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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

The Minister Home was addressing the passing out parade of 15th batch of Anti Terrorist Force (ATF)

at the ATF training school here on Thursday.

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

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

He congratulated the ATF jawans on successful completion of their training and hoped that they would discharge their professional duties in befitting manner

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

## EC nullifies PTI intra party election orders to hold election again

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

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

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

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

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

PTI should hold election within 20 days and file report in EC within 7 days of holding election.

PTI after making change in its constitution on June 8, 2022 held intra party election on June 10, 2022. It filed list of elected members in EC.

## Caretaker Federal Cabinet meets today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Caretaker Federal Cabinet Meeting will be held today on Friday under Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Meeting will be held under Caretaker PM on Friday in Prime Minister House.

Country's economic and peace and order situation will be reviewed in Federal Cabinet Meeting.

## COAS expresses satisfaction with troops' operational preparedness. Top military brass reaffirms full support to national security, regional peace

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

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

Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir presided over the 82nd Formation Commanders Conference at GHQ, which was attended by Corps Commanders, Principal Staff Officers and all Formation Commanders of Pakistan Army, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhadas including officers and men of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies and Pakistani Citizens.

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

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

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

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

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

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with Imam Khatib of Masjid Al-Haram and Advisor at Saudi Royal Courts of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah Humaid, at Aiwan-e-Sadr

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

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

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

The current political and economic situation of the country, elimination of fake news and disinformation, upcoming

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## IMF technical delegation to arrive in Pak next week

ISLAMABAD (Online): Technical delegation of IMF will arrive in Pakistan next week to increase tax revenue and tax net.

According to FBR sources, technical delegation will negotiate with FBR on tax policy for about a week.

FBR and technical delegation of IMF will take steps for amendments in tax policy.

The purpose of amendments in tax policy will be to widen the tax net and collect more revenue.

Sources further said that infrastructure for introducing the scheme for retailers will also be developed in collaboration with technical delegation.

The number of tax payers will be increased to 6 million by bringing 1 million more people in tax net through tax policy.

The amendments to be made in tax policy in collaboration with technical delegation will be implemented in upcoming budget.

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

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

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

We have plundered our home with our own hands. Send my message to entire nation if they are understanding what I am saying. We should reform ourselves. These people have done big injustice with the country. You have been listening tales and still are listening them.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali distributing prizes and appreciation certificates among the jawans who performed excellent performance during passing out parade

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

*Turkish Ambassador announces to give more scholarships to students of Balochistan*

**Independent Report**

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

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

The Chief Minister was speaking to the Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan, Mr Mehmet Pacaci, who called on him on Thursday.

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

The Chief Minister said that there is great potential of investment in different sectors in the province saying that it is the suitable region for investment.

He said that we honour the desire of the Turkish government for investment in the province.

The Chief Minister appreciated the services of Turkey educational institutions are commendable for promotion of quality education in the province.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai along with Shania Khan, Yasmeen Mughal and others during seminar organized by South Asia Partnership and Aurat Foundation held at Quetta press club

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

**Independent Report**

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

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

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

This was informed by the Coordinator of Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Polio Eradica-

tion, Syed Zahid Shah on Thursday.

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

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

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

However, polio virus has been found in the environmental samples, sewerage water in five districts of the province including Pishin, Quetta, Hub, Chaman and Dera Bugti.



## Govt remains committed to tackling challenges of climate change, ensuring food security: Sami

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Thursday said the government remained dedicated to addressing the challenges of climate change as key interventions were being taken under the umbrella of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

He made these remarks while addressing the 26th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) here, a news release said.

The minister addressed the thematic session titled, "Impact of Climate Change on Food & Nutrition Security in Pakistan," the session was held in collaboration with World Food Program (WFP) and SDPI.

The panelists of the session included Country Director World Food Pro-

gram (WFP) Ms Coco Ushiyama, Nutrition Division WFP Ms Lynnada Kiess, Dr Friederike Greb, Dr Irfan Ullah from Nutrition International Pakistan, Dr Aneela Afzal from PMAS-AAU, Rawalpindi, Muhammad Daniyal Masood from NUST.

The event was attended by a larger number of people from different walks of life including students and civil society activists.

"The government is well aware of the climate crisis and several interventions are being undertaken to address the issue under the umbrella of SIFC as agriculture is one of the key areas of this council," the minister said while emphasizing the adoption of strategies highlighted by the experts to address this crisis.

Stressing the need to enhance agricultural practices and resilience to en-

sure food supply in Pakistan, he said Pakistan aimed for increased productivity through international best practices and welcomed foreign investment in the corporate agriculture sector.

The SIFC was established earlier this year to attract foreign and local investments while targeting five key areas which include Agriculture, Defense Production, Mining/Minerals, Information Technology and Telecommunication and Energy.

It is noted that Pakistan has vast potential for foreign investment in the fields of agriculture as Pakistan is a semi-industrialized economy with a well-integrated agricultural sector that contributes 22.9 per cent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creates 37.4 per cent of jobs, ensures food security and provides raw materials for industry.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed addresses at the 26th Sustainable Development Conference (SDC) organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

## ECP expedites preparations for general elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is actively preparing for the general elections, with major steps such as publishing of final delimitation lists scheduled for November 30 after completion of objections and formulation of a code of conduct, besides training and security measures.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja on Thursday chaired a meeting to review arrangements for the forthcoming elections.

The meeting was informed that the final delimitation of constituencies would be published on November 30 as the review of objections had been completed.

It was told that additional final electoral rolls were currently in the process of printing at the National Database Registration Authority (NADRA), and their delivery would be guaranteed before the election schedule announcement.

It was further apprised that the Election Commis-

sion, following consultations with political parties, had approved the code of conduct as per legal requirements, and its official notification would be issued in the coming days.

The meeting was informed that the training plan for district returning officers, returning officers and polling staff had also been prepared to ensure their timely training.

Likewise, the necessary preparations for printing ballot papers had been finalized, and the procurement of election materials was also concluded, it was told.

The meeting resolved to prepare comprehensive plans for the deployment of law enforcement agencies within a week.

The provincial governments would be requested to ensure peace and order during the elections. It noted that in the absence of a sufficient police force, it was crucial to establish timely alternative arrangements and enlist the assistance of the Pakistan Army during general elections.

## Govt to provide maximum....

**Continued from page 1**  
The biggest challenge on social media.

All stakeholders would have to play their role in ending fake news, he maintained.

The role of media in the upcoming general elections was also discussed in the meeting.

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

The delegation expressed its determination to continue working with the government in efforts to build a consensus in Pakistan.

The delegation included IPRI Director (Advocacy and Communication) Siddique Humayun, Hisham, Miss Jawaria, Institute of Strategic Studies Director Khurram Abbas and Naufal, also from Institute of Policy Studies.

## Special court summons Imran in cipher case on Nov 28

ISLAMABAD (APP): The special court on Thursday summoned the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman and vice chairman on November 28 in the cipher case registered under the Officials Secrets Act. Special Judge Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the case at the Judicial Complex, Islamabad. During course of hearing, the defence lawyers produced the copy of the Islamabad High Court's (IHC) order regarding the termination of jail trial.

The court observed that the trial would be proceeded from the position of August 29, and instructed the officials of Adiala Jail to produce the two accused before it on November 28.

## Top military...

**Continued from page 1**  
the capital of Palestine. The participants also expressed concerns over continued repression of Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and condemned the unabated human rights violations by Indian forces.

The forum reaffirmed that Pakistan shall continue to support Kashmiris politically, diplomatically and morally.

Participants stressed that the only solution to the issue lies in providing the right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir according to relevant UNSC resolution.

The forum noted that despite challenges, recent months have witnessed an increasing sense of stability, certainty and optimism across Pakistan and resolved that vested efforts towards engineering of dependency will be defeated through perseverance and continued positive actions, with the support of the people of Pakistan, InshaAllah.

The participants affirmed that Pakistan Army will continue defending and serving the nation in every possible way; in our journey towards enduring stability and security. The forum urged the proud people of Pakistan to stay determined and united.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, Danila Ganich calls on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

## Missing persons case: If police, admin have nothing in their hands then we will summon PM: SHC

KARACHI (Online): Justice Naimat Ullah of Sindh High Court (SHC) has remarked in missing persons case if police and administration have nothing in their hands then we will summon caretaker Prime Minister (PM).

The petitions regarding recovery of missing persons came up for hearing before SHC Thursday.

The court remarked 10 years have passed in missing persons cases. No hearing has been made. The meetings of JITs and Task force are not result oriented.

## Terrorist killed, two civilian children martyred in Tank terror attack

TANK (APP): Two civilian children were martyred and a terrorist was killed in exchange of fire between the security forces and unknown terrorists on Azamabad road here Thursday.

According to police spokesman, the security forces and Tank police were heading towards Azamabad village to conduct a search operation on the basis of secret information when unknown terrorists, hiding along the road side, opened indiscriminate firing at the security forces. Resultantly, two civilian children including Muhammad Noman son of Ghafoor Shah

and Asmat Ullah son of Mehmood Shah residents of Azamabad were martyred. The police and security forces retaliated and given a forceful response in which a terrorist was killed. The police also recovered a Kalashnikov, nine magazines, two hand grenades, explosive material and a motorcycle from the dead terrorist.

The bodies were shifted to District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital Tank for legal formalities.

The identity of the killed terrorist could not be ascertained yet. The police have launched a search operation in the area for search of terrorists.

## Spreading tentacles of Indian Global Terrorist Network to US, Canada alarming: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick has expressed alarm over the fast-spreading tentacles of the Indian Global Terrorist Network after the US thwarted a plot to kill Sikh separatists on American soil, saying that the Indian genocide mongers and death squads became a threat to the world peace.

Mushaal, who was also the wife of Kashmir's Revolutionary Liberation Leader Yasin Malik, pressed that the global community must apply pressure tactics on the supremacist Hindutva regime to stop the butchery and genocide of Indian minorities, said a press release.

She vented shock that Indian Global Terrorist Network now expanded across the continents after a long-drawn-out and non-stop spree of target killings in Pakistan, Azad Kashmir, Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and within India, which was evident from the coldblooded murder of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada and the recent failed murder plot of another prominent Khalistani leader Gurbatwant Singh Pannu.

Mushaal said Nijjar's murder in Canada Pannun's planned assassination plot in the US clearly showed that Indian death squads even now directly challenged Ottawa and Washington's sovereignty and national security.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq

## Pakistan firmly supports...

**Continued from page 1**  
based on the two-state solution.

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

The President appreciated the role played by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) for important Muslim causes. He emphasized the need for unity and solidarity among Muslim nations to address the common challenges being faced by them.

The President lauded the leadership of KSA for the recent Saudi-Iran normalization of relations and termed it a major breakthrough that would bring peace and security in the region, besides promoting trade and development. He also appreciated the Saudi initiatives for peace and sta-

bility in Yemen, Syria, and Sudan.

The President deeply thanked KSA for its economic support to Pakistan in difficult times as well as for extending humanitarian aid and supporting development projects, especially in the education and healthcare sectors in Pakistan.

The President also highlighted the issue of Islamophobia, particularly in India, and the atrocities being committed by India against the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He said that India was changing the demography of IIOJK and was involved in the ethnic cleansing of Muslims.

Dr Saleh bin Abdullah Humaid expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to him by the Government of Pakistan.

## Ours' ultimate...

**Continued from page 1**  
after the training.

He said that the Balochistan police has turned into a professional force in the province, the credit of which goes to the officers. Mir Zubair Jamali said that our jawans have rendered sacrifice of their lives to protect the life and property of masses and establish peace in the province. The Minister Home also said that the Balochistan police has created history of bravery in the war against terrorism.

He assured that the necessary resources would be provided to the force enabling it to combat terrorism and other law and order issue in the province.

Earlier, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and Commandant ATF Training school also addressed the passing out parade. The Commandant informed that the jawans were imparted training to combat the terrorists in the jungles and cities during the training period.

## PM reiterates need to further enhance Pakistan, Russia cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday expressing satisfaction at the steady growth of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Russia, reiterated the need to further develop mutually beneficial cooperation.

He in a meeting with outgoing Russian Ambassador Danila Ganich who paid a farewell call on him, appreciated cooperation between the two countries at international fora.

The prime minister appreciated the valuable contribution of the ambassador

towards further strengthening bilateral ties.

He wished the ambassador well for his next assignment and hoped that he would always remain Pakistan's friend.

Discussing bilateral relations, Prime Minister Kakar emphasized that Russia, a key player in the region and internationally, remained an important partner of Pakistan.

He said that connectivity and energy were key sectors to develop collaboration which would benefit our people as well as the region.

## Interior Minister, AJK PM discuss development in Azad Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Interior Sarfraz Bugti on Thursday visited the Kashmir House where he met Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq.

Both the dignitaries discussed construction work and progress of development projects in Azad Kashmir at length.

The interior minister assured the AJK PM that the Government of Pakistan would provide all possible support to solve the problems of the people of Kashmir and the government.

He said that despite of economic difficulties, full cooperation with the Azad Kashmir government would continue because the latter "stands with the government and the people of Pakistan".

"Kashmir is our jugular vein and the hearts of the people of Pakistan beat their Kashmiri brethren," he expressed.

Earlier on his arrival at the Kashmir House, Interior Minister Bugti was warmly received by the AJK prime minister.



QUETTA: Director General NAB Balochistan Zafar Iqbal Khan meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

## Seminar on TB preventive treatment held

QUETTA (APP): A one-day seminar was organized by Mercy Corps here on Thursday with the title 'Advocacy and Awareness of TB Preventive Treatment (TPT)'. The seminar was attended by public health professionals, and private as well as public sector officials who are actively engaged in the fight against TB including Dr Asif Anwer Shahwani, Provincial Coordinator PTP Balochistan, Dr Maqbool Ahmed, President Pakistan Chest Society Balochistan Chapter, Dr Attaullah Bizenjo, President Pakistan Pediatric Association, Balochistan Chapter, Prof. Dr Shereen Khan, Chief Executive Fatima Jinnah Chest and General Hospital, Quetta, and Abdullah Khan, Secretary Health, Government of Balochistan.

As a part of the efforts, to end TB in Pakistan, Mercy Corps and its partners are implementing a large-scale TB program, across the country in 120 districts, with the support of The Global Fund.

Mercy Corps interventions include engagement with the private sector health system, enhancing community awareness, and public outreach to remote areas in partnership with Provincial TB Programs, Health Departments, and implementing partners.

Tuberculosis Preventive Treatment (TPT) is another initiative under this program by Mercy Corps to curb the spread of the TB disease. Dr Saeedullah Khan, Team Leader (South) Mercy Corps, started the

session with a welcome note.

He highlighted the achievements of the TB program and praised the efforts of Mercy Corps Pakistan and its partners in rolling out the TPT initiative across the country.

After the opening remarks, Dr Adeel Tahir, Senior Program, Mercy Corps while sharing about the Programmatic Management of TB Preventive Treatment (PMTPT), shared the innovative approaches adopted by Mercy Corps on the basis of the latest research and international best practices.

He also shed light on the background and objectives of the seminar. He gave a comprehensive briefing on the topic of 'Burden of TB (Global Vs Pakistan), and Progress of Mercy Corps'.

Abdullah Khan, Secretary of Health, Government of Balochistan, emphasized the need for a collective effort from all stakeholders to eradicate TB from Pakistan.

Dr Amin Ullah, Project Manager, Mercy Corps concluded the seminar with the hope to continue collaborating with all key stakeholders to spearhead the fight against TB in Balochistan with the effective use of TPT.

The aim of the seminar was to raise awareness about TPT, and its outcomes as well as benefits and sensitize public health professionals, key stakeholders, decision-makers, and private as well as public sector officials who are actively engaged in the fight against TB.

## Pakistani delegation explore collaboration at Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences

BEIJING (APP): To further strengthen Pak-China cooperation in the field of Chinese traditional medicine (TCM), a Pakistani delegation led by Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Director of China-Pakistan Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine Cooperation, stating, Our center has successfully undertaken a series of initiatives, ranging from international scientific and technological cooperation research on Chinese herbal medicine to sending herbal seeds to space stations, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday.

Li Kun, Vice President of CACMS, presided over the meeting.

"I hope that the visit of the delegation can foster greater exchange and mutual learning in the field of traditional Chinese medicine, leading to enhanced collaboration and laying a solid foundation

for future joint initiatives," Li Kun said.

On the meeting, Iqbal Choudhary presented the achievements and ongoing projects of the China-Pakistan Center for Traditional Chinese Medicine Cooperation, stating, Our center has successfully undertaken a series of initiatives, ranging from international scientific and technological cooperation research on Chinese herbal medicine to sending herbal seeds to space stations, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Thursday.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani in a meeting with the students and faculty members of Law Department of University of Turbat held at Parliament House in Islamabad





ISLAMABAD: Imam-e-Kaaba, Professor Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid addressing a ceremony held at the Faisal Masjid Campus of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

## Imam-e-Kaaba stresses world to play role in halting massacre in Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Imam-e-Kaaba, Professor Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid on Thursday said that the killing of human life was forbidden, Muslims were being massacred in the name of human rights in Gaza, the international community should respect the sanctity of human lives and they must act to stop the crimes in Gaza.

He expressed these views during a special address at the international conference on "Protection of Human Life in Shariah and Law" held at the Faisal Masjid Campus of International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI).

The Imam-e-Kaaba said that the massacre of innocent people in Gaza was the darkest period in human history.

He said that he prayed for the end of the cruelty against the Muslims of Palestine.

Dr. Saleh bin Abdullah bin Humaid said that special attention was paid to the sanctity of human life in Islam. He added that in

Islamic Shari'ah and law, human life had special importance without distinction of belief.

Referring to the sanctity of human life, he said that Islam strictly prohibited the loss of human life. Dr. Saleh said that there was a promise of hell for the person who takes human life for no reason.

He further said that the services of Dr. Hathal Homoud Alotaibi and the International Islamic University were praiseworthy. "I appreciate the International Islamic University for organizing a conference on the most important topic of hour" he said.

He emphasized that educational and research institutions of Muslim countries should focus on mutual cooperation.

The Imam-e-Kaaba said that the people of Pakistan were loving and Pakistan was a hospitable country. He said both the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have deep rooted historic and brethren ties.

## Climate action plan for Karachi kick starts with rapid strategic appraisal, visioning workshop

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, in collaboration with its partners at C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40), Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and The Urban Unit on Thursday conducted a Rapid Strategic Appraisal and Visioning Workshop to commence the development of a Climate Action Plan for Karachi city (K-CAP).

UNDP's global flagship initiative, Climate Promise, is actively engaged in Pakistan, extending support at provincial and local levels to fortify climate change governance.

This initiative,

coupled with UNDP Pakistan's Innovation-Accelerator Lab (AccLab), aims to revolutionize development approaches for accelerated impact through research, human-centred strategies, and portfolio logic. Climate Promise and AccLab are jointly spearheading the development of K-CAP, said a press release issued here.

At the Rapid Strategic Appraisal and Visioning Workshop to launch K-CAP, priority stakeholders from government departments and civil society organisations based in Karachi participated to set the tone for the city's long-term decarbonization strategy.

The workshop was conducted in two sessions with robust participation from government departments in the first session and civil society organizations in the second.

The participants were engaged in interactive activities to identify gaps and prioritise the issues and challenges to draft their Long-term Vision Statements for a carbon-neutral Karachi city by 2050.

The Mayor of Karachi, Murtaza Wahab Siddiqui, inaugurated the workshop, emphasizing the city's commitment to implementing sustainable and practical solutions.

## Pak to continue political, moral support to Kashmiris till resolution of J&K issue: Caretaker PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday said Pakistan would continue to extend political, moral, and diplomatic support to its Kashmiri brethren till the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

He stated this as Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq called on him here at the PM House.

The prime minister

vowed support for Kashmiris till the implementation of the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The AJK prime minister extended an invitation to PM Kakar to visit Azad Jammu and Kashmir and thanked him for addressing the issues pertaining to energy, water resources, and infrastructure.

Chief Secretary AJK Dawood Muhammad Bareach was also present.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of AJK Chaudhry Anwaar-ul-Haq and Chief Secretary of AJK Dawood Muhammad Bareach called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar

## Promotion of art & culture sectors key drivers for Pakistan's socio-economic growth: Jamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah said on Thursday that the country's main sector of arts and culture promotion will soon play an important role in our economic development.

"Pakistani art and culture was playing a significant contribution to our sustainable development goals, fostering social, economic, and environmental development", he said while talking to a private news channel.

"Culture and creative economy has the potential to not only support the recovery of the country's

economy but transform it", he added. He said we had devised a comprehensive plan for promoting regional languages as it would help to promote the rich culture of the provinces, adding, that artists need to promote a soft image of Pakistan worldwide through their talents. The main purpose of the new cultural policy is to work for the revival of cultural organizations and the promotion of art and culture as no nation can develop by putting its culture behind it. Replying to a question, the minister said that Pakistan is blessed with a huge number of ancient and historic places, adding, that these places keep us linked to our past and conserve our culture and customs for centuries. Pakistan is a treasury of ancient culture and customs through centuries, he added. Pakistan needs massive financial resources, administrative capacity and effective governance to protect and promote its cultural heritage which is also going to help in economic growth, he added. The minister further expressed his concern over the decline of drama production at Pakistan Television (PTV), stressing the need to revive the local drama industry with quality content.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of the Russian Federation, Danila Ganich called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## PPP has no plan to make alliance with PTI in general polls: Kundi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Information Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Faisal Karim Kundi Thursday said that PPP is not going for a political alliance with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in the upcoming general elections, scheduled in the month of February. Addressing a press conference here, Faisal Kundi said that PPP would contest the upcoming general polls according to its manifesto that is given by party chief Bilawal Bhutto.

"All the political forces should respect the mandate of the masses and PPP will contact all the political parties for making Bilawal Bhutto as Prime Minister after the general elections in the country," he added.

Highlighting their confidence on the Election

Commission of Pakistan (ECP), Faisal Kundi said that the ECP would take all possible measures to ensure free, fair and transparent elections across the country. "PPP respect the senior politicians of the country but believe that now youth should be given chance to play their active role in the politics", he said.

Faisal Kundi said that Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had addressed the six workers convention in which he briefed about the performance of 16 months of the government.

Secretary Information appreciated the office bearers and party workers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter for conducting a successful 'Workers Convention' of the party chief in the province.

## CS Punjab meets CEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Secretary Punjab has met Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Both exchanged views on election in Punjab and the matters related to the arrangements for election during the meeting.

Chief Secretary reached office of Punjab Election Commission and met CEC therein. According to sources chief secretary Punjab gave briefing to CEC about arrangements for general elections while CEC directed to ensure fool proof arrangements for election in Punjab.

## Taxes, hike in electricity tariff matter: JI files appeal plea in SC against registrar office objections

ISLAMABAD (Online): JI has filed appeal in Supreme Court (SC) against registrar office objection on its constitutional petition on the matter of taxes and hike in electricity tariff. The JI has taken plea that registrar office raised baseless objections over the petition.

In the appeal it was said SC has declared supply of electricity in its several decisions a basic right.

The point raised by JI is not personal but it is of collective nature. SC has declared several petitions with reference to power tariff maintainable in the past. The objections cannot be raised on the petition in connection with provision of basic rights. Order be issued for fixing the constitutional petition for hearing by nullifying the registrar objections. It is pertinent to mention that SC registrar had raised objections saying under what capacity you can file this petition. You have no relevance with this matter.

Therefore, it should be told before hand what is your right to application in this matter.

Chief Secretary AJK Dawood Muhammad Bareach was also present.

## ATC adjourns hearing of bail pleas of Imran, Shah till Nov 28

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) has adjourned till November 28 hearing of bail plea of chairman PTI in three cases and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in two cases due to non availability of investigation officer.

PTI lawyers Ali Bokhari and others appeared in the court of Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain during the hearing of the case Thursday. Prosecutor requested the court to give time in connection with arguments. Upon it Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry advocate said the court had issued order on previous hearing. State will give arguments today.

## Mian Javed says: Fair, transparent elections should be held in country

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif said that fair and transparent elections should be held in country.

Despite presence of constitution and law in Pakistan, country is being run with lawlessness and injustice.

Traditions based on injustice have made Pakistan hollow.

If they were not part of the sixteen-month national government, the gulf between the institutions and the people would have turned into a bloody civil war. In the fire of revenge, the opponents are taunting Nawaz Sharif.

Remaining people sitting in institutions are creating environment same as before 9 May.

An attempt is being made to make the elections controversial by creating an anti-Baluchistan narrative.

Anti Pakistan forces are standing behind Chairman PTI. Institutions should take notice.

While holding a press conference in National Press Club Islamabad, PML-N Leader Javed Latif further said that external pressure is being increased in Pakistan and decisions are being made on external pressure.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Mitsuhiro Wada addressing during a reception in the Honor of Senior Journalists at his residence in Federal Capital.

## Crackdown on illegally residing foreign nationals intensifies in Islamabad

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have launched a robust campaign against foreign nationals unlawfully residing in the federal capital and nabbed 13 persons living without proper authorization.

Police spokesperson said that a joint team from Islamabad Capital Police's Bani Gala, Sabzi Mandi, and Shams Colony Police Stations successfully apprehended 13 individuals found to be residing in the country without proper authorization.

The detained foreign nationals were currently in the process of deportation, with 13 others handed over to the Islamabad administration for repatriation to their respective countries.

Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir

Khan underscored, "These measures are aimed at discouraging the unauthorized establishment of residency by foreign nationals within the federal capital's jurisdiction."

"The presence of illegal foreign nationals in Pakistan is only acceptable in accordance with national laws and regulations."

Moreover, Dr Khan highlighted the active pursuit of legal actions by Islamabad Capital Police against those individuals who facilitate illegal residency or employment of foreign nationals.

"Citizens are urged to uphold Pakistani laws and play their part in maintaining security by reporting any suspicious individuals or activities related to undocumented foreign nationals through the 'Pucar-15' helpline," he added.

## Expert stresses more media awareness for 'Dengue'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Health expert here Thursday appealed every citizen to play a responsible citizen role to keep environment clean and urged media to cooperate with health departments to raise more awareness drives at community level complimented by enhanced surveillance along with implementation of measures against the mosquito-borne sickness (Dengue).

Talking to PTV news channel, Principle Lahore General Hospital Prof Dr Muhammad Ul Farid Zafar urged that public should actively participate in anti-dengue activities and play their role in eradicating the virus completely.

The citizens should keep their houses clean to avert breeding of dengue mosquitoes, he said, adding, all government departments were alert and regularly monitoring the situation to deal with any emergency.

Keeping in view of the alarming spike in the dengue fever cases, he said, "The health department in collaboration with the district administrations has begun fumigation and an awareness campaign in the country, adding, people are now much aware with the symptoms of Dengue virus." Prof explained, "Dengue is one of the major diseases in the world which can be avoided by taking precautionary measures."

## PSDE's 3-day AGM, conference conclude

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: A three-day Annual General Meeting (AGM) and conference of the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) titled "Breaking the Aid-Debt Chains" concluded on Thursday.

It was organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad in collaboration with Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) Multan at the latter's Jinnah Auditorium, a news release here said.

The final day of the conference started with the third parallel technical session, during which several papers on diverse topics were presented by researchers from different parts of the country.

The topics of the papers included the lifetime cost of public sector employees, Public Sector Development Programme, public financial management, remittances, debt threat and gender.

The special lecture on "Fiscal Management for the Revival of the Economy" was delivered by Faisal Rashid of the Oxford Policy Management. He viewed that Pakistan's current situation was the most challenging for its economy.

He said the country had developed a major debt reliance to finance its high fiscal deficit as revenues continued to remain inadequate compared to the ever-increasing expenditures.

"The tax-GDP ratio remains low, while leakages in the energy sector have increased circular debt to unsustainable levels," he said, adding the pension schemes continued becoming unaffordable for the Federal Government, which also

continued to overburden itself by undertaking development projects of even the devolved subjects.

In that scenario, he said, it was important to think of the possible options that Pakistan had to solve the problems.

"In the short to medium term, there is no doubt that Pakistan needs to turn towards the IMF (International Monetary Fund) for support," he said, adding a typical IMF programme required countries to focus on reducing fiscal deficits, and employ tight monetary policy.

In recent years, he said, the IMF had pressed Pakistan to reform its state-owned enterprises' governance and energy sectors on a priority basis.

Faisal Rashid said in the medium to long term, Pakistan needed to develop an economic reforms plan.



ISLAMABAD: Students carrying Palestinian flags, banners and placards as they hold pro-Palestinian demonstration to show solidarity with Palestinians outside Faisal Mosque.

## Thousands of children take out rally in solidarity with Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Thousands of children took out a rally here on Thursday against Israel's bombing of Gaza, assuring their moral support to the innocent people.

The rally, which began from Centaurs Chowk and culminated near Faisal Mosque was arranged by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI).

The participants were carrying banners and placards, inscribed with slogans such as "Free Palestine", "Down with Israel," and "Stop genocide in Palestine".

Addressing the participants Ameer JI, Siraj-ul-Haq demanded an immediate end to Israeli bombing in Gaza Strip.

"Gaza has become a graveyard. This gathering is a message for the oppressors that they must stop genocide," he added.

He said Israel was targeting civilians and infrastructure in densely populated civilian areas, which constituted war crimes.

The ameer said there was no respite for the people of Palestine, who had been enduring worst violence of modern age for the past several days.

He demanded that murderers and oppressors should be punished for their crimes against humanity.

He asked people to boycott all products of Israel.

He also called on international community to play its role for stopping bombing on Palestine.

He said that so far the world had abjectly failed to protect Gaza's hapless citizens from Israel's attacks.



ISLAMABAD: A group of Youth Representatives along with Tribal elders from Balochistan visiting Senate Museum at Parliament house.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**  
Friday November 24, 2023

### Temporary ceasefire

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

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

In an interview with Al Jazeera after news broke of the ceasefire, which is supposed to start today, Hamas official Abu Marzouq said that Hamas seeks a permanent ceasefire, is agreed to a prisoner swap but is worried Israel could target those Palestinians released from Israeli prisons, and that the whole world has been asking for a ceasefire except the US. The attitude of the US, in particular US President Joe Biden, can in the politest terms only be called an open support for a genocide. In fact, till Wednesday night, at least, Israel had not curbed its violence. This is in keeping with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's stance: we agree to a four-day 'ceasefire' but it is only temporary. What does this mean? According to some analysts, Israel is smarting from the loss of face it has had to contend with as a result of its unrestrained campaign of terror in Gaza. No amount of propaganda has been able to sway the shift in perception in the West, with a younger demographic asking uncomfortable questions from a leadership that has for far too long been given a pass for its complicity in war crimes against Palestinians. The ceasefire is no doubt good news, because with it comes hope for food, water, fuel, medical aid for the people of Gaza. But a four-day 'ceasefire' is not a solution. The only solution to the Palestine question is an end to the occupation by Israel of Palestinian territories so that the victims of the first and now the second Nakba can return home and live on their lands without fear of bombs, raids, or torture.



By Miftah Ismai

There is a debate in Pakistan on the foreign trade strategy we should pursue: export promotion, or import substitution? In much of the world, especially Southeast Asia, the debate has been won by export promotion to spectacular effect. We, however, are still confused, trying to carry out the best of both strategies and ending up with the worst of both.

Import substitution is a strategy that seeks to substitute imported goods with domestic production. Take, for example, cars. In the 1980s, our government, while keeping higher duties on imported cars, reduced duties on components such as engines, transmissions, windshields, etc, so that firms that assembled cars here could get a domestic market protected from foreign competition through

this duty differential.

This tariff protection, paid by consumers through higher prices, was justified by the argument that this was an 'infant industry' and the small local market didn't allow companies to quickly reach the production scale needed for global competitiveness.

Three decades later, infant-industry protection continues, we have excellent local cars from several international brands but they remain expensive and the market remains small. Both customs duty on parts — which is quite high — and domestic protection through prohibitively high duties on foreign cars, have kept prices high. Moreover, the auto market and firms remain small and therefore inefficient and uncompetitive.

There are, of course, certain advantages to the import substitution model. We have now developed a vibrant engineering and vendor industry, the auto industry provides many jobs, we save foreign exchange compared to importing built-up cars and collect considerable taxes.

The downside is that we still have to import a lot

of auto components and we have almost no exports from this sector, so it is still a drain on our foreign exchange reserves. If every industry were like that, substituting imports but exporting nothing, we'd have no dollars to pay for the raw materials for any industry.

I have given the example of cars but the effect of protecting markets from competition is the same, whether it's air conditioners, shampoos, candies, or any other good.

By imposing tariffs to protect manufacturers catering to domestic consumers, we let companies remain small and inefficient and not able to export their wares. This is an important reason why Pakistan has such low exports.

Export promotion, on the other hand, is a strategy that makes manufacturers better off selling to foreign customers than local ones. This is done through policies that favour exporters with cheap credit, lower taxes, etc.

East Asian countries have used this strategy to achieve impressive growth, but even though Pakistan has also offered many of the same incentives, we

have not been able to increase exports. The reason is that by pursuing both these strategies simultaneously, we just end up increasing the cost of doing business for all manufacturers, which renders our industry neither competitive in exports nor in substituting imports.

Of course, this isn't the only factor holding back exports; there are others as well. For instance: non-reliable and expensive provision of energy; periodically overvalued rupee; and law and order issues that prevent foreign buyers from visiting Pakistan. But here I want to discuss how, by pursuing both import substitution and export promotion simultaneously, we mess things up.

Consider a zipper manufacturer that has to import various metals, say at five per cent duty, to produce zippers. He will typically go to the government and request that it impose a 15pc duty on the imports of zippers so he can compete with larger foreign manufacturers.

Even assuming that the Pakistani zipper has no quality issues and is available in all varieties, our garment exporters will quickly run to the government and say they can't afford to buy the more expensive Pakistani zippers or pay 15pc duty on imported zippers as they have to compete in the international market.

So the government allows them to import duty-free imported zippers that are then re-exported as part of a garment. As a result, Pakistani exporters still have to buy imported zippers and pay for freight (and hence be at a disadvantage to their international competitors) while the local zipper manufacturer will remain small and inefficient. Rather than win-win, we end up with lose-lose.

Our Ministry of Commerce over the years has tried to have an export promotion strategy, but the problem is that more than half of our tax revenues come from the ports — in the shape of customs duty, sales tax and withholding tax. And much of the remaining sales tax is also collected because the government knows who has imported raw materials and therefore those manufacturers

have to pay sales tax on goods.

So our entire tax system depends on us collecting taxes from imports and therefore the import substitution strategy is not pursued because we want to but because we have to.

So, how do we get our exports to finally increase? While our textile industry has done well in spite of mills having to import cotton, not getting gas (in Punjab) and buying expensive land and water (Karachi), textile cannot be the only industry that exports.

We must diversify. We have, over the years, given a lot of benefits to exporters, such as cheap loans. And yet, we have seen these incentives not result in increased exports. (One recent World Bank study has confirmed that export financing has had little effect on increasing exports.) What we need now is tough love.

We need to convert the 10pc super-tax on all companies to those that have zero exports and reduce that tax to zero as companies increase their share of exports.—Courtney Dawn

## Foreign trade debate



By Dr Imran Khalid

For obvious reasons, the much-anticipated summit between Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Joe Biden on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in San Francisco, is likely to work as a stabilizer for China-US relations.

Both leaders delved into a candid and comprehensive exchange of perspectives on strategic, overarching and directional facets shaping China-US relations. Their discussions extended beyond bilateral concerns, encompassing pivotal global issues concerning peace and development. The key feature of the summit was the agreement in which both sides committed to fostering and fortifying dialogue and collaboration across diverse domains.

The key points of the agreement include the im-

plementation of official China-US government talks on artificial intelligence, the establishment of a task force dedicated to counter-narcotics cooperation, and the resumption of high-level military-to-military communication. This resurgence includes pivotal forums such as the China-US Defense Policy Coordination Talks and the China-US Military Maritime Consultative Agreement meetings. The commitment has further resulted in the establishment of a telephone hotline between two presidents. The two leaders have also pledged to facilitate a substantial surge in scheduled passenger flights early in the coming year, demonstrating a commitment to enhancing people-to-people connections. Moreover, they have expressed commitment to broaden exchanges in education, culture, sports and business, fostering a multifaceted relationship that transcends political boundaries.

This China-US summit has broadcast a reassuring and steady message to the global audience. This signal suggests a shared commitment from both China and the US to alleviate and stabilize their bilateral relations, actively seeking opportunities for collaboration. In addition to addressing specific issues, the meeting has propelled the enhancement of bilateral ties and laid the groundwork for the future trajectory of China-US relations. This summit has set the tone for a more cooperative and constructive engagement, marking a pivotal moment in the evolution of these crucial international ties.

However, the summit has yielded a series of outcomes that underscore the realization that neither Beijing nor Washington harbours unrealistic expectations for an immediate breakthrough or substantial improvement in their relations. Nevertheless, a shared acknowledgment exists on the advantages of maintaining tensions at their current level and preventing further deterioration.

As expected, the Taiwan issue dominated the four-hour long session between the two leaders. In addressing the Taiwan question during the summit with Biden, Xi underscored its paramount significance and sensitivity in China-US relations. China acknowledged the positive state-

ments from the US during the Bali meeting, emphasizing the need for concrete actions to uphold its commitment of not endorsing Taiwan independence. Xi urged the US to cease arming Taiwan and lend support to China's pursuit of peaceful reunification, asserting the inevitability of this reunification.

This candid appeal by the Chinese top leader represents a noteworthy and direct call for US support in China's endeavours for 'peaceful reunification', conveying a significant message to both the US and the global audience. This underscores China's plea for the US to refrain from arming Taiwan — a plea grounded in the broader context of maintaining a pathway towards peaceful resolution and reunification.

On the positive side, Biden again affirmed America's commitment to the One-China policy. He expressed a welcoming stance towards dialogue between government agencies at different levels and emphasized the readiness to sustain open and candid communication with China. President Biden restated the American stance on the Taiwan question but al-

luded to a potential "toning down" from Washington on the matter.

This subtle adjustment in position stands out as a noteworthy facet of the meeting, hinting at a possible positive development. The nuanced shift in the US stance on the Taiwan question adds an interesting layer to the diplomatic discourse, providing space for interpretation and indicating a potential transformation in the diplomatic landscape. He objective appears to foster mutual understanding, avert misperceptions, and adeptly navigate and manage differences between the two nations. With the US consistently voicing apprehensions about a prospective conflict in the Taiwan Straits, it becomes imperative to communicate a critical perspective from both sides. Factually speaking, over the past year, the US has adopted a palpably assertive stance towards Beijing — from the balloon episode and Nancy Pelosi's controversial visit to trade restrictions on certain China businesses. Furthermore, in collaboration with its allies, the US initiated a blockade on the export of high-end chips and chip

manufacturing tools to China, a move widely perceived as an attempt to stifle China's progress in the high-tech domain. Simultaneously, military surveillance and provocations persist in the South China Sea, raising regional tensions.

Of even greater concern is America's attempts to 'Nato-ize' the Indo-Pacific region, a development that poses a direct threat to regional peace and stability. These instances represent just a snapshot of the adversarial actions undertaken by the US against China in the year since the leaders convened in Bali, Indonesia in November 2022. Regrettably, these actions have precipitated a significant deterioration in the relationship between the two nations.

However, in response to the recent and somewhat unexpected display of goodwill from the US, China has reacted with appropriateness and positivity. This response is rooted in the hope that the US will exhibit less hostility in the future, allowing China to address its internal challenges within a more optimistic external environment.—Courtney Dawn

## The Xi-Biden meeting

### When the pie shrinks



By Khurram Husain

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

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

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

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

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

Between July and Sep-

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

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

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

At the same time, small and medium enterprises issued SOS calls for survival. After all, these are months in which demand in the economy is collapsing, large-scale manufacturing is registering near zero growth, high interest rates are weighing on debt service costs of corporates, and the state is thirsting for revenue.

Partially out of this thirst, the government imposed a 'windfall tax' on the banks for the outside profits they made last year on their foreign currency dealings, aiming to capture up to Rs58bn of these banking sector profits for itself, according to calculations presented by Arif Habib Ltd.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Anti-Americanism: rhetoric and reality



By Husain Haqqani

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The PTI's current lobbying effort is in the range of two to three hundred thousand dollars per year, which is no more than a drop in the bucket for the four billion dollar-a-year lobbying business in the US. It is unlikely that it will change American policy and seems geared more towards raising hopes of demoralized party supporters at home. Cult-like fans are expected to forget that the US allegedly caused the removal from power of their hero and start believing that is about to intervene to get him released from prison.

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

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

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



## KP Caretaker Cabinet advances key social welfare initiatives

PESHAWAR (Online): A meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah was held at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by caretaker cabinet members, Chief Secretary, and the Additional Chief Secretary Interior, related administrative secretaries, and other pertinent officials.

The meeting commenced with the recitation of Fatiha for the late Muhammad Azam Khan, former Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a significant move, the caretaker cabinet approved the extension of the monthly stipend program for female students in classes VI to

XII within the newly merged districts, extending support until the year 2025.

The initiative aims to provide scholarships to 32,833, 37,758, and 43,422 female students in the years 2023, 2024, and 2025, respectively, with a total estimated project cost of 940.5 million rupees.

Furthermore, the cabinet endorsed the proposal to link scholarship disbursement with student performance and examination results, requiring a minimum attendance of 70%. Additionally, approval was granted for allocating 2 kanals of land in Tehsil Jamrud, Khyber District for building offices and residential structures of Federal Government Institutions.

In a move toward social welfare, the cabinet

sanctioned the establishment of a welfare fund for prisoners and prison employees, with a focus on skill development. Under this initiative, 30% of the income generated from products made in jails will be allocated to inmates, enabling them to acquire skills and achieve financial independence upon release. The fund, established from prisoners' and prison employees' contributions, incurs no cost to the government.

The cabinet also greenlit the nomination of representatives from Peshawar, Mardan, and D. I. Khan districts to represent farmers on the Cane and Sugar Beet Control Board. Similarly, names for the Board of Directors of Water and Sanitation Services Company Peshawar approved.



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

## Information minister launches LWMC mobile app for fee collection

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Information and Local Government Amir Mir has said the ongoing digitalization of administrative institutions is proving instrumental in curbing corruption and enhancing their efficiency.

He was addressing the inaugural workshop for digitalization of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) and the launch of a mobile application for fee collection here on Thursday. He highlighted the role of digitalization in making the municipal system more transparent. Computerization of workshops, maintenance of complex garbage collection machinery, and fee collection through a mobile application are anticipated to reduce costs and boost revenue.

The provincial minister commended the LWMC for justifying its

existence through diligent work. Regardless of festive seasons or adverse weather, the company's staff consistently demonstrated dedication. Amir Mir acknowledged the visible improvement in the city's cleanliness, attributing it to the commitment of the cleaning staff, including the Chief Executive Officer.

Amir Mir underscored the importance of officer motivation for maintaining high staff morale and credited the check and balance process for enhancing institutional efficiency. While inspecting the workshop, the minister directed LWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din to ensure robustness and availability of equipment. He praised the staff involved in vehicle repairs and offered feedback on the aesthetic aspects of the equipment.

## Australian HC calls on CMKP

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation headed by Australian High Commissioner Neil Hawkins called on the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice @, Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interests.

Australian High Commissioner congratulated Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on assuming the responsibilities as caretaker Chief Minister of the province and expressed his best wishes for him.

The chief minister also extended his heartfelt felicitations to the High Commissioner on the brilliant win of the Australian Cricket Team in the ICC Cricket World Cup, 2023. Talking to the delegates, the Chief Minister said that it was the top priority of his government to serve the people to the maximum and to promote good governance in all the departments and sectors of the province.



MUZZAFFERABAD: People burn the effigy of Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu during protest at Garhi Dupatta Chowk, to show solidarity with oppressed Muslims of Palestine, in the Capital of A.J.K.

## ANF recovers 44 kg drugs in 11 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 11 operations across the country managed to recover 44 kg of drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 2.4 kg of heroin was recovered from a parcel at a courier office located in Shahr-e-Faisal, Karachi. The heroin was soaked in six pants, booked for the UK.

230 grams of weed was recovered from a parcel sent from Canada at a courier office in Multan. The spokesman informed that 1174 grams hidden in a passenger's trolley bag was recovered at Sialkot airport. The

accused was leaving for Bahrain by flight number GF-769.

7.2 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects riding a motorcycle on Shangla Hill Road, Faisalabad.

2.4 kg hashish and 150 grams of Ice drug were recovered from a motorcycle rider intercepted on Lahore Road, Faisalabad.

18 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle stopped on Kahuta Road Islamabad while an accused was also arrested during the operation.

The spokesman further informed that 3.5 kg hashish was recovered from a parcel sent from Quetta at Jinnah International Airport.

## MDA seals six unapproved commercial buildings

MULTAN (APP): Multan Development Authority (MDA) has raided against unapproved commercial constructions and sealed six illegal commercial buildings.

The MDA enforcement teams under the directions of Director General MDA Zahid Ikram, raided Piran Ghaib road and sealed Mitho commercial hall, Anwar milk shop, Shohban petrol pump unit and four illegal shops owned by Muhammad Afzal.

The team also stopped the under-construction work at a shop owned by Dr Iqbal and Muhammad Bilal's under construction hall and seized goods.



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

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

LAHORE: The scholars from University of Bolton UK under Pak UK Education Gateway Mobility Project with the support of Higher Education Commission and British Council called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor's House Lahore, here today. The delegation of students was led by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Shafuta Naz and Project Lead Engineer Dr. Aqsa Shabbir. Project co lead, Dr. Amina Moazzam, Dr. Naveed Iqbal and students from Lahore College for Women University who successfully completed the educational tours of British universities under the project were also present. Speaking on the

occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the exchange program in the field of education gives students opportunities to learn about modern trends in education. He said that the education of female students and empowering them is very important. Governor Punjab said that a consortium has been formed for the education and empowerment of women in universities. He appreciated the efforts of Project Lead Engineer Dr. Aqsa Shabbir for the promotion of research activities and student exchange programme with British universities. Governor Punjab also inquired from the British scholars about their experiences in Pakistan.

## Steps taken to deal with climate change in Karachi: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab Thursday said that Karachi is the only city in the country which has the honour of being included in the C-40 cities. Various steps have been taken in Karachi to deal with the issue of climate change, he said.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that urban forests had been made to bring improvement in the air quality. However, it is not enough to plant trees, they have to be nurtured and cared for, to improve the environment of Karachi. Vehicle fitness and smoke from factories in industrial areas need to be controlled and

environmental initiatives need to be proactive in every sector, he said.

He was addressing as chief guest at the opening ceremony of a workshop on climate change held at a local hotel. Municipal Commissioner of KMC Syed Afzal Zaidi, Abid Hussaini of UNDP, Professor Nauman Ahmed and officers of various departments of KMC were also present on this occasion. The Mayor said that citizens should adopt trees, which would make the city environment pleasant. The Karachi Metropolitan Corporation is allocating spaces for car parking at different places in the city to avoid traffic jams on roads.



KARACHI: Jamal-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Idara-e-Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

## Dwellers demand prompt action: Mathra Kochian Warsak Road area of Peshawar facing acute low Sui gas pressure

By Sher Malik PESHAWAR: While Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) is claiming to have improved low gas pressure issue in different areas of Peshawar city, some parts are still confronting the same issue apparently with no respite in the sight.

In these areas is also included Mathra Kochian warsak Road area of Peshawar city. The dwellers of Mathra Kochian have been complaining about the extreme low gas

pressure in the locality for last one year, but the concerned authorities in SNGPL have not paid any heed towards the issue yet.

What to speak about the low gas pressure during winter season in the Kochian, it was also deprived of the gas in summer even.

The dwellers of area demanded of the SNGPL authorities to take notice of the Sui gas crisis and resolve it immediately so that they may not suffer any more due to the issue in extreme winter.



LARKANA: Sikh Pilgrims are leaving from Larkana on a special train to participate in celebrations of the birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak in Nankana Sahib, at Railway Station in Larkana.

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

LAHORE: The Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a special meeting of the Cabinet Committee for Anti-Smog at the Chief Minister's Office today. Important decisions were made based on the recommendations of environmental and health experts. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman attended the meeting through video link.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi briefed the media about the meeting's decisions, stating that educational institutions in 6 divisions, including Lahore, will remain closed on Friday and Saturday. Markets, restaurants, and businesses will open at 3 pm on those days, with all establishments closed on Sundays in six Divisions. If suitable clouds for rain are present on November 29, artificial rain will be induced in Lahore.

In Lahore, 10 thousand students will receive electric bikes with subsidies, and government employees will be provided electric bikes on lease. The Chief Minister announced the closure of vehicle entry on Main Mall Road on Sundays, allowing only bicycles. These measures are applicable to Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Multan, and Sahiwal divisions due to increased smog effects.

Mohsin Naqvi stated that an MoU for installing air filter towers in Lahore has been signed, and a special committee will provide recommendations for providing subsidized electric bikes to students. Steps are also being taken to offer electric bikes on lease to government employees. If conditions permit, artificial rain will be attempted on November 29, contingent on suitable

cloud cover. The Chief Minister clarified that while he is not in favor of market closures, necessary steps have been taken considering the smog situation. Government offices will be open on Fridays and after 3 pm on Saturdays. He highlighted the higher air quality index in the morning in Lahore and emphasized doubling water sprinkling on roads by WASA, PHA, and LWMC to combat smog. People should wear masks to minimize the effects of smog on their health. The reason for the high air quality index is India's crop residue burning. Joint efforts are being made to reduce smog. Provincial Ministers, including SM Tanveer, Dr. Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Ibrahim Hasan Murad, Bilal Afzal, Senior Member Board of Revenue.

## Ask from Nawaz, has he condemned Israel, US: Hafiz

KARACHI (Online): JI Amir Karachi Hafiz Naeem has said "ask from Nawaz Sharif who considers himself monarch if he has condemned Israel and US."

He said this while addressing a press conference here Thursday.

He held bombardment is continuing persistently in Palestine. Most of the martyrs in Palestine are children.

He added Israel cannot fight with Hamas. We are with Hamas. Every man of conscience is with Hamas.

The license of K-Electric should be abolished. Still 10 hours loadshedding is continuing in several areas.

## Seven day anti-polio campaign kicked off in Nawabshah

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Hyderabad division Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider and Deputy Commissioner Zahid Hussain Rind here on Thursday visited Mother and Child Hospital and kicked off seven-day anti-polio campaign by administering polio drops to children.

District Health Officer Dr Asadullah Dahri, Area Coordinator WHO Dr Jehangir Korai, Focal Person for Polio Dr Allah Bux Rajper, Information Officer Sher Muhammad Jamali and officials of Health Department were present on the occasion.

Addressing on the occasion, the Commissioner said that it was collective efforts of all of us and the polio teams to administer polio drops to all children up to the age of five years to make the campaign successful. He warned that officials showing negligence in national cause would face legal action. The Commissioner appealed parents to fully cooperate with the polio teams visiting house to house during the anti polio.



GILGIT: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah having lunch with children of Sweet Home during his visit.

## Round-the-clock free food facility at Data Darbar

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has fulfilled yet another promise by introducing the 24/7 'Langar' [free food] facility at the Data Darbar complex within 48 hours.

The Auqaf Department took the initiative, in partnership with the Madina Foundation, to feed round-the-clock influx of devotees. The step marks a significant development, ensuring that devotees and the homeless have continuous access to free food.

Auqaf's Secretary and Mian Rasheed of Madina Foundation briefed the media about the arrangements.

While chairing a meeting at his office, the CM emphasised the importance of maintaining cleanliness and enhancing the aesthetic appeal of the area around Data Darbar. He reiterated the commitment to take steps to maximise facilities for the visitors.

The meeting was also briefed about upgradation of nine shrines of Sufi saints including Hazrat Jalaluddin Bukhari in Uch Sharif, Baba Bulleh Shah in Kasur, Hazrat Musa Pak in Multan and Shah Shams Tabraiz.

The meeting noted that expansion of verandas around Data Darbar would enhance the capacity from 3,000 to 5,000.



MULTAN: Lecturer Dr. Kalyan Singh addressing a seminar regarding "Interfaith Dialogue" in collaboration with the Punjab Higher Education Commission at The Women's University Multan.

## KP police in anti-terror operations Pak Army's special measures continue to enhance capacity

PESHAWAR (APP): The special measures of Pakistan Army continued to enhance capacity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police in anti-terrorism operations.

Special training is being provided to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police especially police personnel working in the newly merged tribal districts by Pakistan Army to enhance their capacity regarding anti terrorism and non-conventional war operations, security officials told APP on Thursday.

Till date, 23,792 police officials were provided professional training in five

different phases by the renowned instructors of Pakistan Army. Besides, over 600 police officials have been provided SSG specialized training, 300 officials master training and 34 officials IED's defusing training.

In this regard, 40 police personnel were being provided three weeks special training at Spinwam area of North Waziristan tribal district.

During the last two years, 4,000 personnel had been provided training on modern lines by Pakistan Army in North Waziristan.

The use of weapons, search operation and protection of citizens.



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

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

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

The minister said that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) was the only key that open the door to stabilizing and strengthen the country's

economy.

He said that Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) had a significant role in enabling the sector and removing departmental bottlenecks.

The minister hoped the forum of the SIFC would attract more Foreign Direct Investment in Pakistan.

Highlighting about the strategy to increase ICT exports, Dr. Umar Saif said that according to the official figures, IT exports were \$ 2.6 billion, the government would add another 200,000 skilled people to the existing IT workforce, which would increase exports to \$ 5 billion.

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

Dr. Umar called for

the strategy's potential, presenting a vision that prioritizes human resource development, capacity building, the implementation of a freelancers' facilitation program, a startup funding initiative, and the nurturing of a resilient IT ecosystem.

Talking about the key points of the report, he said that the report confirmed that there was a substantial opportunity for Pakistan to grow its IT/ITeS Export revenues to \$10-\$18bn by 2028 and would make Pakistan a Global IT hub, with a commensurate increase in the Domestic industry to over \$6bn per annum.

He further said this was particularly the case in five priority IT/ITeS market segments, and within those, 12 priority sub-segments for the Pakistan IT/ITeS Industry which have been identified as having a combination of a high global market growth rate, significant global market.



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

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

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

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

Dr. Ejaz informed the Ambassador that the first phase of CPEC is at an advanced age at an inter-

governmental level which has helped Pakistan to develop the infrastructure, road network, and power plants to meet energy needs and now the time has come for the private sectors of both countries to gear up to realise the benefits of the ground that has been prepared by the two governments.

Minister heralded the start of a new relationship initiated by consensus between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar on the second stage of CPEC.

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

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

The minister highlighted the importance of private sector collaboration as the next step in strengthening the Pak-China relationship, revealing plans for the development of a Northern SEZ to link Urumqi with Pakistan and the availability of the Lahore and Karachi SEZs for further development.

He informed the Ambassador that as a part of his "Vision Pakistan."

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

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

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

Apart from that, in order to redress the low-pressure issues, SNGPL has successfully carried out replacement of 223 KMS Old network during

FY 2022-23.

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

Similarly, in the current Fiscal Year, SNGPL is carrying out several mega projects for ensuring smooth supply of gas to our esteemed consumers specially during cooking hours. These include laying of 10" dia x 20.8 Km Charsadda-Peshawar line transmission line, laying of 16" dia x 11.2 KMs operational phase line in Kohat, laying of 6" x 10.5 KM operational phase line in Charsadda. Apart from these, work on operational phases for further augmenting the network of walled city. Peshawar are also in progress. After completion of these mega projects, gas availability of Peshawar, Charsadda, Sardheri, Kohat cities will improve. In addition to this, SNGPL Peshawar is carrying out 403 KM of rehabilitation project during the current FY i.e. 2023-24.



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

## Switching to renewable energy way forward for Pakistan: Energy Minister

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

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

Muhammad Ali said that the government's commitment to increasing

the share of renewable in the energy mix, coupled with international support and investment was paving the way for a sustainable energy future.

Initiatives such as the Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDB) and the implementation of supportive policies and incentives for renewable energy projects are driving the transition, he said and added, a diversified renewable energy not only enhances energy security but also contributes to reducing carbon emissions, aligning with global efforts to combat climate change.

The future of renewable energy in Pakistan represents a crucial step towards a cleaner, more sustainable and resilient energy landscape, he added.

## Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$ 12.3 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan reached US\$ 12,302.3 million while the central bank held the reserves of \$7,180 million.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 217 million to \$ 7,180 million due to debt repayments during the week ending on November 17, 2023. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks stood at \$ 5,122.3 million, it added.

Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ending on November 10, 2023, were \$ 12,535.5 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 7,396.7 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,138.8 million.

## KBP urges govt to order sugar mills to start working from Nov 25

LAHORE (APP): Kisan Board Pakistan (KBP) has urged the government to order sugar mills to start working from November 25 besides fixing sugarcane price as Rs 500 per maund.

According to a press release issued here on Thursday, KBP president Sardar Zafar Hussain said, "Sugarcane crop has become unprofitable for growers due to increasing prices of agricultural inputs."

He said that late functioning of sugar mills would not only put negative impact on financial condition of farmers but also affect the production of wheat.

He said that as agriculture was backbone of country's economy.

## Gold imports decrease by 1.1% to \$8.8 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of gold decreased by 1.1 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

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

In terms of quantity, Pakistan imported 189 kilograms of gold during the period under review as compared to the imports of 156 kilograms last year, showing growth of 21.12 percent.

On year-on-year basis, the gold imports decreased by 35.62 percent in October as compared to the same month of last year. The gold imports during October 2023 were recorded at \$1.584 compared to imports of \$2.461 million.

In terms of quantity, the gold imports declined by 9.81 percent to 35 kilograms in October 2023 the imports of 32.69 kilogram during October 2023.

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

## Gold price drops by Rs 650 per tola

LAHORE (APP): The price of per tola gold decreased by Rs 650 rupees in the country on Thursday.

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

The price of gold in the international market has decreased by \$6.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif talking to media after launching ceremony of IT Export Strategy.

## SBP asks EFT facility providers to update digital applications

KARACHI (Online): For the convenience of customers using electronic fund transfer facility, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has prepared standardized list of purposes and directed all banks, electronic money institutions and all other regulated entities to update their digital applications accordingly by the end of the year 2023.

The central bank's Payment Systems Policy and Oversight Department issued a circular letter to heads of all banks, Microfinance banks, Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs), Payment System Operators (PSOs) and Payment Services Providers (PSPs) for standardization of purpose list for domestic electronic fund transfers (EFT). The circular letter mentioned that all regulated entities providing EFT facilities have in place their own list of purposes for the customers to choose from while conducting transactions through the Internet and mobile banking channels.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was reported at the port where two ships scheduled to load/offload 40,770 tonnes of Cement and 59,170 tonnes Coal, berthed at Multipurpose Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile three more ships, carrying 56,607 tonnes Coal, 58,950 tonnes Wheat and 54,798 tonnes Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during last 24 hours. A total of eight ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them, an oil tanker Al-Soor-II left the port on Thursday morning and another ship VTC Phoenix is expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo throughput of 149,937 tonnes, comprising 124,646 tonnes imports cargo and 25,291 tonnes export cargo, including containerized cargo carried in 1,531 Containers (956 TEUs Imports and 575 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 11 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them four ships, Express Athens, New Fairy, Sggar Shakti and Ceilo Di Houston & another ship Canopus scheduled to load/offload Containers Rice, Coal.



LAHORE: Secretary Transport Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi inspecting the Electric Motorcycles.

## SAPM for simplified procedure for Pak seeking job opportunities in KSA

ISLAMABAD (INP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OPHRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik has met CEO Takamol, Ahmad Al-Yamani to simplify procedure for Pakistanis seeking job in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

They met at Takamol head office in Riyadh, said a press release, received here on Thursday.

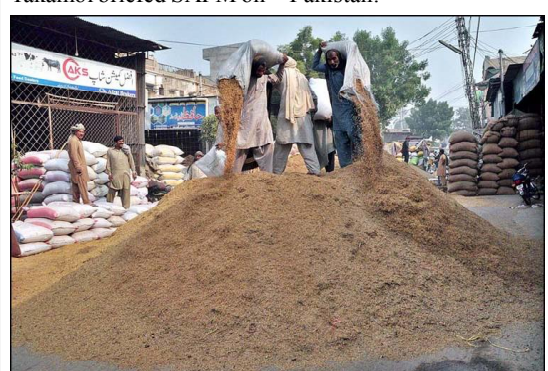
In the meeting, the SAPM stressed the need to establish training centers in Pakistan to align worker skills with the requirements of the Saudi labour market.

In a bid to streamline worker emigration, he proposed the establishment of one-window solutions in Pakistan. Sohrab Malik also highlighted the importance of expanding Takamol's presence in Pakistan to better facilitate Pakistani migrant workers seeking employment opportunities in KSA. Later, CEO Takamol briefed SAPM on

the various initiatives implemented by the company.

These initiatives included the Skills Verification Program (SVP) and the introduction of digital platforms.

He explained that the SVP was initiated to ensure the quality of skilled workers in Saudi Arabia, enhance their productivity, and improve service quality. Initially launched in Pakistan, the program has now been expanded to other countries, including India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. The SAPM expressed appreciation for the initiatives of Takamol. He pledged complete support and coordination for the implementation of SVP in Pakistan. The visit of the SAPM signifies a positive step toward further strengthening the ties between the two countries. It is expected to pave the way for new Saudi investment and cooperation opportunities in the realm of human resource training in Pakistan.



SARGODHA: Labourers busy in unloading rice crop in Ghalla Mindi.

## Pak businessman explores textile opportunities in Shanghai

BEIJING (APP): Recognizing the importance of the textile industry for Pakistan's economy, the country has been actively seeking opportunities to upgrade its manufacturing capabilities. China, renowned for its expertise in textile machinery, has emerged as a valuable partner in this endeavor.

This was stated by Waseem Bari, a Pakistani businessman with a keen interest in the textile industry who visits the ongoing ITMA Asia + China International Textile Machinery Exhibition (CITME) in Shanghai.

The event, which runs from November 19-23, is renowned as Asia's leading textile machinery

exhibition, attracting more than 1,500 textile machinery manufacturing enterprises from 23 countries and regions. The exhibition, which showcases the latest advancements in textile technology including machinery, materials and digital solutions, presents an ideal setting for Waseem, who has 10-20 years of collaboration with over 10 Chinese manufacturers, to gain insights into the latest trends and innovations in the textile machinery sector. As his 4th visit to the exhibition, including the promotion of low carbon energy saving.



PESHAWAR: Workers busy in preparing cotton before making quilt on his workplace at factory in Dabgari Bazaar.

## LESCO detects 29,244 power pilferers in 76 days

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

The LESCO spokesman told media here Thursday that the company has so far submitted FIR applications against 28,883

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

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division.



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

UNITED NATIONS (APP): UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "welcomed" the temporary truce deal reached hours ago between Israel and Hamas, but said it was not enough, with his spokesman emphasizing that he stands for a humanitarian ceasefire in besieged Gaza.

"I welcome the agreement reached by Israel and Hamas. It's an important step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done," the UN chief said in a statement read out at the regular noon briefing at UN Headquarters in New York.

For weeks Guterres has been advocating for an indefinite ceasefire for humanitarian reasons, in line with most of the international community, but it has been opposed by Israel and its ally the United States, which say that such a truce would serve to rearm Hamas.

"The secretary-general is still pushing for a ceasefire" Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters in response to questions.

In his statement, Guterres added that the UN "will

mobilize all its capacities to support the implementation & maximize positive impact on the humanitarian situation in Gaza," which after six weeks of relentless Israeli attacks is in ruins and its 2.3 million population traumatized.

The temporary humanitarian truce between Israel and Hamas has been welcomed by the international community, from neighbouring Arab countries to multinational organizations.

It is expected to come into force on Thursday and in a first phase, Hamas will hand over at least 50 hostages, almost all of them women and children, of the more than 240 it seized on Oct. 7, and Israel will release a first batch of 150 Palestinian prisoners.

The agreement includes a temporary truce of at least four days, which may be extended to a maximum of 10, in which the fighting will be completely paused and will involve the entry into the Strip of between 100 and 300 trucks of food and medical aid and fuel.



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

## China and Uruguay upgrade ties as leaders meet in Beijing

News Desk

BEIJING: China is Uruguay's largest trading partner, in line with Beijing's steadily growing influence in Latin America, where it has poured billions of dollars of investment into infrastructure.

"The strategic partnership between China and Uruguay has been elevated," Xi said according to state broadcaster CCTV, as he announced the establishment of a "comprehensive strategic partnership".

China has targeted Latin America as part of its global quest for natural resources, with many countries joining China's decade-old Belt and Road Initiative infrastructure project.

On Wednesday the Uruguayan presidency said Xi and Lacalle Pou had agreed to "continue efforts to accelerate the construction of a Free Trade Association" between the two countries.

Uruguay is part of the South American trade bloc Mercosur along with Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay.



Montevideo's desire to negotiate a commercial deal with China independently has in the past sparked opposition from fellow members and even rumours that the bloc could break up.

Brazil has recently reaffirmed strong ties with China under President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

But Argentina's president-elect Javier Milei had threatened to cut ties with China during his campaign, and Paraguay maintains diplomatic ties with Taiwan.

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

Niagara Falls, Canada, (AFP/APP): A car erupted into a fireball at a US-Canada checkpoint near Niagara Falls on Wednesday, killing the two occupants, triggering border closures and sparking a massive security alert on the eve of a major holiday.

New York Governor Kathy Hochul confirmed the two fatalities in the blast at the checkpoint 400 miles (640 kilometers) northwest of New York City and said nothing pointed to a "terrorist" attack.

"There is no evidence at this time that this was terrorist activity," Hochul

told a briefing. ("It was) a horrific incident, a crash, an explosion... but at this time no known terrorist connection."

While the two victims' identities were not yet public, she suggested their vehicle may have been from western New York state.

Witnesses described seeing a car traveling at high speed before it crashed into a checkpoint barrier and exploded into flames.

The explosion happened at the major Rainbow Bridge crossing near Niagara Falls with nothing left of the vehicle which Hochul said was incinerated except for the engine.

Authorities on both sides of the border activated emergency responses and images showed access roads to the crossing swarming with emergency service workers and vehicles.

The White House said President Joe Biden had been briefed and was closely following developments.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told parliament "this is obviously a very serious situation."

"We've seen this car coming down towards the border and he was flying—over 100 miles an hour," Mike Guenther, a Canadian visiting the United States,

## US intercepts multiple attack drones launched from Yemen: Pentagon

PENTAGON (INP): A US warship patrolling the Red Sea intercepted multiple attack drones launched from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen on Thursday, the US Central Command said.

"On the morning (Yemen time) of November 23, the USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) shot down multiple one-way attack drones launched from Houthi controlled areas in Yemen," CENTCOM said on X, previously Twitter.

"The ship and crew sustained no damage or injury," it added.

The Huthis have declared themselves part of the "axis of resistance" of Iran's allies and proxies and

have launched a series of drones and missiles towards Israel after the start of the war in Gaza.

The Huthis have also threatened to target Israeli shipping over the country's war with Islamist militant group Hamas, which is backed by Iran's clerical leadership.

On Sunday, Houthi rebels seized an Israeli-linked cargo vessel and its 25 international crew at the entrance to the Red Sea.

Israel's military on Sunday said the seizure was a "very grave incident of global consequence", and a US military official said it was "a flagrant violation of international law".

## Afghan government is a victim of disorder, under Taliban rule

KABUL (Online): Afghanistan's government system is a victim of corruption, since the Taliban came to power in August 2021, Afghanistan has been at the top of human rights violations, women have been banned from working in human rights organizations and the United Nations.

According to the United Nations report, the violations of women's rights in Afghanistan have gradually increased to an alarming level. It has also been banned from working in organizations and the United Nations.

Other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, physical integrity, access to justice and minority rights were also systematically destroyed.

In Afghanistan, civil society, human rights activists, journalists and even

peaceful protestors are being illegally arrested.

According to the United Nations report, in November 2022, the Taliban government implemented mass executions and other inhumane punishments.

Between November 2022 and April 2023, 74 men, 58 women and 2 boys were publicly flogged.

The Taliban government's claim of adherence to Islamic laws and the positive opinion of the people about them is completely false, more than 85 percent of the population in Afghanistan is living at the lowest level of poverty and the Taliban has made it impossible for aid to reach them.

In 2023, a budget of just \$744 billion was provided for the welfare of the people of Afghanistan, compared to \$1.49 billion in 2022.

## UNGA resolution upholds 'Olympic Truce' ahead of next year's Paris Olympics

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Ahead of the Summer Olympics in Paris next year, the UN General Assembly has urged countries to maintain the ancient Greek tradition of observing peace before, during and after the Games.

The call follows the adoption on Tuesday of a resolution that calls for a cessation of hostilities globally starting seven days before the opening of the Olympic and Paralympic Games and ending seven days after they conclude.

The General Assembly comprises all 193 UN Member States, and 120

voted on the resolution. It received 118 votes in favour, none against, with Russia and Syria abstaining.

The Paris Olympics will be held from 26 July to 11 August.

The resolution calls for observing the Olympic Truce "to ensure the safe passage, access and participation of athletes, officials and all other accredited persons taking part in the Games of the Olympiad and the Paralympic Games, and to contribute through other appropriate measures to the safe organization of the Games."

## Fossil fuels in the crosshairs at pivotal COP28 talks

PARIS (AFP/APP): World leaders will face a reckoning over humanity's failure to curb climate-heating emissions and polluting fossil fuels when they meet for UN climate talks next week, as the planet swelters in likely the hottest year in human history.

Pope Francis, King Charles III, political leaders, activists and lobbyists will be among the more than 70,000 visitors expected for the COP28 meeting in oil-rich United Arab Emirates, making it the largest UN climate change conference ever held.

Negotiators will grapple with a host of flashpoint issues, including the future of oil, gas and coal, as well as financial solidarity between rich polluters and poorer nations most vulnerable to accelerating climate impacts.

But the central focus will be a damning stocktaking of the world's limited progress on curbing global warming, which requires an official response to be

crafted at the November 30 to December 12 talks.

Signals from leaders will come early, with about 140 heads of state and government due to speak during a two-day summit beginning on December 1.

The stakes have never been higher, with scientists warning that the Paris Agreement's safer 1.5 degree Celsius warming limit is slipping through humanity's fingers.

"The biggest wildcard is probably in there geopolitical space for climate cooperation?" said Alden Meyer of the think tank E3G, adding there was a "corrosive lack of trust" even before the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Global relations have soured in recent years over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a mounting debt crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, when developing countries struggled to access vaccines.

Campaigners have also raised concerns over the in-

## WHO asks China for more data on respiratory illness

BEIJING (AFP/APP): The World Health Organization has asked China for more data on a respiratory illness spreading in the north of the country, urging people to take steps to reduce the risk of infection.

Northern China has reported an increase in "influenza-like illness" since mid-October when compared to the same period in the previous three years, the WHO said.

"WHO has made an official request to China for detailed information on an increase in respiratory illnesses and reported clusters of pneumonia in children," the UN health body said in a statement on Wednesday.

China's National Health Commission told reporters last week that the respiratory illness spike was due to the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and the circulation of known pathogens, namely influenza and common bacterial infections that affect children, including mycoplasma pneumonia.

The Chinese capital of Beijing, located in the north of the country, is currently experiencing a cold snap, with temperatures expected to plummet to well below zero by Friday, state media said.

Temperatures plummeted as the city "entered a high incidence season of respiratory infectious diseases", Wang Quanyi, deputy director and chief epidemiological expert at the Beijing Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told state media on Wednesday.

Beijing "is currently showing a trend of multiple pathogens coexisting", he added.

At Beijing's Capital Institute of Pediatrics' Children's Hospital on Thursday, AFP journalists saw crowds of parents and children dressed in winter clothes.

A parent surnamed Zhang accompanied her coughing nine-year-old son and said he had fallen ill with pneumonia.

"There are really a lot of children who have caught it recently," she said.

Li Meiling, 42, had brought her eight-year-old daughter, who was suffering from mycoplasma pneumonia—a pathogen that can cause sore throats, fatigue and fever.

"It's true that a lot of children her age are ill with this at the moment," she told AFP.

But she said she was "not particularly worried" about the WHO announcement.

"It's winter, so it's normal that there are more cases of respiratory illnesses. It's due to the season."

On November 21, media and public disease surveillance system ProMED reported clusters of undiagnosed pneumonia in children in northern China.

The WHO said it was unclear if ProMED's report was related to the authorities' press conference and that it was seeking clarification.

The agency "has also requested additional information on recent trends in the circulation of known pathogens, including influenza, SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that gives rise to Covid-19), RSV affecting infants and Mycoplasma pneumoniae, as well as on the degree of overcrowding in the health system," the statement added.

In the meantime, it urged people to take preventative measures, including getting vaccinated, keeping distance from sick people and wearing masks.

The WHO gave no indication of China's response to the request for more information.

And China's foreign ministry did not respond to a request for comment from AFP on Thursday.

## Wildfire engulfs homes in Western Australia

SYDNEY (INP): Australian firefighters Thursday battled a runaway bushfire that has incinerated 10 homes and forced scores of people to evacuate in the northern outskirts of Perth during a fierce heatwave.

Fire services issued emergency warnings for fire-swept areas north of the Western Australian capital, urging people to flee their homes if they can, or shelter in place if it is already too late to move.

More than 500 emergency workers backed by aircraft were trying to tame the out-of-control, fast-moving flames, which were being fanned by warm winds, officials said.

The blaze has destroyed 10 homes, four sheds and a number of vehicles including caravans, said Western Australia Deputy Premier Rita Saffioti.

"The forecast today is unforgiving," she told a news conference, predicting that thermometers would hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) during the day.

"It is crucial now that everyone involved continues to be alert as this bushfire emergency continues to unfold. Today is a day that everyone has to stick together."

Firefighters in one truck struggled to navigate smoke-shrouded streets as red-hot embers flew through the air, television images showed.

At one point, they were confronted by trees engulfed in towering orange flames, just a few steps from the roadside pavement.

## Dublin stabbing: Three schoolchildren among five knifed in Irish capital with at least one critical

News Desk

DUBLIN: Five individuals, including three children and two adults, are said to be critical in a Dublin hospital after a knife-wielding man reportedly went on a frenzied stabbing spree near a girls' school located on the northern side of Ireland's capital's centre, The Irish Times reported.

"A person of interest has been identified and a large knife has been seized at the scene on Parnell Square East. Gardaí have sealed off the scene," The Irish Times said.

"The chief suspect for the knife attack has been detained and had sustained wounds believed to be self-inflicted."

The incident unfolded shortly after 1 pm near Parnell Square on the north-side of the Irish capital.

## Iceland may spray water on lava to save town

REYKJAVIK (AFP/APP): Icelandic authorities on Wednesday said they were considering pumping water onto any lava that spews out if a volcanic eruption threatens the evacuated town of Grindavik. Authorities would use the water to cool and divert the flow of lava to protect the fishing port of 4,000 people on Iceland's southern Reykjanes peninsula.

Residents were ordered out on November 11 after magma shifting under the Earth's crust caused hundreds of earthquakes—a warning of a likely volcanic eruption. Thousands of smaller tremors have shaken the region since.

But in a bulletin on Wednesday evening, the Icelandic meteorological office said the probability of a sudden eruption "is decreasing every day and is considered low" due to declining magma flow and seismic activity.



Emergency services at the scene of a suspected stabbing at Parnell Square in Dublin city centre



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

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

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

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

He also said that no excuse is acceptable in construction of the roads under Quetta Development Package after release of funds for them. The Chief Minister was speaking on occasion of the visit and briefing

about the progress of ongoing development projects under Quetta Development Package here on Thursday.

It may be mentioned here that it was fourth visit of Chief Minister Domki to the development projects since assuming his office.

The Chief Minister inspected the work continued on Spinnay road, Sariab road, Link Badini road, Radio Tower road, Western bypass and Anscorb road.

The Project Director Quetta Development Pack-

age, NHA and NLC high ups briefed the Chief Minister about the projects.

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

It was told that the opinion of Islamic Ideological Council (ICC) was sought about the mosques coming in the way of roads.



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



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

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

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

Addressing the "Tazem Al-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference" here at a local hotel, he said that this initiative would equip pilgrims with the necessary

knowledge and skills to navigate the sacred rituals while prioritizing their safety and well-being.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, said the pilgrims must receive comprehensive spiritual guidance from qualified scholars, covering the significance of each ritual and the historical context of Hajj and Umrah.

This would not only deepen their understanding but also foster a sense of connection to the religious roots of the pilgrimage, he added.

He said the pilgrims must be addressed the prac-

tical aspects of the pilgrimage, including transportation details, accommodation guidelines, and essential information about the holy sites. He said it would help ensure that pilgrims were well-informed about the logistics, minimizing confusion and stress during their journey.

He said the HGOs should educate pilgrims on the diverse cultural backgrounds of fellow participants, fostering an atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding as it would promote tolerance and harmony, reflecting the inclusive spirit of the pilgrimage.

## Religious Ministry working to reduce cost of Hajj: Aneeq

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

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

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

witness a further reduction.

Turning his attention to the Gaza crisis, Minister Aneeq expressed his earnest desire for the leaders of all 57 Muslim countries to unite on a common platform and decisively address the challenges confronting the Islamic world, including the Palestinian issue, with a view towards achieving a permanent resolution.

In the meantime, Chairman of the Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Jamal Khan Taraki conveyed heartfelt appreciation to the Saudi government and Ambassador Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki for their unwavering support and continual enhancement of facilities and services for pilgrims on an annual basis.

## FIA freezes Moonis Elahi's bank accounts, seals properties

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Governor and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

thorities (PDMAs).

The prime minister emphasized benefiting from the research of foreign and Pakistani experts on climate change and the ways to reduce its disastrous effects.

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

Chairman (NDMA) Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik briefed the prime minister

about the national strategy for disaster management. Federal Ministers Jilil Abbas Jilani and Shahmshad Akhtar attended the meeting. The meeting was told that NDMA had formulated a strategy for coping with disaster management, making a two-month advance forecast, and minimizing the losses. It was highlighted that Pakistan was among the countries that were facing the consequences of climate change in the shape of glacier melting, floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOF).



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Standing Committee for Petroleum and Resources Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir on Thursday said that Pakistan could earn foreign exchange of 50 billion rupees annually from the export of meat and dairy products.

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

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

meat, although halal meat is mostly found in Islamic countries", he added.

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

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

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

## Kyrgyz delegation meet Education Minister

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

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

The minister dis-

cussed the exchange of expertise and knowledge regarding Vocational and Technical Training.

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

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

## UNDP renovates Govt Girls High School Killi Ismail

QUETTA (APP): United Nation Development Program (UNDP) in collaboration with the District Education Department here on Thursday organized an event to inaugurate recently renovated Government Girls High School at Killi Ismail. Resident Representative, UNDP Pakistan, Samuel Rizk along with officials from the education department, teachers, students, and community members attended the event, said a press release issued here. UNDP Pakistan successfully implemented renovation of the school under promoting the COVID-19 Response and Public Services Capacity in Balochistan Pakistan for accelerating SDGs Delivery Project funded by the Global Development and South-South Cooperation Fund (GDF) from China.

China Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong praised the close cooperation between UNDP and China.



Former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Anjad Khan Niazi receiving King Abdul Aziz Medal from Commander Western Region of Saudi Armed Forces in Makkah, Saudi Arabia



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

## Pakistan exploring debt for nature swaps with global agencies: Shamshad

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

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

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

## SC issues Justice Minallah's note about elections date verdict

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

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

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

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

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

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