note, said that the National Assembly was dissolved on August 09, 2023 and general elections were to be held within ninety days i.e., not later than November 07, 2023.

"It was not disputed by the Attorney General that, under Article 48(5) of the Constitution, the duty to 'appoint' a date was imposed upon the President while the announcement was to be made by the Commission as required under section 57(1) of the Act of 2017.