

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vd XXV No 72, Rabi-us-Sani 17, 1445 AH Thursday November 02, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

COAS Munir, Azerbaijan top leaders vow to take military ties to new level

Army chief pays official visit to Azerbaijan, emphasises enhancing cooperation in fields of defence and training

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, who is on an official visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan, called on Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Defence Minister, 1st Deputy Minister and Chief of General Staff and Commander of Azerbaijan Air Force.

According to a news release of Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the COAS' visit is aimed at enhancing military-to-military cooperation and defence collaboration between the two brotherly countries. During the meetings, the COAS emphasized on enhancing cooperation in the fields of defence and training. He appreciated the high morale and remarkable standard of operational readiness of Azerbaijan's Armed Forces. During the meeting Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said that the friendly and brotherly ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan were being successfully strengthened in various fields, including military cooperation. Appreciating the successful cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pa-

kistan in the defence industry, he emphasized the importance of conducting joint military training between the two countries.

Regarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two countries at the international level, the Azeri president reiterated that Azerbaijan always supported Pakistan on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

President Ilham expressed the confidence that the visit of COAS to his country would help in further stabilizing the cooperation between the two countries.

PM for complete utilization of Balochistan's natural resources

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday stressed upon complete utilization of natural resources of the Balochistan province.

He was talking to Speaker of Balochistan Assembly Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali who called on him, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister said that progress and prosperity of the people of Balochistan were among the top priorities of the Federal Government. During the meeting, they also discussed different matters related to the province.



BAKU: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir meeting with President of Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev

CM directs to expedite pace of work on ongoing projects under QDP

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has directed the concerned quarters to expedite the pace of work on the ongoing development projects under Quetta Development Package.

He asserted that no carelessness and leniency would be tolerated in the early completion of the development projects included different roads under the Quetta Package. The Chief Minister was on visit to the development projects being executed under Quetta Development Package in the metropolis on Wednesday morning.

The Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Secretary Com-

munications, Commissioner Quetta Division and other concerned high ups were also accompanied with the Chief Minister.

He was briefed about the development projects under the Quetta Development Package. During briefing, the Chief Minister was informed that the Sabzal road extension project would be completed by December 30, 2023. Similarly, the work on Link Badini has almost been completed while 90 per cent work on Sariab road project has been completed.

While speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister directed to ensure early completion of the roads and other projects under the Quetta Development Package.

Jan Achakzai warns of stern legal action against illegal immigrants without any discrimination

CT Minister Information says illegal immigrants being deported to their respective countries after detention; Commissioner Quetta says benami properties of illegal immigrants to be confiscated by govt. after due process

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has reiterated the interim government's firm resolve for stern legal action against the illegal immigrants residing in the province as the deadline set for them is already over.

He said that the crackdown has been started against the illegal immigrants and it would remain continued without any discrimination.

The action is being taken against all those residing in the province with-



The caretaker Minister Information was addressing a press conference along with other officials.

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ISLAMABAD: President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda, Dr. Kalinda Francois Xavier calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

PM invites Rwanda to open diplomatic mission for closer African ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday, conveying Pakistan's desire to enhance multi-sphere ties with the African continent, invited Rwanda to establish its diplomatic mission in Islamabad.

The prime minister, in a meeting with a delegation of the Senate of Rwanda, led by Senate President Dr. Kalinda Francois-Xavier, reiterated the desire to strengthen Pakistan's ties with Africa, particularly in trade, investment, IT (information technology), agriculture and people-to-

people exchanges. Pakistan has already opened its mission in Kigali in 2021, according to a PM Office news release.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction at the friendly and cordial relations between Pakistan and Rwanda.

Emphasizing the significance of parliamentary exchanges, Prime Minister Kakar welcomed and appreciated the first-ever visit by the President of Senate of Rwanda.

He also appreciated Rwanda's remarkable economic growth achieved in recent years.

Nawaz Sharif to come to Quetta on 2-day visit: Ayaz Sadiq expects important political personalities may join PML-N from Balochistan



QUETTA: The senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and former Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has stated that some important political parties may join the party from Balochistan soon.

He said that the friends are being invited to join the party under leadership of Mian Nawaz Sharif. He said that it would be made clear today (Thursday) as who is going to join the PML-N from the province.

SC dismisses review petitions about Faizabad sit-in case verdict

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday dismissed the review petitions of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Defence Ministry about the 2017 Faizabad sit-in case after they were withdrawn by the petitioners.

The court said that the Federal Government, Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), and Pakistan Electronic Media and Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) also requested to withdraw their review petitions.

The three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Amin-Ud-Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah, which heard the case, also declared the fact-finding committee as illegal in Faizabad sit-in matter and directed the attorney general to form a new inquiry commission. During the course of proceedings, Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan informed the court that the government had constituted a fact finding committee on October 19, and its first meeting had already held on October 26. He said that the committee would also prepare its recommendations after inquiring into the matter.

Caretaker FM says: No Afghan refugee having documents will be deported

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Foreign Minister (FM) Jalil Abbas Jilani has said no Afghan citizen having documents will be deported.

Self respect of Afghan citizens will be given due regard, he said this while talking to media men outside parliament house.

He held misconception has arisen with reference to Afghan refugees. We should inform media in this regard.

He stated there are several categories of Afghan refugees. The Afghan refugees who are holding registration cards are not being deported. Like this there are deprived sections of society who are concerned over it that they will have to face problems on their return to Afghanistan. Our attitude with them will be mild and tender.

We have asked those Afghan refugees who are having no documents to return with respect and honor.

He underlined Prime Minister (PM) and cabinet had decided the respect of Afghan refugees, women and children will be taken care of and they will be taken to transit centre. They will be investigated and those having documents will be allowed to stay.

25 killed during skirmishes between warring tribes in Kurram

PESHAWAR (APP): At least 25 people were killed during skirmishes between warring tribes over land dispute in Kurram tribal districts so far.

According to an official statement here issued by a spokesman of Home Department KP, the rival tribes now agreed to vacate the bunkers and trenches in affected areas of Kurram district where the situation started towards improvement due to efforts of Khyber Government and law enforcement agencies.

Several peace jirgas were held during last week attended by the area elders and representatives of the Government and law enforcement agencies that brought significant improvement in the area.

The government was trying to open all roads in one of two days so that delivery of medicines, food and other necessary commodities could be ensured.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki being briefed about Encomb Road construction project under Quetta Development Package

Interior Minister says: No political party named for unrest in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dismissing any specific political party's involvement in the recent turmoil in Balochistan, Caretaker Minister for Interior, Senator Sarfaraz Ahmed Bugti, clarified his stance on the matter in the Senate on Wednesday.

This statement came in response to a query raised by Senator Muhammad Qasim, who had expressed objections to Bugti's earlier remarks.

The Minister underscored that he had not directly implicated any political party, including the BNP-M, in the unrest.

He further emphasized that the BNP-M was a political ally in both federal and provincial governments, urging them to address the issue of missing persons during their ten-

ures, rather than politicizing it at present and making protest over it.

Highlighting the complexity of the situation, Senator Bugti drew attention to the presence of death squads affiliated with various militant groups, responsible for the targeted killings of innocent civilians, including individuals from diverse backgrounds such as Punjabis, teachers, doctors, and professors in Balochistan.

He specifically named organizations such as the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), Baloch Liberation Front (BLF), Majeed Brigade, United Baloch Army (UBA), Baloch Republican Army (BRA), Aho Group, and Lashkar-e-Balochistan as entities contributing to the unrest in the region.

Six terrorists killed in Zhub district

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least six terrorists were killed in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in general area Sambaza of Balochistan's Zhub district, Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press release on Wednesday.

The IBO was carried out last night by the security forces on reported presence of terrorists.

"During the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between own troops and terrorists, resultantly six terrorists were sent to hell, while a cache of arms, ammunition and explosives has also been recovered," the ISPR said.

Solangi takes part in 69th Japan Self-Defence Forces Day celebrations

ISLAMABAD, (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday took part in the celebrations of the 69th Japan Self-Defence Forces (JSDF) Day.

The minister attended a reception arranged by the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad to celebrate the 69th anniversary. In the reception, military officials, caretaker ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, and other individuals were also present.

On the occasion, the minister felicitated the people and the Government of Japan, and highlighted the growing bilateral ties between Pakistan and Japan in the area of defence.

Naval Chief discusses naval collaboration with leadership of RSAF

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf who is on official visit to Saudi Arabia called on the top leadership of Royal Saudi Armed Forces on Wednesday.

The Naval Chief during his meetings with Chief of the General Staff of Saudi Armed Forces, Gen Fayyadh bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili at Ministry of Defence and Commander Royal Saudi Naval Forces Vice Admiral Fahd Bin Abdullah al-Ghofaily at Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) Headquarters discussed matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security, said a press issued here.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf underscored the contribution of Pakistan Navy towards regional maritime peace and stability through its initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMS) and participation in Combined Maritime Force.

The Commander RSNF appreciated Pakistan Navy's role in support of collaborative maritime security in the region and acknowledged the significance of strong bilateral defence collaboration.



RIYADH: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf exchanges views with Chief of the General Staff of Saudi Armed Forces, General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al-Ruwaili during meeting held at Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF) Headquarters in Riyadh

Ejaz represents Balochistan in Kathmandu workshop: Rising population major hurdle in way of progress of developing countries

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering and Population Welfare, Sardar Ejaz Ahmed Khan Jaffar has stated that rapidly increasing population is major hurdle in way of progress of the developing countries, and as such there is a dire need to make comprehensive planning to control population.

He said that if comprehensive planning was not made, then not only the developing countries, but the developed countries can also face problems.

The caretaker Minister was addressing the workshop held regarding planning 2030 in Kathmandu, Nepal on Wednesday.

Sardar Ejaz Ahmed Khan Jaffar represented the government of Balochistan in the important workshop. The population welfare experts from all over the world participated in the workshop. He caretaker Minister highlighted the role of population welfare department saying that the department is playing important role for family planning besides providing better healthcare facilities to the people. In this regard, the provincial task force holds meeting on regular basis, he maintained.

Moreover, budget allocation has been increased for purchase of the equipment in the current year budget, adding he mentioned.

Pakistan, Rwanda for stronger political, economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Rwanda on Wednesday reiterated the desire to strengthen political, economic and trade relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

Both sides also underscored the need to increase economic and commercial cooperation.

This was discussed at a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and President of Rwanda Dr Kalinda Francois-Xavier, who along with the members of his delegation called on the president at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Talking to the delegation, the president said that Pakistan wanted to further cement its friendly ties with Rwanda and expressed sat-

isfaction over the fact that both countries were cooperating with each other at the regional and international fora.

He said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Rwanda and wanted to maximize bilateral trade to its true potential.

He informed the delegation that Pakistan was organizing the 4th Pak-Africa Trade Development Conference and Single Country Exhibition in January 2024 in Cairo.

He expressed the hope that Rwandan businessmen would also participate in the event to explore new business avenues between the two friendly countries.

The president highlighted the Israeli atrocities against innocent Palestin-

ians and called for an immediate ceasefire to prevent further destruction and bloodshed in Gaza.

The delegation thanked the president for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to it during its stay in Pakistan.

President of the Senate of Rwanda Dr Kalinda Francois-Xavier said that both countries enjoyed excellent relations and stressed the need to reinforce bilateral ties.

He said that Rwanda considered Pakistan a great partner and wanted to enhance bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Dr Kalinda Francois-Xavier informed the president that Rwanda was considering to open its embassy in Islamabad.

New gas tariff to be effective from Nov 1

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Petroleum Division (PD) of the Energy Ministry on Wednesday rejected a news item appearing in a section of media about the effectiveness of the new gas tariff from back date, clarifying that the revised prices would be applicable from November 1, 2023.

"Reports in some newspapers claiming that the prices are effective from back date, which is misleading. It is categorically stated that gas price revision is effective from November 01, 2023" a news release said.

The ministry further said that the press release issued by the petroleum division after approval of the cabinet and Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on October 30 clearly stated that the revision of gas prices would be effective from November 1.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki talking with students during his visit to Sandaman High School

Shaheen Afridi goes to number one in ODI ranking

Sports Desk
LAHORE: Pakistan spearhead Shaheen Afridi has become cricket's top-ranked bowler but his prime concern is keeping the Green Shirts in the World Cup.

The 23-year-old, who has 16 wickets at the tournament, has displaced Australian quicks Josh Hazlewood at the top of the pile, taking the honour for the first time since making his international debut in 2018.

Skipper Babar Azam retains his top spot in the ODI ranking for the batters, a position that the skipper has held for more than two years.

Afridi claimed 3-23 in the seven-wicket win over Bangladesh in Kolkata on Tuesday, a victory which kept alive their slim hopes of making the semi-finals.

His dismissal of Bangladesh opener Tanzid Hasan also gave him a 100th wicket in his 51st one-day international.

"I am delighted at completing 100 ODI wickets but the biggest thing is that all these wickets are for Pakistan and my goal is always to do something that helps us win," said Shaheen.

Shaheen's success in India has come despite a lack of swing, prompting him to adjust his sights in the campaign.

"I watched some of the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches this year and there was not much swing," said Shaheen.

JUI fully support fundamental rights of oppressed people

By Sardar Khondai
CHAMAN: Provincial Ameer of Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam Balochistan and Former Federal Minister Maulana Abdul Wasey while addressing the ongoing sit-in in Chaman said that we believe the demands of this sit-in are based on reality and assure full support of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam.

The workers are standing side by side with you, criticizing the caretaker government and saying that instead of creating problems for the tribes that

have been living for thousands of years, it needs to be seriously considered.

Thousands of people are participating in it and they demand that passport visas are not accepted at the

Representatives of various political, tribal and social organizations also addressed the sit-in.

Deliberately closing the doors of employment to them is an act of state cruelty which cannot be condemned as much as it is. But there is no arrangement for employment outside the border.

Jamiat Ulema Islam is with you in this difficult time and I pay tribute to all the political tribal social organizations participating in the current sit-in and the people of Chaman for this historic unity and agreement and Jamiat Ulema Islam Chaman. We strongly support the fundamental rights of the oppressed people, strongly oppose the introduction of the passport system and allow the movement of old CNIC cards and Boldak Tazkira and solve the problems of the people instead of harassing them further.



Chaman border and that the tribes living on both sides of the Chaman should be allowed to travel in the old way and the Lugri people, who number in thousands, should be allowed to work on the border so that the people of the border area can continue their work here, there are no employment opportunities here.

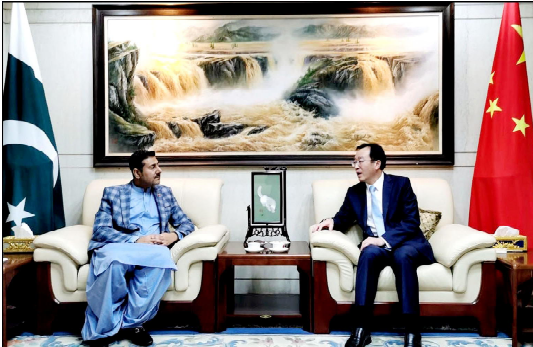
Alluddin Marri meets new Consul General of China

Independent Report
KARACHI: The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a major infrastructure project and can bring economic growth and development to Balochistan by improving

China has reached with Belt & Road Initiative - BRI. Former Chief Minister particularly thanked the Chinese government for providing support in health, education and investments through Chinese

infrastructure, creating job opportunities, and enhancing trade, this was stated by former Chief Minister of Balochistan Alluddin Marri while meeting the new Consul General of the People's Republic of China Mr Yang Yundong in Karachi.

Marri expressed his optimism that the benefits of CPEC will be shared among the local population, he particularly thanked the People's of Republic China for giving special consideration to the Socio-Economic Development of Balochistan, he also mentioned that Balochistan province has strategic significance as it borders with Afghanistan and Iran where



companies in Balochistan, Mr Yang Yundong lauded the support of former Chief Minister during his tenure and assured that his country has commitment to support the Socio Economic development in the province of Balochistan, he said Gwadar has been developed under CPEC which includes Sea Port, Airport, desalination plant, power project and roads, this infrastructure would help the people of coastal area to improve their quality of life, Consul General assured that he would work with local tribal elite and political leaders to bring CPEC benefits in Balochistan.

140,322 undocumented foreigners voluntarily left Pakistan on govt's call

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ministry of interior on Wednesday shared a total number of returnees who volunteered and opted to go back to countries of origin with in the one month amnesty time period.

According to the data shared by ministry's representative, 140,322 undocumented foreigners voluntarily left Pakistan so far.

Meanwhile, Minister for Interior, Sarfraz Bugti wrote a message on social media platform that the government bid a farewell to 64 Afghan nationals first day after the deadline as they embarked on their journey home.

He wrote that the action was an expression of Pakistan's determination to repatriate any foreigner who did not have the necessary documents.

According to the ministry's handout, from November 1, the process of arrest and subsequent deportation of illegal aliens had begun, however, the voluntary return of illegally staying aliens would also continue and be encouraged.

All returnees and deportees would be treated with dignity and respect and all necessary facilities including food and medical aid would be provided to them in the holding centers, it added.

The minister had already issued directives to the concerned officials and agencies to be respectful with detainees and undocumented immigrants while detaining them.

He warned of strict action against officials found involved in manhandling the immigrants including Afghan national while transporting them to the holding centers.

The ministry has also set up a helpline for complaints regarding the eviction of illegally staying foreigners.

Foreign nationals can lodge any complaint regarding evacuation on these telephone numbers as well as people can also report information about illegal aliens at these numbers 051-111367226 and 051-9211685.

Ayaz Sadiq expects important.

Continued from page 1
Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was speaking to the media persons soon after his arrival in Quetta from Islamabad on Wednesday.

The PML-N leader said that he has come to Quetta on the party's invitation, and meeting the friends on directives of the party's Quaid, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He said that Nawaz Sharif would also be coming to Quetta on two-day visit.

He said that Nawaz Sharif has good relations with all political parties, and he wants to maintain these relations.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that although he is meeting the party leadership besides some friends, but he has no schedule of meeting with the political parties during his stay in Quetta.

He said that the party would make decision on whether to make seat to seat adjustment or contest election individually on the party ticket.

To a query, the PML-N leader said that all including Jam Kamal Khan are respectable to us. However, there is no mention of his (Jam Kamal) joining in the party as yet, he maintained. He said that no one including Jam Kamal has made any demand.

He said that those who supported the party in the hard time would be preferred in it.

Chinese ambassador, Fazal discuss ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong along with his delegation Wednesday met with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and discussed ties between the two countries.

According to a JUI-F Spokesperson, the delegation included Minister Counselor Zhang Nu, Zhang Duva and Wang Sita.

The matters related to bilateral relations and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) were also discussed in the meeting.

The ambassador said "We want Pakistan to use

China's technology in agriculture." The meeting also agreed to expand the scope of CPEC, also underscored the importance of including more projects in CPEC. Fazal expressed his resolve to form industrial and economic zones in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

The ambassador also invited the JUI-F chief to visit China.

Mohammad Jalaluddin, a former ambassador, and adviser on foreign affairs, and Mufti Abrar Ahmed, who is the spokesperson for JUI-F were also present in the meeting.

CNG pumps fined for overcharging

By Haroon Siraj
SWAT: The Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr Qasim Ali took stern action after receiving public complaints against the compressed natural gas (CNG) stations involved in overcharging at different localities of District Swat.

The district administration team was fined several CNG pumps during action against profiteering and irregularities in gauge. Following the directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Swat Dr Qasim Ali, the team of district administration conducted raids on filling stations in various localities of the district during night time and fined more than 10 CNG pumps.

The CNG stations had increased the price of gas from Rs234 per kg to Rs309 per kg on their own the other day before the due time.

Talking to our correspondent DC Swat Dr Qasim Ali Khan said that if any owner is found receiving extra money, his stations would be sealed or heavily fined, nobody could charge extra money until the government announced the increase in the CNG price, he added. The Deputy Commissioner has directed all administrative officers for continued inspections of the filling stations and stern action against those keeping lower gauge and other violations.



ISLAMABAD: Japanese Players are demonstrating the Martial Arts performance during an event regarding the celebrations of the Japan Self-Defense Forces Day 2023 at local hotel in Federal Capital.



QUETTA: Administrator Quetta, Jabbar Baloch is giving a briefing about IT Section to Balochistan Secretary Local Government Noor Ahmed Pirkanji during his visit of Metropolitan Corporation building

Pak urges UN's top human body to address 'massive' rights abuses in Palestine & Kashmir

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called on UN Human Rights Council to address the massive rights violations taking place in situations of foreign occupation and intervention, highlighting the terrible ordeals in Gaza and occupied Palestine as well as Jammu and Kashmir.

"Human rights must be promoted comprehensively and in a balanced manner," Ambassador Munir Akram told the UN General Assembly on Tuesday while underscoring the need for avoiding selectivity and double standards in the 47-member Council's approach.

Speaking in a debate on the annual report of the President of Geneva-based Human Rights Council, the Pakistani envoy said that it must address the massive human rights violations which take place in situations of foreign occupation and intervention.

"The heart wrenching slaughter that is taking place in Gaza and occupied Palestine is visible on our television screens today," he said, pointing out that the occupying power -- Israel -- has enjoyed impunity for these violations for over 50 years.

"The massive violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir are also well recorded," Ambassador Akram said.

In both instances, he said, the occupying powers -- Israel and India -- have sought to suppress the legitimate national liberation struggles under the guise of combating terrorism.

"The most recent conflict in the Middle East illustrates the danger of allowing the persistence of foreign occupation," the Pakistani envoy added, referring to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

At the same time, Ambassador Akram pushed for a "much more robust effort" to counter the rise of racial hatred, religious supremacy and extreme and violent nationalism and fascism in certain parts of the world.

"Islamophobia is a major element of the new phenomena manifested in the discrimination and attacks against Muslims, hijab 'bans', the repeated burning of the Holy Quran, blasphemous caricatures and the vandalization of Islamic symbols and holy sites," he said, adding that such acts cannot be allowed under the cover of "freedom of expression".

"In our eastern neighbourhood -- India -- the pandemic of Islamophobia poses the danger of Muslim genocide," the Ambassador Akram said, saying that the menace should be frontally dealt with by the Council.



ISLAMABAD: Workers are demolishing the illegally contracted houses at Afghan Basti I-12 as govt announce warning for people living in Pakistan illegally to leave the country as security forces on Wednesday rounded up, detained and deported dozens of Afghans who were living in the country illegally, after a government-set deadline for them to leave

Jan Achakzai warns of stern legal...

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with the Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, here at the Quetta Press Club on Wednesday.

Jan Achakzai asserted that while it is firm resolve of the government to repatriate the illegal immigrants to their respective countries, however, those political parties are trying to exploit the situation should not do it.

"I warn those parties who are trying to take advantage of the situation, they should not take any such step that may harm them in future," maintained the caretaker Minister Information.

About the repatriation of illegal immigrants, Jan mentioned that over 35,000 immigrants have so far been repatriated via Chaman border. He said that around 100 illegal immigrants have been detained in Quetta till

now, and they would be duly deported to their homeland.

He said that it is a complicated task to trace and identify the illegal immigrants, however, efforts are continued in this regard.

He said that two holding centers have been established in Quetta where the detained illegal immigrants would be kept for time being before their repatriation.

He said that it is our endeavour to keep the minimum number of immigrants in the holding centers.

He said that data of illegal immigrants is being collected from all over the province. He said that action is also being taken against those illegal immigrants belonging to Iran, Iraq and other countries besides Afghanistan.

In addition to this, legal action would also be taken against those immigrants who got prepared

their documents through illegal means, the Minister added.

He on the occasion appreciated the role being played by the local administration for repatriation of the illegal immigrants describing it very important.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat said that the drive of repatriation of the illegal immigrants is continued successfully.

He informed that the holding centers have been set up for the illegal immigrants in Quetta. They would be kept in the holding centers on temporary basis after detention for necessary arrangements, he added.

To a query, Commissioner informed that the benami (unnamed) properties of the immigrants would be confiscated by the government after due process.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting regarding the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

Wafaqi Mohtasib team visits CDA Central Directorate to address citizens complaints

ISLAMABAD (APP): A Wafaqi Mohtasib inspection team visited the Central Directorate of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Wednesday to ascertain the status of its service delivery arrangements and suggest remedial measures.

The team, comprising Senior Advisor Ahmad Farooq, Deputy Advisor Pervaiz Haleem and Senior Investigation Officer Adnan Ahmad, met CDA Chairman Capt (Rtd) Anwar Ul Haq and other executives to discuss public complaints about the traffic mess caused by the expansion work being carried out by Authority on the Park Road and Islamabad Expressway, depleted condition of roads and streets, defective sewerage system, delayed payments to contractors, substandard construction of infrastructure and delay in payment of pension and retirement benefits to its workers.

The team also visited different sections of the CDA Directorate, including the One Window Facilitation Desk and interacted with the citizens who had come there to get redressal of their complaints. The team observed that the public at large was facing problems due to an inordinate delay in the completion of the construction work. The team advised the CDA authorities to come up with a time frame for the completion of its ongoing projects. It also advised the authorities concerned to complete the process for issuing completion and transfer letters within 45 days and objections, if any, must

be raised and settled within 30 days.

The team directed the CDA administration not to depute an officer below the rank of BS-19 to represent Authority in the investigation process of the Wafaqi Mohtasib. Earlier, these CDA Member (IT) briefed the inspection team on the CDA Management Information System (MIS), which is fully functional and provides online services to customers. All matters pertaining to the sale and purchase of CDA land have been digitalized, and the same is being carried out in the attached departments of CDA as well.

The team was informed that an auto parking facility is being introduced in the limits of CDA to resolve the chronic issue of parking.

He also acknowledged and praised the long-standing brotherly relations between the two countries.

The minister welcomed the delegation and said that the two countries had cultural, linguistic and people to people love for each other, said a news release issued here. Madad Ali discussed exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding vocational and technical training and said that the two countries could benefit from the experience of each other.

He said that BISP was yielding good results but Pakistan's durable future

PM for mechanism to encourage financial self-reliance in society

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday, while appreciating outcomes of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), directed the relevant authorities to chalk out a mechanism for promoting economic self-sufficiency in the society.

He said that BISP was yielding good results but Pakistan's durable future

was linked with the financially self-reliant citizens.

The prime minister chaired a meeting regarding BISP. The meeting was given a briefing over the performance of BISP and the future strategy.

The meeting was attended by BISP Chairperson Amjad Saqib, Secretary Ministry of Poverty Alleviation Yusuf Khan and other senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing

said in a press release.

About 60 million members of 10 million families were being benefitted from BISP whose total annual budget this year was Rs 471 billion, it was told.

The prime minister praised the financial assistance extended to the deserving families and observed that with the provision of technical training to the BISP beneficiaries, in

accordance with the requirements of the market, would enable them to become financially self-sufficient.

He said that BISP was a good programme whose database could be used for providing targeted subsidies, and urged the big business entities and well-to-do elements in the society to become partners in BISP under corporate social responsibility.

High-powered delegation of Türkiye calls on Madad

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-powered delegation led by the Ambassador of Republic of Türkiye to Pakistan Mehmet Paçacı Wednesday called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi. The minister welcomed the delegation and said that the two countries had cultural, linguistic and people to people love for each other, said a news release issued here. Madad Ali discussed exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding vocational and technical training and said that the two countries could benefit from the experience of each other.

Lok Mela to serve as fund raising platform to support oppressed Palestinians: Jamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Jamal Shah announced on Wednesday that the upcoming Lok Mela, would not only showcase Pakistan's rich cultural diversity but also serve as a platform for collecting donations to support the oppressed Palestinian people who were facing the severe Israeli aggression.

During a press conference, Jamal Shah unveiled a comprehensive plan designed to kick start various cultural activities aimed at

engaging the country's youth.

He also emphasized the significance of preserving and promoting cultural heritage and attracting tourists. To achieve that, he said, the ministry was collaborating with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to renovate heritage sites in Islamabad.

He said the Lok Mela, which was scheduled to take place from November 3 to 13 at the Lok Virsa Complex in Shakarparian, would be more than a mere exhibition of Pakistan's heritage.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindhi attended the Annual Sports Day of Islamabad Model College for Girls F-8/1.

CEO Biopharma calls on Nadeem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of U.P.H. Biopharma, Lue FENG called on Caretaker federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan to discuss mutual cooperation and matters of mutual interest in the health sector.

During the meeting, the CEO briefed the minister on the preparation and supply of Sinovac vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The minister expressed special gratitude for the supply of Sinovac vaccines during the global pandemic.

Dr. Nadeem Jan mentioned the initiative to build Pharma Parks in Pakistan.

He said, "We are interested in technology transfer from friendly countries to produce pharmaceuticals."

He said positive progress on technology transfer from friendly countries was ongoing.

PIO vows to resolve problems faced by regional newspapers

Says billing problems of newspapers to be resolved on priority

ISLAMABAD (APP): Principal Information Officer (PIO) Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan on Wednesday vowed to resolve the issues faced by the regional newspapers on priority.

He expressed the resolve regarding resolution of the issues of regional papers during a meeting with a delegation of Rawalpindi Islamabad Union of Journalists (RIUJ).

The delegation led by RIUJ President Syed Qaisar Abbas Shah congratulated Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan on assuming the charge of PIO.

The delegation also included Malik Rasheed,

Raheel Anwar Swati, Zarah Farid, Arif Malik, Imran Maqsood and Muzaffar Bhatti.

They briefed the PIO about the issues faced by regional newspapers especially in obtaining health and accreditation cards.

On the occasion, PIO Dr Tariq Mehmood Khan assured the delegation that the issues of the regional newspapers would be resolved on priority and process of obtaining health cards would be made easy.

He said a comprehensive policy would be worked out to solve all the problems faced by the journalists and regional newspapers.

Pakistan lauds ILO's comprehensive action plan on labor protection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Workers' Welfare Fund (WWF) Zulfikar Ahmad expressed Pakistan's commendation for the International Labour Organization's (ILO) proactive approach in developing a comprehensive action plan on labour protection for the period 2023-29.

In a significant address at the 349th Session of the Governing Body of the ILO, representing the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, he emphasized the vital role played by labour protection and social security as interconnected facets of social welfare, echoing the plan's viewpoint on their mutually supportive relationship.

Commencing his statement by extending heartfelt congratulations to the newly appointed Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, he conveyed Pakistan's confidence in the Chairperson's leadership abilities, anticipating significant advancements in the global cause of labour protection and social security. Zulfikar Ahmad highlighted Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the well-being and safety of its workforce, aligning with the national goals and objectives. Acknowledging the evolving nature of employment patterns, he stressed the importance of addressing the needs of workers engaged in non-traditional work arrangements.

Sanjrani refers issue of protesting university teachers to Committee

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman of the Senate, Sadiq Sanjrani, has taken action on the matter of university teachers protesting outside the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and referred it to the standing committee.

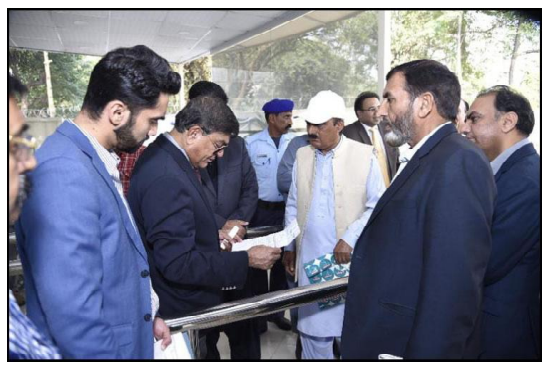
This decision comes after a point from Senator Saadia Abbasi, who highlighted the grievances of the protesting teachers, including their demands for a proper service structure and fair promotion policy.

Senator Abbasi lamented the lack of concrete action despite previous directives to the HEC regarding the matter from the National Assembly and its

relevant Standing Committee. Consequently, she appealed to the Chairman to refer the issue to the relevant senate standing committee for a more thorough examination.

Chairman Sanjrani duly acknowledged the gravity of the situation and accepted the proposal for further consideration of the matter in Senate Standing Committee of Federal Education and Professional Training.

It was also approved to summon the President of the All Public Universities BPS Teachers Association (APUBTA) in the meeting of relevant standing committee.



Wafaqi Mohtasib Inspection Team is attending to the complaint of a customer during their inspection visit to CDA.

Envoy draws parallel of Indian demographic shifts in Kashmir to Israel: Envoy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan in Türkiye Dr Yousaf Junaid on Wednesday calling the Kashmir Black Day the most tragic day in the history of IIOJK, said India was resorting to the same playbook of demographic change similar to Israel, by settling non-Kashmiris in the occupied territory.

The ambassador, addressing a ceremony to mark Kashmir Black Day held at the embassy, highlighted the atrocities committed by Indian occupation forces against Kashmiris.

He said the Kashmiris were living in a situation where they were humans without human rights.

The ambassador highlighted that Palestine and Kashmir represented un-

ceasing situations of foreign occupation in the modern world, where brutal military occupations had not only denied the people their fundamental right of self-determination but also unleashed a reign of terror on innocent civilians. Chairperson Human Rights Investigation Commission of Turkish Parliament Derya Yanik, Member of Parliament Burhan Kayaturk, President SDE Guray Alpar and representatives of media, think tanks and civil society attended the event.

In her speech, Chairperson Human Rights Investigation Commission of Turkish Parliament Derya Yanik stated that supporting Kashmir is the requirement of international law and conscience. Türkiye has always sup-

16 fresh Corona cases reported

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health officials on Wednesday said that 16 new coronavirus cases were reported during the past week across the country.

As per data shared by the National Institute of Health (NIH), the case positivity ratio was 0.52 percent while no patient was in critical condition. No death was reported from the coronavirus while 3,100 Covid-19 tests were conducted. Meanwhile, the official of the Ministry for National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination said that the government had strengthened the role of Border and Health Services in Pakistan to deal with any sub-variant of Covid-19.

Pakistan-Denmark parliamentary friendship group meet NPA

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Pak-Denmark Parliamentary Friendship Group led by Senator Nuzhat Sadiq today met with a delegation of NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NPA) from the Parliament of Denmark, at the International Parliamentarians Congress Secretariat (IPC).

The visiting Delegation was headed by Mads Fuglege Member Danish Parliament. The Secretary General, International Parliamentarians Congress Sitara Ayaz with its team briefed the delegation on the structure, working and functions of the IPC. The convener committee Senator Nuzhat Sadiq and Secretary General Sitara Ayaz while addressing the delegation condemned the Israeli

ground operations in the Palestinian Gaza and stressed the role of Parliament in resolution of conflicts and wars.

Senator Nuzhat Sadiq also commended the Danish Parliament of the help extended to Pakistan during the devastating floods in 2022 and remarked that Pakistan greatly acknowledges their support during the difficult times. She said that Global Climate Change Calamity is a rising issue resulting in serious Natural Disasters around the globe. She further added that collaboration of Worldwide Parliaments in this regard is the need of the day. The delegation recognised the role of collective deliberations on the problems confronting the challenges faced by Global Climate Change.

Pak, Iran to organize joint cultural week during this month

ISLAMABAD (APP): Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Reza Amir Moghaddam and Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Jamal Shah Wednesday discussed ways to enhance collaboration in field of art and culture and mutually agreed to arrange a Pak-Iran Joint Cultural Week later this month. Cultural Counsellor of Islamic Republic of Iran Ehsan Khazaei and Adviser National Heritage and Culture Division Muhammad Kashif Irshad were also present in the meeting. The two sides also discussed in detail diverse areas of cooperation in the field of art, culture, film and calligraphy between the two brotherly countries.



ISLAMABAD: Traffic Police Warden is removing black paper from the window screen of a car at Sector G-7 in Federal Capital.

DG stresses provinces for long-term action plan to expand scope 'child nutrition'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General Health Ministry of Health, Baseer Khan Achakzai Wednesday stressed provincial governments for formulating a long-term action plan to expand the scope of nutrition and rural people's access to safe drinking water as every year around 53,000 Pakistani children die of diarrhoea after drinking unsafe water.

Talking to a private news channel, DG Health expressed his serious concern over the unsafe drinking water in far-flung areas of the country and stressed that provinces should increase their investment to support child nutrition programs.

Ministry of Health with the collaboration of provincial governments would soon launch a campaign to improve maternal nutrition in rural areas by conducting awareness campaigns.

He explained that in 2024, 25 awareness campaigns will be held in 67 selected districts that report poor maternal nutrition indicators. DG Health said that improving the knowledge and capacity of healthcare providers to address maternal nutrition issues and promote a collective responsibility approach is the need of the hour. The key objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of maternal nutrition and improve the capacities of health workers in public.



ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in preparing Sindh pavilion for upcoming Lok Mela in Lok Virsa.

Brutal killing of innocent Palestinian citizens is actually genocide of humanity: Baligh

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended the inauguration ceremony of "Tabeer" Project at LUMS University National Incubation Center Lahore as Chief Guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the brutal killing of innocent Palestinian citizens is

actually a genocide of humanity. He said that the martyrdom of Palestinians by the bombing at the civilian settlements and hospitals in Gaza strip is painful. Governor Punjab said that the international community must come together to end the brutality and tranny and play a role in stopping the massacre of innocent citizens, women and small children in Gaza strip.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the purpose of "Tabeer Project" is to hone the entrepreneurial skills of students. He said that the incubation center in the university is an excellent initiative, adding that it will boost the on going efforts to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic prosperity in the province. He said that

Incubation centers in universities across Punjab are already working towards empowering the youth by providing them with the necessary resources, guidance and opportunities to turn their entrepreneurship dreams in to reality. Tabeer will enhance these efforts through collaborative engagements with university faculty, the NICL team.



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurating Department of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAWW) Studies in Peshawar University. Vice Chancellor Dr. Idrees and Ulema are also present.



KARACHI: Peoples Party senior leader and former Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at PPP Bilawal House Media Cell in Karachi.

AJK PM emphasizes equal importance of ministries

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

During a meeting with a public delegation in the federal metropolis on Wednesday, the Prime Minister emphasized that there is no difference in the weightage and status of all ministries and portfolios. He underlined that the most crucial factor is the hard work and dedication of those in leadership positions, as per a press release.

He further mentioned that it is high time for the youth to focus on IT instead of wasting their time on unproductive activities. The Prime

Minister pointed out that idleness can lead to anxiety and chaos in society.

He indicated that he has given special instructions to the Minister for IT to utilize all available resources to attract educated youth towards IT and skill development. He also stressed the need to prioritize agriculture and livestock.

The Prime Minister assured that his government will allocate all available resources to public welfare projects. He mentioned that the government is planning to launch a significant welfare project worth 5 billion rupees for widows, orphans, disabled individuals, and divorced women.

Punjab still in grip of dengue; 214 new cases reported

LAHORE (APP): Punjab is still in the grip of dengue fever, with 214 new cases reported on Wednesday.

According to the latest data from the Health department, a total of 9,512 confirmed dengue cases were reported across 36 districts in Punjab this year.

Leading the unfortunate tally is Lahore, reporting a staggering 4,032 cases, followed closely by Rawalpindi with 2,287, Multan with 968, Faisalabad with 431 and

Gujranwala with 780 cases. The situation is still continuing, with Lahore reporting an additional 124 new dengue cases, Rawalpindi with 25, Multan with 16, Gujranwala with 24, Faisalabad with 04 while Narowal reported 04 cases in the last 24 hours. Sahiwal reported 03 case of dengue virus whereas Sheikhupura, Chakwal and Sialkot each recorded 02 new cases of dengue in the same time frame. Kasur, Attock, Sargodha.



HYDERABAD: Teachers and students of Nation Public School are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, held in Hyderabad.

KP police committed to end terrorism from country: IGP

PESHAWAR (APP): Inspector General (IG) of Police Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Akhtar Hayat Khan here Wednesday said that the police committed to end terrorism from country.

Every possible effort to sabotage the peace process would be thwarted, he said.

"The restoration of peace and security is the top priority of the police. The police will utilize all available means and capabilities to safeguard the lives and property of the public," he added.

He expressed these views while addressing a high-level police conference

at the Range Office in DI Khan. He said, "Anti-social elements that aim to spread terrorism and create instability through insurgency in the country are trying to undermine it, and it is our collective responsibility to defeat these attempts." "We will give a terror-free country to the coming generations. To counter elements in society who are enemies of peace, we must awaken public awareness and defeat terrorism". Regional Police Officer (RPO) of Dera Naseer Mahmood Satti and other relevant officials briefed the IGP in detail regarding the security situation.

Governor inaugurates Dept of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) Studies

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday visited the University of Peshawar and inaugurated Department of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) Studies.

Former Provincial Ministers, Syed Zahir Ali Shah and Moulana Amanullah Haqqani, Sheikh-ul-Hadees, Moulana Muhammad Idrees, Sheikh-ul-Hadees, Moulana Mufti Ghulamud-Din Popalzai, Dean Islamic Studies, Dr. Muhammad Salim, faculty members and students were also present on the occasion.

Speaking as the chief guest, the Governor said Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) is the best way of life for all of us and we should follow the life of the holy Prophet (PBUH) to achieve success in the world and life

hereafter.

He said the factors that have created rift in society can be overcome by following the principles preached by the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

He said the social evils can be controlled by following Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW) and we can change the mindset of the young generation by informing them about the golden principles of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW). The Governor said that the problems can be solved by living a life according to Seerat-un-Nabi. He also advised the young generation to follow the principles of Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW).

Dean Islamic Studies, Dr. Muhammad Salim also announced free admission for students and said that the department would be made fully functional after appointing staff and faculty members.

NESPAK to design first Smart Education City

LAHORE (APP): The NESPAK (National Engineering Services Pakistan) has been awarded a prestigious consultancy services project for the feasibility study and design of Pakistan's first Smart Education City in District Malir, Karachi by the Board of Investment, Government of Sindh. NESPAK Managing Director Zargham Eshaq Khan told media here on Wednesday that this pioneering initiative was

based on advanced Smart and Safe City concepts. The primary objective of the project was to establish governance processes that leverage technology and digital systems to manage city-wide resources in real-time through the Command and Control Centre. All systems would be interconnected using fast, reliable, and secure GPON, he added. The MD mentioned that key systems integrated into this project.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with participants of an inaugural ceremony of "Tabeer" project at LUMS University National Incubation Center.

Kurram witnesses positive transformation through Govt and LEs initiatives

PESHAWAR (Online): Over the past week, multiple jirgas have convened in Kurram district, facilitated by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and law enforcement agencies, with participation from regional leaders, government officials, and law enforcement personnel. These collaborative efforts have led to an evident improvement in the local situation.

The government is actively engaged in restoring normalcy to the region by reopening previously closed roads within the next one to two days, ensuring the delivery of essential supplies such as food and medicine.

In a significant development, a special land commission has been

established by the government to address land disputes in Kurram district, and its work is nearing completion. Despite the disruptive intentions of certain elements, the situation in Kurram is anticipated to continue its positive trajectory.

Tragically, the ongoing clash between clans has resulted in the loss of 25 lives. However, both parties have agreed to gradually vacate bunkers, signifying a step towards resolution. The everyday lives of the local populace have been adversely affected by these acts of lawlessness, but the government is steadfast in its commitment to restore normalcy and improve the well-being of the common citizens.

Naqvi chairs marathon meeting to take stock of smog situation

Independent Report
LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presided over a marathon meeting stretching for many hours at CM office with regard to take stock of the smog situation. The government and specialists mulled over various steps to be taken for the eradication of smog.

The environment specialists relating to smog apprised during the meeting that it will make no difference by granting leave in schools and closing down a transport.

CM chaired a meeting in which smog emergency has been enforced across Punjab and wearing a mask has been declared mandatory for male and

female students in all government and private schools for one month.

CM while addressing the participants in the meeting said that mask wearing has been declared compulsory for the health of male and female students. We also appeal to the general public to use mask while going out of their houses.

CM directed the Provincial Ministers to visit government and private schools from tomorrow. Mohsin Naqvi stated that a stern action will be taken against those who during the construction of houses fail to sprinkle water on dust, sand and debris. CM issued directions to Commissioner

Lahore division, Local Government department and Lahore Waste Management Company in this regard. CM ordered withdrawal of challans against farmers during smog. Mohsin Naqvi issued directions to the Additional Chief Secretary (Home) in this regard and urged the farmers not to burn crops stubbles and dispose them of in an appropriate manner. Stern action should continue to be taken against smog emitting vehicles and factories without any discrimination.

CM directed that whichever step is humanly possible should be taken for the reduction and elimination of smog.

ABAD delegation meets DG HDA

HYDERABAD (APP): A delegation of the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) called upon the Director General of Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) Zahid Hussain Shar at the HDA Secretariat here on Wednesday. The delegation, led by ABAD Hyderabad Region Vice Chairman Zulfikar Farooqi, discussed the issues about the housing schemes and commercial projects in the district. The delegation emphasizes the need to expedite the development of the Gulistan-e-Sarmast and Kohsar Extension housing projects. They asked the DG to arrange funds to complete the long-delayed Sarmast project which was a low-cost.



ABBOTTABAD: An eye-catching view of a snow covered area during the first heavy snowfall of winter season, which more decreases the temperature below in minus degree Celsius, at Ayubia Koza Gali road in Abbottabad on.

KP Caretaker Minister boosts industrial growth in Mohmand District

PESHAWAR: Dr. Aamir Abdullah, the Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education, and Newly Merged Districts Affairs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, embarked on a one-day visit to the Merged District of Mohmand. During his visit, he inaugurated the operations of two newly established industrial units and laid the foundation stone for another.

The industrial zone in this district, developed under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC), witnessed the formal inauguration of two oil units that became

operational within a remarkably short period of one month. Additionally, the foundation stone was laid for a new flour unit.

These projects have attracted a total investment of 1.2 billion rupees and are expected to create employment opportunities for 1,100 individuals, particularly benefiting the local population.

Accompanying the caretaker minister were Javed Iqbal Khattak, the Chief Executive Officer of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company, the company's zone manager, industrialists, and local community leaders.



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar being briefed by District Municipal officials during his inspection visit of Shah Faisal Colony area in Karachi.

KMC ready to work with World Bank on city's uplift projects: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Wednesday said the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation was ready to work with the World Bank on the city's development projects, the World Bank's investment and other matters will be approved legal protection by the City Council.

To solve the problem of lack of clean water, installation of RO plants is needed in Karachi, by installing a RO plant in every ward of the city, water shortage can be controlled to a large extent.

He said this during a meeting with a three-member delegation of the World Bank in his office. KMC Council Parliamentary Leader Najmi Alam was also

present on the occasion. Head of the delegation Practice Manager World Bank Urban and Land for South Asia Abedalrazq Khalil received information regarding the development projects of Karachi on this occasion and expressed interest in investment by the World Bank in these projects.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab briefed the World Bank delegation about the structure of the local government system and the management of civic affairs in Karachi. He said that the city is divided into 46 towns and thousand wards, each UC chairman represents his area in the KMC council and at the lower level.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presiding over a meeting at CM office with regard to take stock of the smog situation.

Rwanda delegation explores bilateral cooperation opportunities in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Parliamentary delegation from Rwanda, led by Dr. Kalinda Francois Xavier, President of the Senate of Rwanda has explored bilateral cooperation opportunities in various sectors during their visit to Pakistan.

The delegation is currently on a four-day visit to Pakistan at the invitation of Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani. The delegation held significant meetings aimed at strengthening bilateral relations, with a focus on Information Technology (IT) and economic collaboration, said a press release.

During the visit, the delegation met with key Pakistani officials and organizations to discuss potential areas of

collaboration. Notable engagements included meetings with the Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif, a visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ICCI), and discussions with the Secretary General of the International Parliamentarians Congress (IPC), Sitaray Azaz.

In the meeting with the Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Kalinda emphasized the importance of Pakistan establishing a presence in Rwanda and exploring investment opportunities, particularly in the IT sector.

Minister Dr. Umar Saif highlighted Pakistan's robust IT market, with millions of cellular users and significant cellphone

manufacturing capabilities. He also mentioned plans to export cell phones to African countries, fostering growth in the sector.

The Ambassador of Rwanda stressed the necessity of creating a comprehensive framework for cooperation, including cross-ministerial collaboration. Dr. Kalinda implied the signing of MoUs in the fields of Defense and Health with Pakistan, with negotiations underway for agreements in other sectors and desired to sign MoUs with Pakistan also in the IT Sector. The delegation's visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries was marked by discussions on enhancing bilateral trade and cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif in a meeting with Parliamentary delegation of Rwanda.



CEO of E-Commerce Enablers Saqib Azhar and Sardarzada Usama Khan Tareen meeting with Federal Interior Minister Sarfaraz Bugti.

SBP & CDC launched RAAST payments facility for mutual funds

ISLAMABAD (APP): Central Depository Company (CDC) has collaborated with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to allow investors to purchase mutual funds units using SBP's RAAST Payment Gateway.

CDC has developed a framework where it acts as an "Aggregator" and issues a Raast Payment ID, enabling investors to digitally transfer funds, using Raast, to the respective Asset Management Company (AMC) for the purchase of mutual fund units said a news release.

The facility was launched in an event at CDC House with Saleem Ullah, Deputy Governor SBP as the Chief Guest.

While officiating the event, Deputy Governor SBP, Saleem Ullah expressed his heartfelt appreciation for CDC's unwavering efforts and initiatives for digitalization and customer facilitation.

He emphasized that the core objective of all digitalization efforts is to

improve customer convenience and satisfaction. He said that the launch of the RAAST payments facility for Mutual Funds would provide much-needed convenience to mutual fund investors and would be instrumental in increasing the investors' base.

Highlighting the importance of RAAST, the DG SBP said that RAAST will work as the pivot for digitization of the country's payment system. He said that since its launch in 2021, RAAST has been working smoothly, successfully processing over 1 million transactions daily.

To date over 33 million unique RAAST IDs have been created and over 267 million transactions worth Rs.5.4 trillion paid and settled through RAAST.

He added that the RAAST Payment-to-Merchant (P2M) feature has been recently launched, which will revolutionize the digital payment landscape in the country.

NPO to organize webinar on tax & regulatory compliance

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a webinar on 'tax and regulatory compliance' on November 09 (Thursday).

Tax regulations means tax and other laws statute, ordinance, rule, order or other application of the laws applicable in a given country as well as any international treaty whereas tax compliance is the framework designed by the regulators to ensure the transparent governance in the individual or business decision to comply with the tax laws in a given country, according to an NPO document shared here Wednesday.

The objective of the training aimed to help understand the basic taxation laws applicable, how to handle compliance, business to increase their credibility and to avail the benefits associated. The webinar has been designed for senior management, middle management, entrepreneurs, startups and SMEs.

SECP to establish online dashboard 'ESG Sustain'

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Akif Saeed has said the SECP has been actively striving to inculcate a regulatory environment that considers the environmental impact, encourages corporate social responsibilities and stimulates good governance practices.

He was speaking at the 2nd Pakistan Climate Conference organized by the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI).

Akif talked about recent developments in the ESG framework in Pakistan and SECP's vision of its governance framework, said a press release issued here on Wednesday.

He pointed out that Pakistan is one of the 10 most climate-vulnerable

countries in the world and has experienced the most devastating impacts of climate change in the form of catastrophic floods last year that affected 33 million people with a loss of approx. PKR 3.3 trillion.

Akif said, "One of the main ingredients for achieving long-term value for stakeholders is inclusivity. To address this area, not only has the SECP mandated female representation on companies' boards, but we are also actively striving towards creating conducive work environments by encouraging companies to implement gender diversity policies. I am glad to note that major strides have been made, and currently, more than 87% of listed companies have at least one female director on board."

Any kind of seeds not allowed to import; rules & regulation is our priority: Dr Kausar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik Wednesday said that any kind of seeds will not be permitted to be imported, rules and regulation is our priority and according to our law, no seed can be imported.

He said that the Ministry of National Food Security and Research will provide all the possible support to the industry, said a press release issued here. The Minister said that technical and commercial research reports should be submitted in a week regarding Soybean (Glycine max), it is our

vision to solve livestock and poultry problems on a priority basis.

He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting of the All Pakistan Solvent Extractors Association regarding reducing the price of chickens and importing soybeans.

Secretary, Minister of National Food Security & Research Captain Muhammad Mahmood and Chairman PARC Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali were also present.

Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik said that complete work should be done on soybeans before importing them, it is necessary to check which seeds have more economic benefits in

the same season.

He said that it is better to grow something for the sake of domestic and national interest on the land where nothing can grow.

Secretary Ministry of National Food Security & Research Captain (retd) Muhammad Mahmood advised to form a committee comprising of Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Center, the Director General of the Department of Plant Protection and the Director General Federal Seeds Certification and Registration Department and submit a research report within a week on the SOPs and protocols of soybean import and export in the world.

SM Tanveer chairs 15th PPPA session

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer chaired the 15th session of the Executive Committee of Punjab Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA) here Wednesday.

The primary agenda consisted of a comprehensive review encompassing 15 key points. During the meeting, the committee approved the initiation of three pivotal projects i.e. establishment of five underground parking facilities in the vicinity of the walled city area, Thokar Niaz Baig to Mohlanwal Canal Road sewerage initiative and the waste recycling project.

In addition to the

project greenlight, the committee took a significant stride by authorizing the allocation of funds through the Project Development Fund (PDF), marking a pivotal step in advancing these initiatives. Further strategic moves were made as the committee sanctioned the initiation of a commercial bank account and approved the procurement of new vehicles, aligning seamlessly with the Authority's overarching goals.

Administrative and financial matters, crucial to the PPPA, were also addressed and ratified during the meeting. The minutes of the 13th and 14th sessions were also approved.

Lahore Chamber lauds FBR's revenue success

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) has commended the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for surpassing revenue target for the fourth consecutive month, achieving a collection of Rs 2.75 trillion from July to October 2023. Talking to media here Wednesday, the LCCI President Kashif Anwar said the FBR has collected Rs 68 billion more in taxes between July and October than it had planned. Kashif Anwar also welcomed the decision of not to increase interest rates, but he emphasized the need for reduced interest rates, suggesting

that ideally, the interest rate should be in single digit to facilitate industrial growth as the lower interest rates typically have a multifaceted impact on economy like cost of borrowing, investment incentives, Consumer Spending, exchange rates, lower interest rates and reducing debt servicing burden. He calls for parity in exchange rates to curb illegal money transfer methods, saying stable petroleum product prices reflect economic recovery.

Furthermore, President LCCI expressed his appreciation for the reduction in edible oil prices by Rs 60 per liter.

Shell signs agreement to sell majority shareholding

ISLAMABAD (APP): Shell Petroleum Company Limited, a subsidiary of Shell plc (Shell), has agreed to sell its 77.42% majority interest in Shell Pakistan Limited (SPL) to Wafi Energy LLC.

The sale is part of Shell's strategy to high-grade its mobility network and was first announced on Capital Markets Day in June 2023, said a news release.

The sale is expected to be completed by Q4 2024, subject to regulatory approvals. Upon completion, the Shell brand will remain in Pakistan.



KARACHI: Newly elected President Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

CPI inflation recorded at 26.9 in October

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation increased to 26.9 percent during the month of October 2023 as compared to the same month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Wednesday.

The inflation had increased to 31.4 per cent during last month (September) whereas it was recorded at 26.6 percent during October, 2022, according to the PBS data.

On a month-on-month basis, the inflation increased to 1.1 percent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 2.0 percent in the previous month and an increase of 4.7 percent in October 2022.

The urban CPI inflation increased to

25.5% on a year-on-year (YoY) basis in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 29.7% in the previous month and 24.6% in October last year. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, it increased to 1.1% in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 1.7% in the previous month and an increase of 4.5% in October 2022.

On the other hand, the rural CPI increased to 28.9% on a year-on-year basis in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 33.9% in the previous month and 29.5% in October 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the inflation increased to 1.1 percent in October 2023 as compared to an increase of 2.0 percent in the previous month and an increase of 4.7 percent in October 2022.

The urban CPI inflation increased to



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik chairing a meeting of All Pakistan Solvent Extractors Association at Ministry of NFS&R.

KP-EZDMC, British Council discuss skills partnership

PESHAWAR (APP): A virtual session on the development of the International Skills Partnership was held between Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zone Development & Management Company (KPEZDMC) and the British Council team, according to a press release issued here on Wednesday.

This partnership aims to foster growth and

innovation by introducing an Industry Advisory Taskforce Group (IATG) to establish a sectoral approach in the Food and Beverages sector in the Hattar Economic Zone as a pilot project.

The meeting brought together not only key stakeholders but also private industrialists i.e. Mashmoom Private Ltd, and Mughal Foods from Hattar Economic Zone.

Gold price decreases by Rs 1,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,200 to Rs.211,800 on Wednesday as compared to its sale at Rs 213,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs1,029 to Rs181,584 from Rs182,613 whereas the price of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs166,452, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.



MULTAN: Farmer women plucking cotton in the field at Central Cotton Research Institute.

OICCI urges collaborative efforts to address climate crisis in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amir Paracha President of the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) on Wednesday urged collaborative efforts to address the climate crisis in Pakistan.

"Climate change is a global issue but in Pakistan's case it is evident that climate change is happening now and not a phenomenon that only our future generations will experience," said Amir Paracha at the 2nd Pakistan Climate Conference.

This is the second consecutive year that the OICCI has organized the Climate Conference with the aim of better climate action in the country.

Despite being

responsible for less than 1% of the world's planet-warming gases, Pakistan is the eighth most vulnerable nation to the climate crisis.

Caretaker Finance Minister Shamsah Akhtar, while addressing the conference, said that to address climate-related challenges, Pakistan would require an investment of approximately 340 billion dollars, which is 10pc of cumulative GDP. "One of the biggest challenges we have internationally is the issue of trade-off between climate finance and developmental finance," she said. She said that getting money for Pakistan's climate crisis other development finance.

United Business Group will win the FPCCI election with a huge majority: Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Business Group (UBG) has expressed confidence in winning the upcoming FPCCI election with a huge majority.

The group's secretary general, Zafar Bakhtawari on Wednesday said that the UBG has fielded the best candidates to convey the voice of the business community to the houses of power and decision-making forces. He also said

that the business community of the country is equally responsible for the current economic situation, and that the UBG has the best solutions to improve the economy. Bakhtawari also welcomed the joining of Qurban Ali, the group leader of All Chamber of Commerce Gilgit Baltistan, to the UBG. Ali said that there are nine chambers bodies in Gilgit Baltistan out of which 8 are joining

UBG today, and that he has full confidence in the UBG's candidates.

The UBG's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Shaikh, said that he is confident in winning the election and that he will play a role in solving the problems of the business community in the context of the current economic situation. He also said that the UBG will win the FPCCI election with a huge majority.



MULTAN: Members of All Pakistan NTDC Engineers Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Multan press club.

Desperate Israel erases 50 lives in Jabalia camp strike

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Palestinian fighters offered stiff resistance to invading forces, but the relentless Israeli bombing of the besieged enclave claimed at least 50 lives in the Jabalia refugee camp, on Tuesday.

This takes the total number of those killed in Israel's brutal bombing campaign to 8,525, including 3,542 children, according to the latest count by the health ministry.

The director of Gaza's Indonesian Hospital told Al Jazeera that more than 50 Palestinians were killed and 150 wounded in Israeli air strikes on a densely populated area of the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

AFP video footage from the scene showed at least 47 bodies recovered from the rubble after the strike hit several houses in the densely crowded camp.

Dozens of onlookers could be seen standing on the edges of two vast craters as people searched for

survivors.

Ragheb Aqal, a Jabalia resident, described the strikes as "an earthquake" which shook the entire refugee camp.

"I went and saw the destruction... homes buried under the rubble and body parts and martyrs and wounded. People were still transporting the remains of children, women and elderly", he added.

The Jabalia camp is Gaza's largest refugee camp. According to the United Nations agency for Palestinian Refugees, the densely populated camp is situated in the north of the besieged enclave and covers an area of 1.4 square km. There are approximately 116,000 registered refugees in the camp.

The camp also housed three UN-run schools, which had subsequently been converted

into shelters for hundreds of displaced families.

On Tuesday, Tel Aviv said it struck 300 targets during its fourth night of land operations in northern Gaza.

Warplanes kept up a relentless barrage of strikes on Gaza, while Israel also claimed that its forces were engaging Hamas fighters inside their vast tunnel network beneath Gaza.

"Over the last day... IDF struck approximately 300 targets, including anti-tank missile and rocket launch posts below shafts, as well as military compounds inside underground tunnels belonging to Hamas," an Israeli military statement said.

Footage from the Israeli military showed tanks and armoured bulldozers churning up bomb-scarred dirt tracks and troops going from building to building.

In addition, AFP images showed plumes of smoke rising above Gaza and Israeli helicopters raining down rockets on the northern Gaza Strip.



Palestinian fighters offered stiff resistance to invading forces, but the relentless Israeli bombing of the besieged enclave claimed at least 50 lives in the Jabalia refugee camp.

Seoul believes North Korea sent Russia over a million artillery shells

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea's top spy agency believes North Korea sent more than a million artillery shells to Russia since August to help fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine, according to a lawmaker who attended a closed-door briefing Wednesday with intelligence officials.

North Korea and Russia have been actively boosting the visibility of their partnership in the face of separate, deepening confrontations with the United States. Their diplomacy — highlighted by a summit between North Korean leader

Kim Jong Un and Putin in September — has triggered concerns about an arms arrangement in which North Korea supplies Russia with badly needed munitions in exchange for advanced Russian technologies that would strengthen Kim's nuclear-armed military.

Both Pyongyang and Moscow have denied U.S. and South Korea claims that the North has been transferring arms supplies to Russia.

According to lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum, the South Korean National Intelligence Service believes the North shipped more than a million artillery shells to Russia

through ships and other transport means since early August to help boost Russia's warfighting capabilities in Ukraine. Those shells would roughly amount to two months' worth of supplies for the Russians, Yoo said. The agency believes North Korea has been operating its munitions factories at full capacity to meet Russian munition demands and has also been mobilizing residents to increase production, Yoo said. There are also signs that North Korea dispatched weapons experts to Russia in October to counsel Russian officials on how to use the exported North Korean weapons.

2 killed in Russian attacks in eastern Ukraine that also damage Kherson city center

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: A Russian attack on Kherson in eastern Ukraine on Wednesday killed one person and caused serious damage in the city's center, the region's governor said, and a Russian drone strike killed another civilian in the frequently targeted city of Nikopol.

The attack on Kherson, which Russian forces seized early in the war but then abandoned a year ago, also wounded two people. Despite the withdrawal, Russian attacks from the other side of the Dnieper River persist.

"Again an apocalyptic scene," regional Gov.

Oleksandr Prokudin said on the Telegram messaging app. "Broken glass, torn window frames, ruined homes. People with trembling voices telling about what they have been through."

In Nikopol, which is on the opposite bank of the Dnieper from the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, four people were wounded in the drone strike along with the woman who was killed, according to regional Gov. Serhii Lysak. Oleksii Kuleba, deputy head of Ukraine's presidential office, said "the occupiers are increasing the number and intensity of strikes."

Blinken to visit South Korea; North Korea, Russia on agenda

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit South Korea on Nov 8 and 9 to discuss North Korea and alliance issues with Foreign Minister Park Jin, South Korea's foreign ministry said on Wednesday.

Park and Blinken will also discuss economic security, cooperation on industrial technology and regional issues of mutual interest, the ministry said. The visit marks the first by a US secretary of state in two and a half years. It comes amid heightened security cooperation between the allies and growing concerns about North Korea's military cooperation with Russia.



ASTANA: French President Emmanuel Macron meeting with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, in Kazakhstan.

4 former Hong Kong student leaders jailed over their praise of a knife attack on a police officer

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Four former student leaders from the University of Hong Kong were sentenced to two years in prison on Monday for inciting people to wound others through their praise of a man who stabbed a police officer before killing himself in 2021.

Kinson Cheung, Charles Kwok, Chris Todorovski and Anthony Yung are being held responsible for their roles in passing a motion in the students union council. The motion expressed "deep sadness" and appreciated the "sacrifice" of the man who took his own life.

The resolution came against the backdrop of widespread public anger against the police, who were condemned as being heavy-handed in quelling the 2019 pro-democracy protests.

Handing down the sentences, Judge Adriana Noelle Tse Ching said the words they used were likely to incite hatred against the police. The charge for the four were facing was a serious offense and a lenient sentence would send "the wrong message" to society, she said.

Leung Kin-fai stabbed a police officer with a knife before turning the weapon on himself on July 1, 2021, the anniversary of the former British colony's handover to Chinese rule in 1997. Leung was described by the city's authorities as a "lone wolf" domestic terrorist who was politically radicalized.

The passing of the motion drew criticism from the university and Hong Kong's security bureau, prompting Kwok and his peers to apologize and retract the resolution.

Uganda army says it killed rebels that murdered honeymooning tourists

Monitoring Desk
KAMPALA: Uganda's military said on Wednesday it had killed a number of fighters from an Islamic State-linked group who shot dead a honeymooning couple and their guide in a national park last month.

Gummen from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) rebel group ambushed David and Celia Barlow and their Ugandan guide Eric Ayai in Queen Elizabeth National Park near the border with Democratic Republic of Congo on Oct. 17. Celia Barlow was South African and her husband was British. "ADF terrorists whom we have been tracking down since the attack on tourists were finally got and a number of them were killed last night on Lake Edward."



Motorists watch as Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) activists set fire on a road as they attempt to block a highway during clashes with the police in Arahazar, some 40km from Dhaka.

Charles stops short of apologising for UK's 'acts of violence' in Kenya

Monitoring Desk
NAIROBI: Britain's King Charles said on Tuesday he felt the "greatest sorrow and deepest regret" for atrocities suffered by Kenyans during their struggle for independence from colonial rule.

But in a speech at the start of a four-day state visit to Kenya, he stopped short of making a full apology called for by survivors of that period and local rights groups who are pressing for reparations from the British government.

"The wrongdoings of the past are a cause of the

greatest sorrow and the deepest regret," Charles said during a state banquet.

"There were abhorrent and unjustifiable acts of violence committed against Kenyans as they waged... a painful struggle for independence and sovereignty and for that, there can be no excuse." Many citizens of former British colonies, including leaders of Kenya's Nandi people, want Charles to directly apologise and endorse reparations for colonial-era abuses, including torture, killings and expropriation of land, much of which remains in British hands.

France probes graffiti of anti-Semitic symbols in Paris

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French prosecutors opened an investigation on Tuesday into dozens of Stars of David daubed on buildings around the city and its suburbs. Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne condemned "the despicable acts", saying they will not go unpunished.

Fresh stars were painted overnight on the facades of several buildings in a southern district of Paris, a journalist saw on Tuesday. Similar tags appeared over the weekend in suburbs of the city including Vanves.

Two Bangladeshi activists killed in anti-govt protests

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Two Bangladeshi opposition activists were killed on Tuesday after police clashed with hundreds of anti-government protesters launching a three-day strike blocking roads and railways after their top leaders were charged with murder.

Police said violence broke out in multiple cities and towns as members of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-Islami, the country's largest Islamist party, demanded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina step down from power ahead of elections due by the end of January.

The BNP said it launched its transport blockade after police broke up a rally on Saturday, when more than 100,000 supporters of the two major opposition parties demanded Hasina allow a free and fair vote under a neutral government.

The violence has sparked international concern, with seven countries including the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada and Japan urging both sides to "exercise restraint, eschew violence and work together" for a free and fair vote.

Al Amin, deputy police chief in the town of Kuliachar, north of the capital Dhaka.

Germany's Scholz says his country, EU to help boost West Africa security

Monitoring Desk
ACCRA: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday said his country and the European Union as a whole were committed to boosting security in West Africa, and could provide training and equipment to support operations against a jihadist insurgency spreading through the region.

Speaking in Ghana on the last leg of his third trip to sub-Saharan Africa, Scholz said a recent string of coups in West African nations had stalled cooperation between countries and could play into the hands of militants.

West Africa is grappling with an insurgency that took root in Mali in 2012 and has since spread across the Sahel region south of the Sahara, killing

thousands and displacing over six million.

Militants with links to al Qaeda and Islamic State have also encroached south towards the Gulf of Guinea, staging attacks in the north of coastal countries such as Benin, Ghana and Togo.

Military takeovers in Mali, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger and Gabon since 2020 have only added instability. Scholz stressed the importance of restoring "democratic order" and said Ghana was a "beacon of hope" for the region and a close partner for Germany.

He noted that Germany was ready to support cross-border cooperation and that an upcoming EU mission to the Gulf of Guinea could provide training and equipment.

White House will develop an anti-Islamophobia strategy but faces skepticism from Muslim Americans

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden's administration is preparing to announce that it will develop a national strategy to combat Islamophobia, according to people briefed on the matter, as it faces skepticism from many in the Muslim American community for its staunch support of Israel's military assault on Hamas in Gaza.

The White House announcement had originally been expected to come last week when Biden held a meeting with Muslim leaders, but was delayed, three people said. Two of them said the delay was due in part to concerns from the Muslim American community that the administration lacked credibility on the issue given its robust support for Israel's military, whose strikes against Hamas militants have also killed thousands of civilians in Gaza. The people spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the White House

plans.

The launch of the anti-Islamophobia strategy has been anticipated for months, after the administration in May released a national strategy to combat antisemitism that also made passing reference to countering hatred against Muslims. The formal strategy is expected to take many months to formalize, following a similar process as the plan to counter antisemitism involving various government agencies.

Incidences of anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim hate have skyrocketed in the U.S. and abroad since the surprise Oct. 7 attack by Hamas militants on Israel that killed over 1,400 and saw hundreds taken hostage, and Israel's response in Gaza, where it has pledged to use force to "destroy" Hamas. One of the most prominent attacks was the killing of 6-year-old Wadwa Al-Fayoume and the wounding of his mother in an attack prosecutors allege was driven by Islamophobia.

Mexico's Sheinbaum holds 18 point lead in presidency race - poll

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: Former Mexico City Mayor and ruling party candidate Claudia Sheinbaum holds an 18 percentage point lead over her nearest rival in the race to win Mexico's next presidential election on June 2, an opinion poll showed.

A survey of 1,620 Mexicans between Oct 19 and Oct 28 by newspaper El Financiero showed Sheinbaum, who represents the leftist National Regeneration Movement (MORENA), polling 46% support, with her rival Xochitl Galvez at 28%.

Sheinbaum has the firm backing of popular President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, who cannot seek reelection. Under Mexican law, presidents may only serve a single six-year term.

Galvez, an unconventional Senator and businesswoman, fronts a three-way opposition alliance ranging from the center-left to the center-right, including two former ruling parties.

A third presidential hopeful, Nuevo Leon state Governor Samuel Garcia of the center-left Citizens' Movement (MC) party, was polling 8 percent support. The remaining 18 percent of respondents did not express a preference.

Sheinbaum, a trained scientist, has pledged to consolidate the legacy of Lopez Obrador. He has built his popularity around increased welfare spending, and worked to give the state greater control of key sectors of the economy, notably energy.

Galvez backs a more business-friendly approach and wants to encourage greater private sector investment. If either woman is elected, they would make history as the first female leader of Latin America's no 2 economy. The two candidates' personal backgrounds have generated plenty of interest in Mexico and abroad. Galvez grew up in a family with indigenous roots, while Sheinbaum's grandparents were Jewish immigrants from eastern Europe.

Biggest Chinese Antarctic fleet sets off to build research station

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Two Chinese icebreaker research vessels and a cargo ship set sail on Wednesday for the Antarctic with more than 460 personnel on board to help complete construction of China's fifth station on the world's southernmost continent.

China's biggest flotilla of research vessels deployed to the Antarctic focused on building the station on the rocky, windswept Inexpressible Island near the Ross Sea, a deep Southern Ocean bay named after a 19th century British explorer.

Work on the first Chinese station in the Pacific sector began in 2018. It will be used to conduct research on the region's environment, state television reported. China has four research stations in the Antarctic built from 1985 to 2014. A U.S.-based think tank estimated the fifth could be finished next year.

The facility is expected to include an observatory with a satellite ground station, and should help China "fill in a major gap" in its ability to access the continent, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) said in a report this year.

The station is also well situated to collect signals intelligence over Australia and New Zealand and telemetry data on rockets launched from Australia's new Arnhem Space Centre, it said. China rejects suggestions that its stations would be used for espionage. The two icebreakers, Xuelong 1 and Xuelong 2, the name means "Snow Dragon" in Chinese, set sail from Shanghai with mostly personnel and logistics supplies on board. The cargo ship "Tianhui", or "Divine Blessings", taking construction material for the station, set off from the eastern port of Zhangjiagang.



BELFAST: People walk past a pro-Palestinian mural on the Republican Falls Road.

