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Gwadar

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Protestors were not involved in violence, confirms minister. Govt releases women and children after crackdown on Baloch protesters

Police crackdown on Baloch protesters aimed at avoiding 'catastrophe': Interim ministers; 90% of the men arrested during the crackdown have been released

ISLAMABAD (INP): The interim government announced on Thursday that all women and children detained during the police crackdown on Baloch protesters had been released. This was announced by Privatisation Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad while addressing a press conference in Islamabad, accompanied by Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and Jamal Shah. "At the prime minister's direction, a decision was made to release all women and children without exception. Additionally, all identified men have also been freed," stated Fawad Hasan Fawad. The Islamabad police had detained numerous Baloch men and women during a demonstration against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Videos circulating on social media depicted security forces using water cannons and tear gas on the protesters, forcibly dragging Baloch individuals into police vans, and using batons against them. Furthermore, the police dismantled protest camps and loudspeaker setups outside the National Press Club.

Governor calls IGP Islamabad; discusses about arrests of women & children of BYC

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar called the Inspector General of Police Islamabad and discussed about the matter of arrests of women and children belonging to Baloch Yekjehti Committee there in Islamabad on Thursday. Speaking to the IGP Islamabad, Governor stressed on finding peaceful solution to the issue immediately. The IGP Islamabad apprised the latest situation and informed that all the arrested women and children have been released. However, other protesters of BYC are in the police custody and would be produced in the court of law. It may be mentioned here that the Governor would proceed for Islamabad in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on Prime Minister's Youth Program.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party Chief, Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held in Quetta.

Directs Governor to reach Islamabad over issue: BNP chief condemns torture on participants of BYC & arrests in Islamabad

Independent Report
QUETTA: The President of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal has strongly condemned the torture on the peaceful participants of Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC) and the heirs of missing persons besides their arrests in Islamabad the other day. He said that he has directed the Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar to reach Islamabad immediately and resolve the issue and speak to the concerned authorities for release of those arrested in the federal capital. The BNP Chief asserted that if the arrested persons were not released then the Governor would tender his resignation there. Sardar Akhtar Mengal was addressing a hurriedly called press conference on Thursday. Also present on the occasion were other senior leaders of the party. Addressing the presser, BNP Chief said that the baton charge and shelling on the participants of Long march of BYC and protest sit-in is condemnable. He also slammed the arrests of the protesters made in Islamabad. He alleged that the state is trying to suppress the voice of people through force, which would yield worst consequences. He demanded of the rulers to conduct inquiry into the incident through judicial commission. Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that we used to call the caretaker government as the undertaker, and it's testified now. He said that we informed the Islamabad walas about the issues of Balochistan. He said that the issue of Balochistan is purely political and it can be resolved politically.

Pakistan deeply concerned over India's terrorism: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said it is deeply concerned over Indian terrorism adding Modi government is spreading terrorism in all over the world including South Asia. "Blasphemy law is not discriminatory law against any one. Pakistan does not use this law against any minority. Action is taken indiscriminately as per law. All the minorities enjoy equal rights in the country, Army Chief Gen Asim Munir is on official visit of US and he has held important meetings with the authorities therein. Pakistan will participate in conference on Palestine.

Sanjrani announces to participate in Elections

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani has also announced to participate in general elections. Sadiq Sanjrani will contest elections of both National and Provincial constituencies. Chairman Senate will participate in general election from Chaghi. Sadiq Sanjrani has obtained nomination papers for contesting elections of national and provincial assembly.

5 killed as bus carrying wedding guests overturned into ditch in Duki

DUKI (APP): At least five persons including women were killed on the spot while other several injured when a speeding van carrying wedding guests has overturned into ditch near Nana Sahib of Tehsil Duki in Balochistan on early Thursday morning. According to details, Rescue sources said that the accident took place in Duki area of Balochistan where an ill-fated van was returning from after attending a wedding ceremony overturned and claimed five lives, a private news channel reported. Police said the deceased included women and children, adding, after being informed rescue teams rushed to the spot and bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital.

Door opens for others as well Caretaker CM welcomes all militants who surrender and join national mainstream

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardaan Khan Domki has welcomed all the militants of the banned organization who surrendered and joined the national mainstream the other day. He said that we welcome all 70 militants who surrendered and joined the national mainstream the other day by giving up the armed struggle against the state. In an official statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister appreciated the practical efforts made by the tribal jirga held during the current month in this regard. The Chief Minister said that positive impacts of the tribal jirga have started coming in. He said that we invited all the angry Balochs to play their role by joining the national mainstream with open heart. He said that while 70 anti state militants joined the national mainstream the other day, it is hoped that more would also come. He said that the state is like a great mother and kind father and there's nothing in the anti-state movements. He said that the solution of issues lies in the mutual talks and we have to find out the ways and means to resolve the basic issues being faced by the people of the province.

IHC rejects plea for immediate stopping cipher case trial

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notice to Attorney General (AG) and FIA on the petition filed by PTI founder Imran Khan against in-camera trial in cipher case. The court rejected the plea for immediate stopping the trial of cipher case. The case came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb here Thursday. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked we want to hear AG on this matter. Expressing his surprise over giving deadline of four weeks by Chief Justice (CJ) IHC for completion of trial of cipher case remarked we don't give four weeks time in general cases.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatization & Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Fawad Hasan Fawad addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Jamal Shah

CPEC Balochistan Forum to equip journalists in under-developed areas

ISLAMABAD (INP): The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Media Forum Balochistan Initiative was launched on to equip the journalists in underdeveloped areas of Balochistan with information of the Chinese investment in the region and its positive impacts. In an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said that the CPEC Media Forum Balochistan Initiative will equip the local journalists of Balochistan with the right information about CPEC projects. He said, "CPEC starts from Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar, and it cannot be completed without the development of Balochistan, especially Gwadar. We should encourage more journalists to join the media industry especially focusing on the region's developmental projects and will give them the right information to encounter the negative propaganda against the corridor." On asking about the availability of media education at the University of Gwadar one of the University students Samaa who was present at the forum told the correspondent that journalism has not been introduced at Gwadar University as yet, and introducing media education at the university level will help youth play their role in this field. Adding to the role of the media industry in Balochistan Chairman Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed elaborated that the local media channel journalists from print as well as electronic media should be supported by both Chinese and Pakistani governments to convey the right information to the locals.

Individuals involved in May 9 riots mustn't hold any public office, opines PM Kakar

LAHORE (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar opined on Thursday that individuals involved in the violent events of May 9 should not hold public office. In an interview with a private news channel, PM Kakar stated that no political party should be prevented from participating in electoral activities. "If any party is hindered, it constitutes an illegal act which must be investigated." PM Kakar further stated that a strong coordination existed between the caretaker government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for holding transparent elections. He assured that the caretaker government would fulfill all responsibilities for fair elections in the country. Kakar also noted that the individuals involved in the violent events of May 9 were currently facing the law.



QUETTA: Members of Baloch Yakjehti Committee are holding protest rally for recovery of Baloch missing persons as soon as possible, held at Assembly Chowk in Quetta.

Pak demands probe into banned TTP acquiring advanced weapons

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has demanded a probe to determine how the banned out-fit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan acquired advanced weapons, used in recent terrorist attacks in the country. The demand was placed by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram to UN Security Council during a debate on the situation in Afghanistan. He said TTP and its affiliates have carried out a series of organized cross-border terrorist attacks on Pakistan's soil.

Baloch demonstrators have 'constitutional right' to protest: IHC

IHC orders Islamabad IG to submit report today of number of Baloch protesters arrested, in judicial remand
ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq Thursday warned the capital city's top cop against any hindrance in the protest staged by the Baloch marchers, saying that they have the constitutional right of demonstration. The remark came during the hearing of a case pertaining to the "illegal" arrests of Baloch long march participants in Islamabad. Islamabad Inspector General (IG) Akbar Nasir Khan appeared before the IHC bench upon being summoned by the CJ after the court took up a plea against the arrest of Baloch protesters — earlier in the day. The long march participants were detained by authorities during a demonstration in Islamabad against the enforced disappearances of Baloch missing persons.



HYDERABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaking at 9th Ayaz Melo organised by Khanabadosh Writers Cafe in collaboration with Culture & Tourism Department Sindh at Sindh Museum.

Bilawal reiterates imperative to end politics of hatred, division

HYDERABAD (INP) — Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday reiterated the imperative to end the politics of hatred and division, asserting, "Unity leads to victory, not division". Speaking at the Sheikh Ayyaz mela [a public event] here, Bilawal acknowledged the presence of individuals promoting division and hatred, and stressed collective efforts to confront all these threats. The ex-foreign minister asserted that a united youth was the key to defeating those involved in divisive politics. Voicing concern over prevalent oppression in Pakistan, Bilawal stated that the gravest injustice was not solely the loss of popular leaders, but also the suppression of history, culture and language. The PPP leader called for a societal shift, encouraging a transition from a culture where youth wielded guns to one where they held pens, aiming to showcase Pakistan's rich history and culture. Bilawal, while recognising the progress made towards curbing extremist mindsets, cautioned against political parties labelling each other as traitors or infidels.

19th Annual convocation of BUITEMS held: Governor exhorts students to utilize potential for development & prosperity of country



Independent Report
QUETTA The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the students to utilize their potential for development and prosperity of the country and Balochistan. He said that the future of the country and province is linked with youth. The Governor said that the real objective of life is to help others. He also urged the youth to take wholehearted part in the development and reconstruction of the country. The Governor was addressing the 19th annual convocation of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) here at its main Takatu campus on Thursday. The caretaker provincial ministers, government high ups, Vice Chancellor of BUITEMS, Professor Dr Khalid Hafeez, Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan and others were present. Malik Abdul Wali Kakar congratulated all the graduates on their successful graduation. He also congratulated the parents and teachers of the students on their graduation and achievement of a milestone in their academic career.

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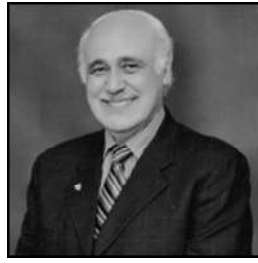
Multiple candidacies

In light of the recent consultative meeting organised by Pildat and UNDP, it is high time Pakistan's political landscape embraced a much-needed reform: limiting the number of seats an election candidate can contest. The practice, while not new, has recently sparked debate, especially following PTI chief Imran Khan's decision to contest from eight constituencies in last year's by-elections. We regret that a private bill introduced last year by a Jamaat-i-Islami MNA, aimed at restricting candidates to no more than two seats, was not taken seriously. The lack of progress on this front perpetuates an unfair electoral advantage and a financial burden on the nation. Globally, democratic nations have addressed this issue with pragmatic solutions. India, for example, permits a maximum of two simultaneous candidacies, while Bangladesh allows three. Meanwhile, the UK has completely banned the practice of contesting more than one seat. These measures not only ensure financial prudence but also uphold the fairness of the electoral process. In Pakistan, the financial implications of this practice are significant. The ECP estimates a cost of Rs20.7m associated with conducting by-elections in constituencies vacated by winning candidates. These expenses, borne by taxpayers, are hard to justify, especially in a country facing economic challenges.

Furthermore, the ability to contest from multiple constituencies creates an inherent imbalance in the poll competition. It favours those with ample resources, often sidelining capable candidates with limited financial means. This disparity goes against the very essence of a democratic system, which should ideally ensure equal opportunities for all aspirants, irrespective of their economic status. The matter also has a direct impact on voter sentiment.

When elected representatives vacate seats to choose another, it can lead to a sense of disenfranchisement among the electorate. This practice not only necessitates costly by-elections but also weakens voters' trust in the democratic process. In the interest of these concerns, a mutual agreement must be reached among political parties to limit the number of constituencies from which a single candidate can contest. This self-regulation would be a significant step towards ensuring fair play and financial responsibility in the electoral process. Thereafter, it is imperative that the next government, irrespective of its political alignment, takes definitive steps to amend Article 223 of the Constitution. This amendment should aim to limit candidates to contesting from no more than two seats, in line with international practices. The need for reform in Pakistan's poll system is clear. Political parties must collectively work towards implementing these changes. Such an initiative would not only enhance the fairness and integrity of elections but also demonstrate a commitment to responsible governance. We hope that with mutual understanding and collaboration, Pakistan can move towards a more equitable and financially sustainable electoral system.

That elusive cell



F.S. Aijazuddin

Dr Azra Raza's name — a playful anagram — is nevertheless one of the most universally respected in oncology.

Pakistani by origin, she graduated from Dow Medical College, Karachi, in the 1970s. There, treating a victim dying of cancer — "the emperor of all maladies" — she decided to make that disease her specialisation.

Like many talented Pakistanis who found local institutions a useful springboard only to discover that the pool of future options was empty, Dr Raza migrated to the United States where she joined the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo (New York) in 1977. Its motto, composed by a Dr Grace, gripped her: "If I had a choice between a walk on the moon and saving one life from cancer, I would never look at the moon again."

Rather like Dr Raza, whose husband Harvey Preisler would in time himself die from cancer, it took a personal tragedy — the death of his two-year-old son Jimmy from leukaemia — for Dr Grace to realign his priorities. Dr Grace too made it his mission to find a cure for cancer. He discovered in his chagrin though that the US government committed 400 times more money to the military than to cancer research. (Which country doesn't?)

Dr Raza has compressed her research over the past 40 years in cancer prevention and treatment into a moving, readable (even for a layman) book titled *The First Cell: And the Human Costs of*

Pursuing Cancer to the Last (2019). She lectures extensively, drawing attention to her lonely quest to identify and isolate the first cell — in essence, "finding cancer before it finds us".

She summarises her book in one pithy sentence: "The future is in preventing cancer by identifying the earliest markers of the first cancer cell rather than chasing after the last."

Synthesizing her experience in the field since 1984, she found that "while there has been little progress in cancer research, there has been even less improvement in treatment", some of it unchanged since the 1970s. She makes this startling observation: "Since 2005, 70 per cent of approved drugs have shown zero improvement in survival rates, while up to 70 per cent have been actually harmful to patients."

She notes that in 1977, the survival rate of cancer patients was 26pc. Over 40 years later, despite the billions of dollars spent on research, it has improved only marginally to 28.5pc.

Having seen death too often and too closely, she is qualified to assert: "Dying is not a failure. Denying death is." It is not shared nihilism that draws her close to the late James Baldwin, who mused: "It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the fact of death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life [...] It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return."

Dr Azra borrowed Baldwin's telling phrase as the title of her recent Yohsin lecture at Karachi's Habib University: *Confronting with Passion the Conundrum of Life*.

During her lecture, she explained the uniqueness of her approach. She identifies patients with a

high risk of cancer and then monitors them, looking for that first tell-tale symptom. She has analysed that the major causes of cancer are age and stress. According to her, 60pc of cancers diagnosed are cured, mostly by surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. The remaining 40pc are diagnosed but are at too advanced a stage to be salvaged.

Her medical library consists of a tissue bank she created that contains over 60,000 specimens drawn from cancer patients. Her pioneering effort in this type of specialised documentation is now being given the re-cognition (bela--ted--ly) it deserves.

In her inimitable, often bilingual presentations, Dr Azra weaves science with poetry, in English and in Urdu. She does not need to search for the appropriate quotation: Rainer Maria Rilke, W.H. Auden, Shakespeare, Allama Iqbal, Faiz and Ghalib wait impatiently to be summoned.

She honoured Ghalib particularly by co-authoring a book on him with Sara Suleri Goodyear titled *Ghalib: Epistemologies of Elegance* (2009).

At a small gathering in Lahore on Dec 11, Dr Azra discussed how the life span of humans has lengthened. Whereas previous generations had a life expectancy of 50-60 years, then 70-80 years, now 80-90, our elders reaching 100 or more, she suggested, should no longer come as a surprise. "Will a human being live up to 150 years?" she was asked. "Why not?" she replied. "In fact, I suspect that the first person likely to live 150 years has already been born."

Dr Azra should herself have been born more recently. She would have had at least a century of vital life-saving research ahead of her. — Courtesy Dawn

Climate resilience



Naseer Memon

The screening of development projects through the lens of climate resilience requires a paradigm shift in development planning and budgeting. The International Monetary Fund wants Pakistan to introduce this shift through the FY2024-25 budget. Prodding the ministries of finance and planning, the IMF has prescribed making budget documents more explicit on the nexus between the budget and climate-related action. It has put emphasis on advancing green budgeting, including budget tracking, publishing information on climate-related spending and aligning the next budget with climate change adaptation.

The overall mainstreaming of climate change in development planning involves myriad intricacies. Prioritising the most promising investments in the public sector with a strategic focus on addressing climate concerns requires a wise approach. This entails development planning and financial allocations to pre-empt climate woes through diligently designed adaptation and mitigation projects.

Last year's floods inflicted losses and damage to the tune of \$30 billion on Pakistan. A deeper scrutiny of the factors that triggered this devastation reveal climate-insensitive planning and misplaced priorities. The logical cure to perpetual disasters is removing the bugs from the development process that worsen the impact of extreme climatic factors. The latter can convert hazards into calamities, and removing

developmental defects is a prerequisite for averting disasters and mitigating loss and damage.

Climate-sensitive budgeting and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation is often misconstrued as financial allocation for the relevant ministries and departments. In reality, the concept transcends budgets. International expert on climate change adaptation Richard Klein explains the concept as "the integration of policies and measures to address climate change into ongoing sectoral planning and management, so as to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of sectoral and development investments".

This approach underscores the need for applying a climate lens to development projects. Sectoral policies should focus on adaptation that can be infused into sectoral plans and eventually trickle down to the project level. Applying climate filters at the project level requires an in-depth dissection of every development project with a climate knife and not just marking a perfunctory tick box in the PC-1 pro forma.

Another possibility could be to broaden the scope of the environmental impact assessment to climate impact assessment. This can climate-fence projects. The EIA is mandatory for large-scale, complex and environmentally sensitive projects but has been reduced to a ritualistic drill these days. The process has been trivialised to the extent of circumventing the EIA altogether or conducting it mid-course only to observe a formality. The environmental protection agencies have been rendered spineless. At times, they take a compromised position when projects involve special interests for powerful people.

Once the development process is made climate-proof, setting the

right priorities is the next goalpost. Water conservation, disaster mitigation, resilient agriculture, efficient irrigation systems, reducing emissions in brown sectors, renewable energy sources, preventive public health systems, sanitation, storm drainage, and afforestation are some of the key priority areas of the investment portfolio. These sectors need integrated strategies to create synergies, with adaptation agendas in line with the Pakistan National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan 2023-2030.

A silver lining is that the glass is not half empty. The Climate Public Expenditure Review, 2017, for Pakistan shows that the country is already spending a sizeable proportion of its budget on sectors contributing to offsetting the impact of climate change. Nevertheless, a significant financial gap still persists as the average costs for annual adaptation to climate change have been estimated at \$10.70bn per annum over the next 35 to 40 years.

The provincial governments have to lead from the front as all these subjects fall under their ambit. The provinces are equipped with locally contextualised climate change policies. Climate-sensitive planning and budgeting will have an enduring advantage for the provinces. A robust climate mitigation and adaptation plan will reduce their vulnerability to hydro-climatic disasters, and thus create fiscal space for other developmental needs that are often compromised due to climate-induced torments. Investment in such projects will have multifarious benefits, including disaster mitigation, ecosystem restoration, the greening of the economy and the creation of resilient communities. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

FTO can take action against FBR, President Arif Alvi

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Arif Alvi has said that Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has full authority to initiate an investigation into the alleged misconduct of any FBR official under suo motu notice.

President Arif Alvi has rejected 6 documents presented by Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and confirmed the orders of Federal Tax Ombudsman regarding investigation against tax officials.

According to media

report, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has directed FBR to take steps in the light of information issued by office of Federal Tax Ombudsman regarding results of immediate investigation regarding 6 cases. Chief Commissioner LTO Islamabad has been directed to identify and point out the officers responsible for reduction in collection due to unnecessary and unjustified delay.

FTO Secretariat was informed with evidence

that lack of proper follow up by FBR officials, frequent transfers and changes in scope were not achieving the desired results.

An analysis by FTO Secretariat revealed that FBR has adopted all modern methods including proper data base and web portal. However adequate steps have not been taken regarding comprehensive communication and coordination with officers deployed and mobilized for tax collection.

It has been also stated that FBR headquarters and other formations have not arranged tracking system under modern IT facilities to regularly review the performance of officers.

In most cases, adequate performance is not possible. FTO Secretariat also comes to know that investigation reports and case studies of few cases of alleged tax evasion were prepared and shared by directorate related to Broadening of Tax Base (BTB).



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif visited Frontier Works Organization (FWO) Headquarters in Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, International Growth Center (IGC) and Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR) hosts a seminar in Islamabad, featuring Dr. Sadiq Khan, Vice Chairman of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh. The event, organized by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Mohammad Jahanzeb Khan, focused on the "Development Journey of Bangladesh and Lessons Learnt for Pakistan."

Seminar held on development journey of Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Thursday held a seminar titled "Development Journey of Bangladesh: Lessons Learnt for Pakistan" in collaboration with International Growth Center (IGC) and Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR).

Country Director International Growth Center (IGC) Dr Ijaz Nabi, Chief Economist Zafar ul Hassan, Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman, representatives from think tanks, economic institutions, academia, private sector, civil society and various government organisations participated in the seminar, a news release said.

Vice Chairman of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh Dr Sadiq Khan gave a comprehensive presentation covering Bangladesh's early challenges, including quantitative restrictions, economic deregulation, banking reforms, trade with India, sectoral policies, special bonded warehouse systems, raw material imports, and strategies for food self-sufficiency and private investments.

Committee and Divisional Agriculture Task Force. Crop Reporting Service Divisional Director Chaudhry Mohammad Jafar, Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Rawalpindi Sadia Bano, Deputy Director Attock Shakeel Ahmed besides progressive farmers and representatives of fertilizer dealers.

EXIM Pakistan launched to catalyze global trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr Shamsad Akhtar here on Thursday formally launched the Pakistan's Export-Import Bank (EXIM), marking a significant stride towards fortifying external trade, attracting investments and propelling broader economic growth in the country.

"EXIM's operationalization is a proud moment and a major milestone for us today. It will augment the banking and trade finance landscape as we know," the finance minister remarked while speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the bank.

The minister highlighted the global impact of EXIMs, citing that these institutions disbursed a staggering \$2.5 trillion in trade finance last year, substantially fostering exports across over 60 countries and boosting export investments.

Detailing the diverse portfolio of products offered by EXIMs, Dr Akhtar emphasized the significance of export credit loans, which provided competitive-rate financing to exporters.

The minister said that the EXIM of Pakistan grew and matured it would shape Pakistan's trade finance, promoting it principally through a proper institutional framework backed by effective policies and regulatory framework.

Dr Iqar says: UAF chickpea has production potential of 25 maunds per acre

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has introduced new variety of chickpea for irrigated land, which has the potential of 25 maunds per acre production, said Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). Addressing a 16-

member delegation of 34th Senior Management Course, National Institute of Management (NIM) Lahore during their visit to UAF, he said that Pakistan spends billions of rupees on the import of chickpea and other pulses but now UAF variety would play its active role to trim down its import bill.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 245 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 245.56 points, a positive change of 0.39 percent, closing at 62,693.57 points against 62,448.01 points the previous trading day. A total of 812,383,481 shares valuing Rs.16.687 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,187,368,881 shares valuing Rs. 26.038 billion.

Commissioner directs authorities to ensure supply of fertilizers at govt rates

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi division Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to ensure the supply of fertilizers at government rates in Rawalpindi division. Commissioner Rawalpindi division Liaquat Ali Chhatta presided over the meeting of the Divisional Agriculture Advisory

IAP, SDPO agreed to take joint steps to facilitate business community

PESHAWAR (Online): Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) president Ayub Zakori and Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Hayatabad Peshawar, ASP Nayab Moiz agreed to take joint steps to improve security situation in the estate and resolution other issues, besides provision of facilities to the business community through PAL on priority basis. According to details, the SDPO Hayatabad Peshawar, ASP Nayab Moiz held a meeting with IAP president Ayub

Zakori in the association office, said in a press release here on Thursday. The meeting was attended by IAP executive member Malik Niaz, Zarak Khan, Adeel Rauf, Haris Mufti, Shayan Imtiaz, secretary general Muqtasid Ahsan and member Saad Khan Zahid. The Estate Manager KPEZDMC and SHO Hayatabad were also present in the meeting. Participants of the meeting thoroughly discussed overall security measures in the estate.

Punjab governor awards 29,456 degrees at Sargodha University convocation

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SARGODHA: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman conferred degrees upon 29,456 students at the 10th convocation of the University of Sargodha (UoS), held on Thursday.

The ceremony was significant as it marked the graduation of around 64.5 per cent girl students, out of the total student population. The ceremony was presided over by Chancellor Muhammad Balighur Rehman, accompanied by Chairman Higher Education Commission Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Vice Chancellor UoS Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas and deans of eight faculties at the convocation venue. As many as 81 PhD

degrees, 1098 MS/ MPhil/ MSc (Hons)/ LLM, 12,713 MA/MSc, 4741 BS/ BSc (Hons)/ BBA and 10,823 BA/BSc/ADP degrees were awarded to students from the faculties of Agriculture, Arts and Humanities, Computing and Information Technology, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Science and Social Sciences. Moreover, 277 students with distinctions were honoured with medals.

Governor Balighur Rehman extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and scholars, stating, "Today is a day of joy and success for the students." He expressed hope that the graduating students, through their unique research capabilities, would contribute significantly to the dignity of institutions,

teachers, and the value of degrees earned."

He emphasised the fortune of Pakistan, boasting a large youth population, stating that the youth are the most valuable asset for any nation. Furthermore, the governor highlighted the imperative use of fact checking in era of disinformation to counter the exposure of youth with false narratives across digital platforms. He applauded the efforts of University of Sargodha in skill development of the students. He appreciated efforts of the Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qaisar Abbas to promote academic culture with emphasis on commercialization of the ideas generated by students.



SARGODHA: Chancellor University of Sargodha Governor Punjab, Mohammad Baligh-Ur-Rehman and VC University of Sargodha Pro Dr Qaisar Abbas distributing degrees during 10th Convocation of the University.

Governor KP highlights rule of law for social, economic development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday said that supremacy of rule of law was prerequisite for economic development of a country and establishing society on firm foundations.

He was addressing a ceremony in Centre for Learning Law and Business (CLLB). The ceremony was also attended by Advocate General, Amir Javaid, Secretary Higher Education Regulatory Authority, Sajid Inam, lawyers, students and faculty members.

On the occasion, the

Governor was informed that the center is affiliated with University of London and the students of CLLB would be issued degree from the University.

Addressing the ceremony, the Governor highlighted the significance of rule of law and said that it was the prerequisite for social and economic development.

He said that the role of lawyers community in our judicial system could not be undermined and added that law students should also be informed about their role in existing judicial system.

He urged the students

to further polish their abilities and skills and play role to improve status of country among world nations. Youngsters are assets of the country and they must work in cohesion with a purpose for country's development, he expressed.

The KP Governor said that justice, peace, knowledge and conscious were the factors that derive strength from justice and supremacy of law in a society. He also lauded the administration of CLLB for organizing the co-curricular activities and assured his cooperation to faculty members.

GB gov't forms committee to address the issues of journalists

GILGIT (APP): The government of Gilgit Baltistan has formed a high-level committee under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Syed Sohail Abbas to enact comprehensive legislation on the pattern of other provinces to protect

the rights of journalists and solve their main grievances.

A notification has been issued in this connection. The high-level committee form on the special orders of the Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan.

Police seized smuggled petrol, diesel

PESHAWAR (APP): Saddar Police in a successful operation has seized a significant quantity of smuggled petrol and diesel. The seized fuel, suspected to be non-custom paid, was illegally transported from Iran.

Saddar Police Station has effectively cracked down on the smuggling of Iranian diesel and petrol.

Punjab CM gives approval to construction, repairing of 2600km roads

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has given approval to the building and repairing of 2,600-kilometre roads in Punjab.

More than 105 roads of best quality will be constructed, repaired and expanded in different districts.

A report on road's rehabilitation project was presented in special meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister said that construction of roads, rehabilitation and completion of expansion projects are indispensable

needs of the people. He said that the construction, repair and maintenance of roads will not only ease the traffic but also flow in the traffic.

In the meeting, Secretary C&W Sohail Anwar gave a briefing on the progress on road construction and rehabilitation. It was briefed that about 104 road construction, repair and maintenance projects were pending.

In less than a year, 104 roads projects will be completed with excellence. The construction, expansion and maintenance projects of 104 roads of the province will cost around Rs150 billion.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, Ladislav Steinhübel along with others take keen interest historical Masjid Mahabat Khan during visiting in Peshawar.

Minister chairs meeting to review Tourism Dept's initiatives, future plans

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Culture, Tourism, Archeology and Museum, Barrister Firoze Jamal Shah Kakakhel chaired a review meeting at the office Secretary Tourism here Thursday.

The meeting focused on evaluating the performance of the Tourism Department, ongoing projects and the road map for future endeavors.

During the meeting, Secretary Tourism, Mutahir Zeb gave a detailed briefing, shedding light on the

progress of Integrated Tourism Zones and the identification and development of new tourist destinations within the province. He emphasized ongoing efforts to enhance infrastructure, ensuring improved tourism facilities for visitors. He highlighted the commitment to the welfare of artists, announcing plans to revise the Artist Welfare Endowment Fund Act Rules. He stressed on more effectively on proposed amendments to address challenges faced by artists in the province.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presides over the special meeting to review progress on Roads Projects.

Czech Republic envoy visits city, explores cultural heritage

PESHAWAR (APP): The Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, Ladislav Steinhübel along with his spouse, embarked on a captivating journey to Peshawar, leaving an indelible mark on their visit to the city on Thursday.

The purpose of their visit was to delve into the rich cultural heritage of Peshawar. Their sojourn in the city allowed them to explore various historical and cultural landmarks, encompassing significant sites such as Masjid Mahabat Khan, the famed

antiques market at Asamai Gate adjacent to Sarafa Bazar, Qissa Khwani Bazar, Tehsil Gor Gathri, and Sethi House.

As guests of the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, His Excellency Ladislav Steinhübel and his wife expressed immense delight in immersing themselves in the rich history and heritage of Peshawar. Their visit to Masjid Mahabat Khan included a warm reception by the Son of Maulana Taryab Qureshi.

May 9 cases: ATC issues non bailable arrest warrants of 51 PTI leaders

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has issued non-bailable arrest warrants of 51 leaders of PTI including Murad Saeed, Hammad Azhar, Farrukh Habib and Ali Amin Gandapore in May 9 cases.

The court has issued arrest warrants in attack on Gujranwala cantt and May 9 siege and arsons cases on the request of police.

The police told the court that the accused are nominated in case and are absconding to avert arrest.

International News

Israeli aggression, martyrs cross 20,000, all northern Gaza hospitals inactive

GAZA/New York (Online): The number of Palestinian martyrs has reached 20,000 in the brutal attacks of Israel on Gaza since October 7.

All hospitals in northern Gaza became inactive. According to the officials of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 20,000 Palestinians, including 8,000 children and 6,200 women, have been martyred by Israel's continuous bombing of Gaza.

According to foreign media, Israel's attacks continue on Gaza. 46 people were martyred in one day due to the Israeli bombardment on the Jabalia refugee camp. 66% of Palestinians have also lost their jobs due to Israeli brutality.

Meanwhile, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political office of Hamas based in Qatar, arrived in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, for negotiations on a new ceasefire in Gaza, where his talks with the Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel and others are scheduled.

It should be noted that Ismail Haniyeh also met Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in Doha before arriving in Cairo, in which the situation in Gaza and the West Bank was discussed.

On the other hand, voting on the resolution submitted to the United Nations (UN) regarding the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza was postponed

for the third time. Voting on the resolution was postponed due to the fear of the US vetoing the resolution in favor of Israel.

On the other hand, the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that all hospitals in northern Gaza have become inactive due to continuous Israeli bombardment, cut off of fuel supply, lack of staff and supplies.

Palestinian Red Crescent said that Israeli forces are continuously seizing charity ambulances in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

According to the Red Crescent, intense shelling and sniper firing by the Israeli army is also ongoing in the area.



MEXICO: A view of damaged buildings due to Hurricane Otis made landfall near Acapulco.

Gaza children getting just 10 percent of daily water requirement: UNICEF

UNITED NATIONS (APP): With UN Security Council members still unable to agree on a ceasefire resolution, mainly over U.S. objections, the head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned that without safe water, "many more children" in war-battered Gaza will soon die from the disease.

"Access to sufficient amounts of clean water is a matter of life and death...children in Gaza have barely a drop to drink," UNICEF Executive Director Catherine Russell

warned in a statement on Wednesday.

"Children and their families are having to use water from unsafe sources that are highly salinated or polluted. Without safe water, many more children will die from deprivation and disease in the coming days."

The humanitarian alert came after more than 10 weeks of Israel's near-constant bombardment of the enclave that has resulted in the killing of 20,000 Palestinians and injuries to over 50,000.

India's debt may exceed 100pc of GDP: IMF warns

NEW DELHI (INP): The International Monetary Fund has warned India that its government debt may exceed 100% of its gross domestic product, or GDP, in the medium term.

The IMF also cautioned that long-term debt sustainability risks are high due to the significant investment required to meet India's climate change mitigation targets, Indian media reported.

The IMF in its annual Article IV consultation report said, long-term risks are high because considerable investment is required to reach India's climate change mitigation targets and improve resilience to climate stresses and natural disasters.

This suggests that new and preferably concessional sources of financing are needed, as well as greater private sector investment and carbon pricing or equivalent mechanism, it said. "A sharp global growth slowdown in the near term would affect India through trade and financial channels.



NEW YORK: A view of meeting of Security Council regarding Afghanistan at UN Office.

Modi says India is 'ready to look into' plot to kill Sikh leader in US

NEW DELHI (INP): In what seems to be the acceptance of India's involvement in international terrorism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will investigate any evidence provided regarding the plot to kill a Sikh leader in the US.

The US Justice Department last month charged an Indian citizen with plotting to assassinate a Sikh leader on the US soil, maintaining an Indian government official was also involved in the planning.

"If someone gives us

any information, we would definitely look into it," Modi said in a Financial Times interview published Wednesday, in his first comments on the issue.

"If a citizen of ours has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law."

Modi's comments come after the White House said it was treating an alleged plot to assassinate a Sikh leader in the US with "utmost seriousness," and had raised the issue with the Indian government.

Ukraine's citizen army struggles with a hidden enemy: combat stress

Monitoring Desk
DONETSK REGION: Psychotherapist Oleh Hukovskiy stands beside a white board in a makeshift classroom in eastern Ukraine and addresses a group of soldiers attending a session on how to cope with the stress of war.

The former psychiatrist joined the armed forces about six months after Russia launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022, and now runs

a psychological support group attached to the 67th Separate Mechanised Brigade in the direction of the ruined town of Lyman.

The classes cover basic psychological theory and coping techniques including breathing exercises.

While the dozen soldiers attending are responsive to questions and suggestions, Hukovskiy is aware he can only do so much in the time provided.

Food assistance of UN's WFP suspended in parts of Sudan temporarily

SUDAN (INP): The food assistance of the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) has been suspended in temporarily in some parts of Sudan's state of Gezira as fighting spreads south and east of Sudan's capital Khartoum. The statement issued by WFP said that around 300,000 people have fled Gezira in a matter of days, since clashes erupted last week on Friday.

WFP has put food deliveries on hold in some locations in Gezira, said Eddie Rowe, WFP's representative and country director in Sudan.

Biden looks to secure Black support in visit to Wisconsin

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will announce a Black-owned business coalition could win funding to revive downtown Milwaukee on a visit to Wisconsin on Wednesday, as he looks to shore up support in a state that may prove pivotal to his re-election chances in 2024. Biden will visit the Milwaukee Black Chamber of Commerce to discuss what the White House.

China starts erecting temporary housing units after earthquake destroyed 14,000 homes

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Hundreds of temporary one-room housing units were being set up Thursday in northwest China for survivors of an earthquake that destroyed more than 14,000 homes and killed at least 135 people, according to state media reports.

Twelve people remained missing in an area hit by mudslides that inundated two villages, the reports said. Search teams were using excavators to dig out a thick sea of mud that covered roads and encased and blocked entry to buildings.

State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of

cranes lifting white, box-like housing units and lining them up in an open field in Meipo, a village in Gansu province. About 260 had been erected, and the total in the village was expected to reach 500 across nine sites by Friday morning.

The arrival of the prefabricated units was a sign that many of the more than 87,000 people resettled after the Monday night earthquake may be homeless for some time.

Many have been enduring temperatures well below freezing in flimsier tent-like units with blue plastic sheeting on the outside and a quilted cotton lining inside.



GAZA: People busy in relief activities after air strike by Israeli forces in Rafah.

New version of COVID rapidly spread in India, hundreds new cases emerged

NEW DELHI (Online): New type of corona virus JN1 has spread panic in India. 358 new cases have been reported in last 24 hours, out of which 21 are related to the new type.

According to the national news agency, 3000 new cases of corona virus have been reported across the country so far.

In view of the increasing gravity of the situation, states have been directed to be vigilant. In a statement issued by the Indian Ministry of Health, it has been said that the first case of the new type of corona virus, JN1, was reported in the southern state of Kerala. Three

deaths have been reported in Kerala.

Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are among the states that have reported cases of JN1. Statement further said that the number of deaths due to corona virus in India is 5 lacs 33 thousand, 327. Number of Indian citizens affected by different types of corona virus has now reached more than 4 crore 44 lacs 70 thousand.

The recovery rate is 98.81 percent.

The statement said that all states were urged to remain alert so that the new type of corona virus does not take a dangerous form.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi cutting a cake at the Christmas Celebration Ceremony 2023 at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Govt. fully committed to ensure peace, equal rights for all communities: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has reiterated that the government is fully committed to ensure peace, tranquility and equal rights to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion as enunciated in the Islamic teaching, pronounced by Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah and laid down by the Constitution of Pakistan.

He said that being an Islamic welfare state, it was their duty to safeguard the basic rights of all religious minorities and reassured that their all rights would be completely protected at all costs as the successive governments had been making strenuous efforts in this regard.

Addressing a ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in connection with the celebrations of Christmas, the president said Prophet Isa (AS) was an embodiment of peace and affection and these values were much needed in today's world shaken by strife, conflicts and wars.

He said that teachings of Islam as well as by almost all religions laid emphasis upon the value of human life and when its value was reduced, it gave rise to conflicts. "Wars and carnage are no solutions. My message to the world is: wars must end," he stressed.

The ceremony was arranged by the ministry of religious affairs and inter-faith harmony was attended by parliamentarians, religious leaders and members from different faiths, members of diplomatic corps and a large number of Christian families.

The president referring to atrocities in Gaza, said contrary to the religious teaching of peace and tolerance, the scenes in the world were topsy-turvy. About 19,000 precious human lives in Gaza had been lost but the human hearts had not melted, he added.

He opined that despite the United Nations' calling for immediate ceasefire and a denunciation by the Pope himself, the carnage of Palestinians including Christians continued where churches besides, mosques were razed to the ground.

The enlightened world advocating the tenets of democratic values was so oblivious to the humanitarian woes in the conflict, he added.

He said when Pakistan Resolution was passed during 1940, a simultaneous resolution over Palestine was also adopted and reaffirmed that the two-state was the only solution to the issue.

Palestine crisis worries global community: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Thursday that the current situation of Palestine was a cause of concern not only for the Muslim Ummah but also for the civilized nations of the world. During a meeting with Jordanian Ambassador Dr. Maen Khreasat who met with him here, the minister said that peace in Palestine was the responsibility of the whole world.

"International community should play a role for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine," Murtaza Solangi said.

Besides, ceasefire between Palestine and Israel, coming elections in Pakistan and Jordan, regional security situation, cooperation in the media sectors and other important issues were discussed during the meeting. In the meeting, both the minister and Ambassador expressed concern over the tense situation in Palestine.

Expressing complete solidarity with the Palestinian people, Murtaza Solangi said that Jordan's role in aid activities in Palestine was commendable. The Jordanian Ambassador said that a humanitarian crisis was brewing in Gaza due to lack of food. Solangi said that Pakistan valued its relations with Jordan as the two countries had deep ties based on religion, common values and culture. The caretaker minister briefed the Jordanian Ambassador about the progress towards the general elections in Pakistan.

Elections would be

held across the country on February 8 next year in Pakistan, Murtaza Solangi adding the Election Commission of Pakistan had already released the election schedule. He said all registered political parties were provided 54 days for election campaign.

The Caretaker Government, he said was providing all possible support and facilities to the ECP to ensure the conduct of free, transparent and impartial elections. Murtaza Solangi expressed his best wishes for the successful completion of the election process in Jordan next year. He expressed the hope that a new era of relations between the two countries would begin with the governments established as a result of the electoral process in Jordan and Pakistan.

Welfare of youth, government's top priority: PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday terming the young generation as future of the nation, said that the welfare of the youth was top priority of the government.

Chairing a meeting of Prime Minister Youth Programme here, the prime minister directed that the disbursement of loans under the Prime Minister's Youth Program should be done with utmost care and responsibility.

He further directed that the youth of the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given special attention in PM Youth schemes.

The prime minister ordered to evolve a special strategy to achieve the desired results of the skill development schemes. PM Kakar directed that training programmes should also be started for master trainers regarding skill development to increase their capacity and to impart quality training to others. During the meeting, the prime minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the PM's Youth Program.

It was informed that 550,000 people had been trained under the PM Skill Development Program since 2013 while some 56,000 more people would be trained mostly in high-tech skills in the next phase.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani in a meeting with the Director General of International Organisation of Migration Ms. Amy Pope.

DG IOM calls on Secretary Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General International Organization of Migration (IOM) Amy Pope on Thursday called on Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani and discussed issues of mutual interest.

He thanked the DG International Organization of Immigration for its outstanding support to the Government of Pakistan and assured full cooperation from NADRA, FIA and Passport and Immigration Departments at various levels.

He said that the Ministry of Interior will also need IOM's support in border management in future. Both of them reiterated their commitment to full cooperation.

The interior secretary informed DG IOM that the return of foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan will continue and so far, more than 500,000 people have returned to their homeland, out of which more than ninety percent have returned voluntarily.

Durrani said, "We are seeking dignified repatriation of all illegal and undocumented aliens."

The process was being ensured that no harassment of any kind was done against any individual, the Government of Pakistan has a zero-tolerance policy in this matter, he added.

Canadian HC calls on Jalil

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Canada Leslie Scanlon called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Thursday.

During the meeting, they discussed various aspects of Pakistan-Canada bilateral relations and facilitation by the Pakistani government for the resettlement process of Afghan nationals to Canada.

The Canadian High Commissioner thanked the foreign minister for Pakistan's assistance in the resettlement process.

Recruitment case: Parvez Elahi's judicial remand extended

LAHORE (Online): Judicial remand of former Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in case of illegal recruitment in Punjab Assembly was further extended.

Judicial Magistrate of Lahore Local Court Imran Abid heard the case of illegal recruitment in Punjab Assembly against Ch Pervaiz Elahi.

Ch Pervaiz Elahi was not produced in the Lahore court in district Kutcheri after completion of judicial remand, however the jail authorities submitted the warrant of the accused in the court.

Court extended the judicial remand of Pervaiz Elahi till January 4, 2023 and adjourned the hearing of the case.

Committee proposes amendments in Judicial Commission's rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Committee constituted to Review Judicial Commission of Pakistan rules 2010, has proposed amendments in various areas.

The meeting of the Committee was held on 16th December, 2023, under the co-chairmanship of Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice (Retired) Manzoor Ahmed Malik with mandate to propose such rules of procedure for the Commission in making appointments of the Judges of the Constitutional Courts of the country, that comply with the collegial and inclusive decision-making process enshrined in Article 175-A of the Constitution, said a press release issued on Thursday.

The important areas of consideration for proposing amendments in the 2010 Rules includes, process for convening meetings of the Commission and making decisions therein, initiation of nomination(s) in the Supreme Court, initiation of nomination(s) in the High Courts, adequate representation of the District Judiciary and the Bar for elevation, diversity, criteria for selection for appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts, confirmation of Additional Judges in the High Courts and establishment of a Secretariat of the Commission, appointment of the Secretary and other staff thereto.

Sherry says: No possibility of seat adjustment with JUI-F

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman said on Thursday that there was 'no possibility of seat adjustment with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F), as it did not want general elections to be held on time.

"The JUI-F was part of the collusion government; however, this time the situation is different, but PPP doors are always open to other political opponents," she told a private news channel.

Sherry reiterated that her party would launch a vigorous electoral campaign from Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

on December 27, on the death anniversary of BB Shaheed.

She said that the PPP was the only party that stresses the need for holding timely elections in the country.

The other political parties in the country are seemingly running away from the polls.

She deplored that different tactics were used in the past to create rifts in her party, their all attempts went in vein, and the PPP raised the slogan 'Pakistan Khappay' (Long live Pakistan). "We would never let anyone break Sindh," said Sherry.



ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with Jordanian Ambassador, H.E. Maen Khreasat.

ECP rules out KPBC's statement about reduction of NA seats in KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan on Thursday ruled out the statement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) regarding reduction of National Assembly seats in the province. Terming the statement as baseless and contrary to facts, the ECP said it was meant to create confusion in the minds of the people.

The erstwhile FATA was merged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018 in light of the 25th Constitutional Amendment. The Commission said adding that 12 National Assembly seats of FATA were abolished and instead six seats of the Lower House were reserved for that area.

The ECP said those six seats were added to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's quota, raising the province's representation from 39 to

45 seats in the National Assembly. Similarly, sixteen general seats were increased in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly after which the number of seats surged from 99 to 115.

The Election Commission made it clear that increasing or decreasing seats of national and provincial assemblies is not possible without amending the Constitution, which is a sole prerogative of the Parliament. It said the ECP is performing its duties according to the constitution and law without any pressure. Regarding another matter, the ECP also made it clear that it takes all decisions with mutual consultation and as per law. It said all the four members of the commission has reposed their unwavering trust in the Chief Election Commissioner.



QUETTA: Provincial Project Director MSF Ms. Ivy Bojmic meeting with Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem.

Hand grenade attack on former Chief Justice Saqib house, case registered

LAHORE (Online): In the FIR of the hand grenade attack on the house of former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, the Lahore Police has suspected a banned organization.

CTD has registered a case of hand grenade attack on former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar's house in Garden Town area of Lahore on the complaint of Constable Sajjad Hussain. The FIR has been registered under terrorism and other provisions.

In the registered FIR, it has been stated that 3 persons Constable Amir Ali, Khurram Shahzad and Sajjad Hussain were injured in the hand grenade attack.

According to the text of the FIR, the windows of 2 vehicles were broken in the attack. A hand grenade

was thrown at a vehicle parked between the garage and the yard.

The text of the FIR states that the attackers seem to belong to a banned organization.

It is pertinent to say that the former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar's residence was attacked yesterday with a hand grenade, as a result of which 3 people were injured.

According to the police, a cracker thrown by unknown motorcycle-riding accused fell in the garage of the former chief justice and damaged the vehicle parked there. The windows were broken by the blast.

The police said that the family members of the former chief justice are safe.

Cold, dry weather forecast for Balochistan

QUETTA (APP)-The Met Office has forecast cold weather with partly cloudy in most parts of the province while isolated light rain, drizzle might occur during late night hours in some areas including Lasbella, Khaudar, Dera Bugti, Bolan, Mastung, Quetta Ziarat and surroundings areas during next 24 hours. According to the Met Office, the minimum temperature in Quetta was recorded at -3.5 degree centigrade and -2.6 degree centigrade in Quetta on Thursday.

After JUI-F and MQM-P PML-N also seeks extension in nomination papers filing deadline

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Ishaq Dar says ECP enjoys power to make necessary amendments in election schedule.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Thursday sought a two-day extension in the December 22 deadline to file nomination papers for the general elections scheduled for February 8 next year.

A day earlier, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Paki-

stan (MQM-P) also wrote to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), seeking an extension in date for filing nomination papers by three days.

In a letter written to the electoral authority, PML-N Senator Ishaq Dar said the commission enjoys the power to make necessary amendments to the election schedule without affecting or changing the polling date which for the present election is Feb 8, 2024.



KARACHI: Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgazi meeting with Caretaker Health Minister Sindh Saad Niaz.

IHC reserves judgment on petition seeking postponement of gen election

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has reserved judgment on the petition seeking postponement of general election.

The petition seeking court's order for postponement of general election till the scrutiny of fake National Identity Cards (NIC) of Afghan refugees came up for hearing before single bench of IHC led by Chief Justice (CJ) Aamer Farooq Thursday.

The petitioner Aftab Alam appeared in the court along with his counsel 'Malik Akhtar Abbas.

Maryam Nawaz decides to contest elections on NA-119 in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President Maryam Nawaz decided to contest elections from NA-119, a constituency in Lahore.

The move placed Maryam Nawaz at the forefront of a politically significant battleground as previously PTI activist Sanam Javed challenged her to contest election against her on a provincial seat of PP-150. Captain retired Saifdar Awan, the husband of Maryam Nawaz, confirmed the decision.

She received her nomination papers. The initiation

of the nomination paper collection process marked a pivotal moment in the prelude to the elections, with political and social figures actively securing their candidacy forms from the Election Commission offices across the country. In Lahore and various other districts, the PML-N's candidates, including Maryam Nawaz have commenced the formalities of obtaining their nomination papers from the dedicated Returning Officers' offices. Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N Supremo decided to contest elections from NA-15, Manshehra.

DC Kachhi chairs meeting for finalizing of election's preparations

QUETTA (APP) Deputy Commissioner (Kachhi) Kachhi Captain Retired Jameel Ahmed Baloch chaired a meeting of officers in connection with the preparations for the general elections.

District Election Commissioner, Police, Levies and FC officers participated in the meeting, who made security and other arrangements on the occasion of general elections.

In the meeting about the measures, election security, election arrangements, election polling stations, situation in A area and B area were discussed in detail.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Jameel Ahmed Baloch said that security arrangements

should be made on the occasion of general elections, Levies personnel would also be posted in B area saying that all possible steps would be taken to finalize the orders of the Election Commission of Pakistan on the occasion of the election and leave no stone unturned in the polling booth and other arrangements regarding the election that have not been made yet should be completed.

He said that on the occasion of general elections, Police, FC and Levies would perform their duties in different areas, so that no deviation of any kind would affect the election process, whatever instructions to be given to us by the Election Commission of Pakistan in this regard.

Nawaz Sharif obtains nomination papers from NA-130 in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif has received nomination papers from NA-130 constituency in Lahore to contest the February 8 general elections.

According to media reports, PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif will also contest election from NA-123 constituency of Lahore and the provincial assembly seat. Maryam Nawaz Sharif will contest from NA-119, sources added. It stated that Maryam Nawaz Sharif will also contest the election from the provincial constituency.

On the other hand, Hamza Shehbaz received nomination papers from NA-118. Nawaz Sharif had also obtained nomination papers from NA-15 in Manshehra, his son-in-law

Captain Muhammad Saifdar told reporters on Wednesday. "Nawaz Sharif will be our election candidate from NA-15 (Manshehra-II). He will become the prime minister as an elected representative of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Saifdar added.

He said Amir Muqam would be the PML-N's choice for KP chief minister, whereas his wife, Maryam Nawaz, is the party's candidate for the Punjab CM office. A formal announcement in this regard would be made later, he added. Mr Saifdar, who previously contested polls from NA-15, said he would not contest elections this time as he wanted to become a senator. "I will never decline the party's offer for a Senate ticket," he said.