

Independent

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Progress, prosperity of people of Balochistan among priorities of government, says PM

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar for according significance to climate resilience, finance aspects in Balochistan hydro projects; Directs for expediting the matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Tuesday stressed upon focusing the climate resilience and climate finance aspects in all the water projects of Balochistan and reiterated that progress and prosperity of the people of province were among the top priorities of the government.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting on the important matters pertaining to the Balochistan province. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki, Education Minister Dr Qadir Baloch and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir, Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Sami Saeed,

Caretaker Federal Minister for Law and Water Resources Irfan Aslam, and relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The chief secretary gave a briefing over different projects of the province. The prime minister further directed for expediting the matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi and observed that with its construction, the different parts of the country would get an alternate leeway, besides strengthening of the linkages. He also asked for an immediate resolution of the financial issues faced by the universities in the province.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on matters related to Balochistan.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacting with Heads of various Navies during 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in Bangkok, Thailand

CNS emphasizes collaboration among regional navies for maritime security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Thailand to attend eighth Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs at Bangkok.

The event involved panel discussions on issues related to cooperation in maritime security of Indian Ocean and Blue Economy ways forward for sustainable development of IONS members, a Pakistan Navy news release said on Tuesday.

During the IONS Conclave of Chiefs, bilateral meetings between Chief of the Naval Staff and naval leadership of IONS member states were also held.

The CNS called on Commander of Qatar Emiri Naval Forces, C-in-C of Royal Thai Navy, Deputy C-in-C of Russian Navy, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman, CNS of French Navy, Commander of Iranian Navy, Fleet Commander of Royal

Navy, UK and Vice Chief of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and discussed matters of mutual interest. Admiral Naveed Ashraf focused on PN contributions to regional maritime security and emphasized on collaboration between the regional navies to enhance maritime security of the region.

He also stressed upon greater collaboration between Indian Ocean countries to exploit potentials of blue economy.



LAHORE: PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif presiding over 16th meeting of Parliamentary Board.

Mehmood Achakzai & Lashkari to contest from NA-263:

Scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates continues in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The process of scrutiny of the nomination papers of the candidates is continued for the provincial and national assemblies on second consecutive day, Tuesday.

According to the sources of Provincial Election Commissioner office, the scrutiny of papers of some 240 candidates has been completed during last two days.

On second day, the nomination papers of leader

of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party, Nawab Ayaz Khan Jogezeai and leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Governor Balochistan, Syed Zahoor Agha were found corrected. They had filed nomination papers for NA-262, Quetta-I.

Similarly, the nomination papers of PKMAP chairman, Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani were also found corrected for NA-263, Quetta-II.

Syed Farooq Shah expresses grief Deputy Director DGPR Hazrat Ali passes away

Independent Report
QUETTA: Deputy Director, Directorate General of Public Relations Balochistan Hazrat Ali passed away here on Tuesday. He was laid to rest at Mehmoodabad graveyard.

He was brother of Daulat Khan, photographer DGPR and father of Master Saadullah, Dr. Naseebullah, Niamatullah and Qudratullah.

His Fateha khawani is continue at Haji Sardar Gul Jama Khushhal Road Street No. 1, Achakzai Colony Pashtoonabad Quetta.

Meanwhile the Chief Editor Independent Group of Newspapers Syed Muhammad Farooq Shah



has extended his condolence on the demise of Hazrat Ali.

In a statement, he expressed profound grief over the death of Hazrat Ali. He prayed that May Almighty Allah rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give the bereaved family the courage and patience to bear the loss.

PHC suspends ECP verdict revoking bat as PTI election symbol

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision of declaring the PTI's intra-party polls as unconstitutional and the revocation of its election symbol 'bat' till the final verdict on its petition.

The single-member bench comprising Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel announced the verdict which it had reserved on the petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf against the ECP's decision earlier in the day.

During the course of proceedings, Justice Miankhel observed that the general elections were about to take place on February 8, 2024, and that the last date for allotting the election symbols was January 13.

He said that the arguments of all the parties involved in the case were heard. PTI lawyers, including Barrister Ali Zafar pleaded that the intra-party polls were carried out on the orders of the ECP and the latter's December 22 decision might be declared illegal.

They argued that according to the Constitution, any citizen could form a party or be a member of any party.

Murtaza Solangi says Govt to explore legal options to redress journalist layoffs issue

Workers' forced dismissal from media houses unacceptable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said the government would explore maximum options to redress the problems of journalist fraternity, and seek legal action, in accordance with the Constitution, to restrict forced job layoffs of media persons.

Talking to the media after the walkout of journalist during the 334th session of the Senate in the press gallery, he expressed full solidarity with the journalist community regarding the forced dismissal by some media houses. Solangi said the legal provisions would be explored to take punitive action and extend support to safeguard the rights of media workers.

"I stand with journalists and media workers; the issue of forced dismissals of journalists is not acceptable," he said. He said he had an earlier discussion with the Chairman of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) regarding the forced dismissal of journalists and media workers.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi talking with media men.

National conference calls to promote interfaith harmony in country

KARACHI (APP): The Department of International Relations of the University of Karachi in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony organized a national conference on "bridging beliefs: interfaith harmony in Pakistan", at the KU Chinese Teachers Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday.

The conference called to promote the interfaith harmony culture in the country and emphasizes the importance of interfaith harmony, tolerance, love, dialogue, acceptance, and respect for all religions and faiths.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, in his address as the chief guest said that every person in the country condemned the incident of Jaranwala Town in Faisalabad district which was reported in August 2023. He recalled that our

scholars opened the doors of mosques for the Christian community and that gave a positive message to the world.

The minister asked the audience to play their role in promoting interfaith harmony culture in their social circle so that conspiracies against our motherland can be foiled on every platform.

This is the first program arranged by the Ministry at any educational institution, he added. The federal minister stressed the importance of refraining from using the term 'minority' for other religions, asserting that citizens of all faiths are equal in Pakistan. Recalling Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's words, he reiterated the principle of freedom for churches, mosques, and temples in Pakistan.

The speakers of the conference urged that it would play a key part in developing a society that will not allow intolerance at any level.

Balochistan people stand beside Pak Army to thwart enemies' nefarious designs: Achakzai

QUETTA (APP)- Balochistan Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai on Tuesday said that the people of Balochistan stood beside the Pakistan Army which was thwarting the nefarious design of enemies for maintaining peace in the country.

Addressing a press conference at Quetta press Club, the Minister said that Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir was backing the government in efforts to improve the national economy.

Jan Achakzai said that Balochistan government under the leadership of Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali



Mardan Khan Domki was trying to solve the problems of the people of Chaman.

He said that at least 20 thousand rupees per month would be given to the unemployed youth of Chaman by accepting the long-standing demand of the unemployed youth

of Chaman while payment would be made after registering of youth.

Mr. Jan Achakzai said that Sarfaraz Bengulzai and others were included in the national mainstream which was positive sign of the province saying that Bolan Express was grateful to the government for its restoration.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul Haq Kakar had directed Pakistan Railways, thanks to which the problem has been resolved, he said.

Jan Achakzai said that the ticket for Bolan Mail train from Quetta to Karachi is 2200 rupees, which is reasonable.

Seven former Chief Ministers in election field

QUETTA (INP): Seven former chief ministers of Balochistan contesting in upcoming general elections scheduled on February 08. Former chief minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal contesting election on National as well as Balochistan Assembly seats.

Another ex-chief minister Nawab Aslam Khan Raisani running for a Balochistan Assembly seat on the JUI ticket. Former chief ministers Dr. Malik Baloch and

Nawab Sanaullah Zehri of People's Party have also been in the election field.

Former BAP chief minister of Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan now contesting election on the PML-N ticket. Incumbent Speaker of Balochistan Assembly and former chief minister Jan Mohammad Jamali also contesting election. Former caretaker chief minister of the province Sardar Saleh Mohammad Bhotani contesting election from his traditional constituency.

Defence Ministry submits reply in audio leak case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday submitted its reply with the Islamabad High Court (IHC) regarding the audio leak case involving Bushra Bibi and the son of former Chief Justice of Pkistan Saqib Nisar.

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar heard the case.

The ministry, in its one-page reply, stated that several inexpensive accessories and tools were readily available in the market, simplifying the process of intercepting audio during phone calls. It further pointed out that some platforms also offered such services for a fee, and the content of the audios could also be altered with the use of artificial intelligence. The ministry said that only social media platforms could provide the source of the recordings posted on them.

It mentioned that the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was the competent authority to obtain information from the social media platforms under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (ret) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali in a meeting with Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh

Amanullah Kanrani says Bureaucracy third big pillar of state & civil servants are agents of real charge

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs and Prosecution, Amanullah Kanrani has stated that the bureaucracy is the third big pillar of state and the civil servants are the agent of real change because they enforce the policies at the lower level.

The caretaker Provincial Minister was speaking to the Certificates awarding ceremony among the 2nd Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) graduates of Balochistan Civil Services Academy held at Governor House Quetta on Tuesday.

The ceremony was attended by Senior Bureaucrats, Senior Academicians, Members of Corporate Sector and Media Representatives.

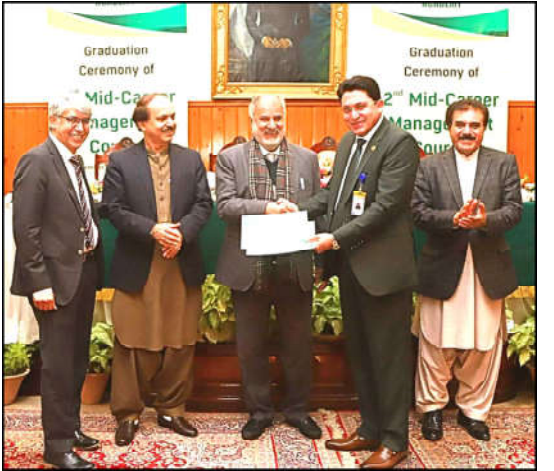
Balochistan Civil Services Academy held its 2nd graduation ceremony of 26 Mid-Career Trainee Officers.

ers in Governor House Quetta in which the graduating officers were from Balochistan Civil Services Group, Balochistan Secretariate Services Group, Agriculture and Forest Department and Local Government Department were awarded the certificates on completion of the course.

Mr. Amanullah Kanrani, Minister, Law & Parliamentary Affairs and Prosecution attended as the chief guest of the event.

While addressing he said, "Bureaucracy is the third pillar of the state and civil servants are the real change-agents since they implement the policy at grass root level".

Earlier, Hafeez Ahmed Jamali, Director General, BCSA said that BCSA is an indigenous academy which is providing the landscape of service delivery through the training of mid-career officers.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Amanullah Kanrani distributing certificates among participants of 2nd Mid-Career Management Course

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Nominations done

From a state of uncertainty only a couple of weeks ago centring on the question of whether or not the general elections would take place, the poll process is now firmly moving forward.

Nominations for both the federal and provincial legislatures wrapped up on Sunday evening, with big guns representing the mainstream political parties throwing their hats into the ring. Meanwhile, the migratory tribe of 'electables' is also present in the contest, offering their services to those believed to have the blessings of the powers that be. Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari, Imran Khan, Fazlur Rehman, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari — all mainstays of the political landscape — have filed their nomination papers, though PTI hopefuls have repeatedly said obstacles are being placed in their way.

From here onwards, parties are expected to switch to election mode, and this requires them to communicate their programme for Pakistan's uplift to voters. It should be remembered that elections are not a popularity contest, as people expect solutions to their myriad problems from the parties vying for their votes.

In this regard, it is a matter of concern that most mainstream parties, with the exception of Jamaat-i-Islami, have not yet released their election manifestos. Perhaps the parties themselves were not expecting the polls to take place on Feb 8, hence their lethargy in finalising their policy proposals in the form of manifestos. But, as the Supreme Court has said, no more delays will be tolerated and the polls are to take place on schedule. Therefore, the parties need to release their manifestos soon. It is true that unlike in many mature democracies, the politics of clan and ethnicity still dominate Pakistan's political culture, meaning that a fair percentage of voters will care little about party programmes.

Yet it must also be said that younger and more tech-savvy voters will demand answers from the parties to their problems, and will be swayed less by cults of personality, or how their respective clans/tribes vote.

Parties have a moral obligation to inform the people of Pakistan — in both dusty villages and the sprawling cities — how they intend to fix the economy, improve healthcare and education, bring down crime, etc. Hollow promises should not be enough; firm policy is required.

Meanwhile, as has been mentioned in these columns, it is essential that the electoral exercise has legitimacy. And this cannot be achieved when one party is being excluded from the democratic process. The state's attempts to cancel the PTI must cease, and all parties need to have a level playing field during elections. Let the people of Pakistan decide who is to steer the ship of state for the next five years. Political manoeuvring has never worked, and will only exacerbate our multiple crises.

Unjustified stigma



Ali Burhan Mustafa

Pakistan is grappling with the stigma surrounding mental health. A social fabric steeped in tradition often finds itself at odds with the critical need for progressive mental healthcare solutions.

This clash is exacerbated by misguided reliance on shamans and archaic spiritual rituals, propelled by misinterpreted religious doctrines, rather than scientific psychiatric intervention. This dependence on traditional healers, especially in impoverished areas, perpetuates the stigma.

Child sexual abuse in Pakistan, with its dismal conviction rates, casts a long shadow over our human rights record. Chilling statistics from organisations like Sahil, reveal thousands of cases with a conviction rate of less than two per cent.

Despite initiatives like the Zainab Alert Bill and national sex offender registries, the acute scarcity of child psychiatrists and underdevelopment of specialised branches, such as forensic and community psychiatry, are a glaring oversight in addressing mental health after abuse.

Pakistan faces a dire human rights challenge, as detailed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A woman is raped every two hours — a statistic that is potentially more frequent, with claims of such incidents occurring every 20 minutes by groups such as Pakistan Men Against Rape.

The distressingly low rate of cases being reported and even fewer convictions exposes deep flaws within the justice

system. A number of high-profile rape cases, including the Zainab Ansari incident and a mother abused sexually in front of her children, necessitates a demand for forensic psychiatric assessments in court proceedings.

Pakistani women are encumbered with a disproportionate share of mental health conditions compared to men. While attention has been drawn to many of the socio-cultural practices responsible, including karo kari ('honour' killings often seen in Balochistan and Sindh), watta satta and child marriages, the struggles of women in less visible rural and urban slum areas remain largely unacknowledged.

Despite Pakistan's pledge to the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030), women are brutally punished for perceived immorality. Such barbaric practices inflict fear and profound physical and psychological trauma, often leading to myriad mental health disorders.

This crisis is exacerbated by the lack of adequately trained healthcare providers who can recognise and assist victims and violence — a shortfall highlighted by the Unicef-initiated mental health and psychosocial support services programme in 2021. Medical studies corroborate this gap. In Pakistan, the intersection of mental health and human rights is brought into sharp relief by the impact of blasphemy laws on the mentally ill. Between 1986 and 2010, an alarming surge in blasphemy accusations resulted in over 50 extrajudicial deaths.

The existing laws, increasingly stringent and far-reaching, ensnare individuals with mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and autism, often misused to conceal abuse against them. There is a critical need for legal re-

forms that provide robust protections for those with mental health challenges, ensuring that blasphemy laws are not weaponised against them.

Pakistan stands at a critical juncture, with recent legal reforms pointing towards progress in mental health care. The decriminalisation of attempted suicide was a commendable step away from punitive measures, signalling the emerging recognition of mental illness as a public health matter and not a criminal one.

However, the realities of mental health care in Pakistan, as evidenced by high suicide rates juxtaposed with an insufficient number of mental health professionals and facilities, particularly in the rural areas, highlight a landscape in desperate need of reform. With a budget that fails to adequately address mental health and a medical community yet to fully acknowledge psychiatric subspecialties, Pakistan's mental health framework is alarmingly inadequate.

Forensic psychiatry in Pakistan is at a pivotal juncture, facing the challenge of reconciling its colonial legacy with contemporary human rights and psychiatric practices. Our legal system, which often places an unreasonable onus on defendants to prove mental illness with insufficient support, calls for urgent modernisation.

Pioneering decisions like the Supreme Court's ruling in the Safia Bano case are indicative of an increasing awareness of these critical issues and underscore the imperative for systemic legal reforms. Pakistan's struggle with mental health stigmatisation and human rights breaches requires a legal overhaul. The justice system, failing to shield vulnerable groups, particularly the mentally ill, highlights the need for incorporating psychiatric evaluation into judicial processes. — Courtesy Dawn

Plantation drive



Shahzad Sharjeel

Elections are in the air, and potted plants are being transplanted to suitable soil with the most earthworms and compost available. Sunshine is essential, but the time to make hay is later. In a no-holds-barred environment, logic is the first casualty. How does one explain a televised interview by an 'encounter specialist' accusing the leadership of a political party of all manner of crime? Some people believe he did it at the instigation of the powers that be. Fine. How do you then explain ministers resigning from the caretaker cabinet to join the same party, again, ostensibly at the same power's behest?

Electoral and constitutional democracy demands constant vigilance by 'we the people.' Stamping a ballot paper can neither be the starting nor the high point of the democratic process. Due diligence of election manifestos of political parties, their past record in delivering on their promises, and an utmost commitment to hold them accountable throughout their tenures in office is the bedrock of a functioning, representative polity.

The most common refrain during the election season is 'We will turn Larkana into Paris'. While the French capital's reputation has so far not been compromised, many a chateau in the south of France routinely becomes the stomping ground for these peddlers of promises from Larkana to Raiwind.

Take Karachi and most of its iconic landmarks; for instance, Frere

Hall was built by the bad old Brits when they ruled us. How greedy, unscrupulous, shameless, and downright evil the colonisers were has been recorded quite sufficiently and is being rubbed in these days by Shashi Tharoor and many others. That we have no love lost for the colonisers and their Raj is axiomatic.

However, it is worth summarising that the British conceived and constructed most structures worth declaring as monuments or heritage sites in this metropolis. Take Denso Hall, Merewether Tower, Empress Market, Jehangir Kothari Parade, Pavilion, and Bandstand at Clifton. The Brits built them with much help from the city's Parsi and Hindu communities. Rupchand Bilaram Park, a magnificent facility, was made possible by its namesake. It has now been conveniently appropriated as Bagh Ibn-i-Qasim. Many a committee tasked to give a similar 'Islamic touch' must have rued their inability to rename the Hindu Kush range.

One can argue that since foreign masters and conqueror-despots like the Mughals were not accountable to the populace, they could spend from the exchequer as they wished on grand schemes and fantastic monuments to themselves and their loved ones. In modern times, elected, accountable administrations can only undertake public works for the good of the populace and not for mere aesthetics and leaving a name for themselves. The problem today is that the only such 'public welfare' schemes that come to mind are overhead bridges and underpasses. While most of these are helpful to the public, they tend to crumble and flood, without any accountability and much too quickly for any chance of attaining an iconic status.

Not sure where the

'chinaman delivery' got its name. It is the same with 'china cutting.' While the former is widely known in the world of cricket as a left-arm spin delivery, the latter is restricted to Karachi, though just the name as the practice of appropriating public property for personal gain is rampant country-wide. In the spirit of fair representation, let us look at Rawalpindi. Here, the textbook practice is putting a trash dumpster on any spot with commercial potential. Rest assured, we will dump all sorts of trash everywhere but in the dumpster. Soon, the place becomes a hell of miasma for the residents and commuters.

The next step is to remove the dumpster, level the plot, and grant the prime piece of land for a nursery. The change of scene could not be more dramatic, from a mountain of trash with accompanying flies, stray dogs, feral cats, and hovering kites to pots of saplings and flowerbeds amidst rows of terracotta ornaments. Everybody breathes a sigh of relief. The civic bodies and cantonment boards are praised instead of being asked how the lease for the nursery was granted and on what terms. The grantees are kicked out after a couple of years, and a spanking cash-and-carry is built. The process has been honed to perfection. The same community that created the trash problem and was first nauseated and then relieved on its evolution now throngs the shopping centre with their trolleys laden with stuff, a lot of it from China soon to be turned into trash. Another public amenity plot, another trash site, another nursery, more saplings, more transplants; the cash-and-carry business continues. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

IPO, PITB join hands for automation, digitalization of IPO-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Tuesday joined hands and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the digitalization and automation of IPO-Pakistan. The MoU was signed by Director General, IPO Ms. Shazia Adnan and Director General, PITB Saima R. Shaikh for automation and digitalization IPO to facilitate the common masses and business in the country.

On this occasion, Chairman IPO, Ambassador Farukh Amil said that the visibility on indifferent

platforms and public awareness are the major priority of IPO at this time, which will make it accessible to the business classes and especially the youth. The Chairman IPO said that at present we were working on digitalization of IPO with the support of PITB, which was an important tool for modernizing institutions in the modern world, which provided facilities to the public and business classes.

He said that a large part of the population of Pakistan consisted of youth and the youth were currently mostly connected to IT and social media and after this facility, they would be able to make online complaints

or other facilities in IPO. Farukh said that IPO was currently making the youth aware of IPO in universities and educational institutions, which would increase the trend of financial education among them.

He said that after automation in the IPO, there would be transparency and simplification of processes in the institution. On this occasion, Director General, IPO, Shazia Adnan said that after this agreement with PITB, online payments and another documentation process would be made easy in the next two months and this would also promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in IPO.



KARACHI: Stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi, Pakistan, 26 December 2023. The Pakistani benchmark 100 index 59,170.97 was down 2534.12 with points during the trading session.

Punjab shift from conventional transport to electric vehicles: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Transport, Livestock, and Mines & Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad Tuesday said that the Punjab government was making a big push for electric vehicles to provide a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transportation to control air pollution.

"Punjab wants to become a 'global hub of manufacturing of electric

vehicles", he said while talking to a Private news channel.

The government is also planning to offer incentives for manufacturing electric vehicles and batteries to boost economic growth and encourage local manufacturing, he said, adding, that other provinces should also focus on shifting their auto industry towards EV systems.

Rupee gains 15 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed the 10th consecutive recovery session as it gained 15 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs282.37 against the previous day's closing of Rs282.52. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs282.7 and Rs285.2 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 47 paise to close at Rs311.27 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.80, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.98; whereas a decrease of Rs 17 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.48 compared to the last closing of Rs358.65.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 05 and 04 paise to close at Rs 76.88 and Rs75.27 respectively.



Caretaker Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz interacting with the members of the Chairman Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Commerce Ministry in Islamabad.

80mn commuters utilized BRT Peshawar during the year 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has achieved an impressive ridership of approximately 80 million people during the outgoing calendar year 2023, contributing to a total commuter of 215 million since its inception in August 2020, said annual report shared by the TransPeshawar operator of the urban transport system here on Tuesday.

It said that a noteworthy shift was observed in the gender dynamics of ridership, with women constituting 30% of the total

commuters—a significant surge compared to the meagre 2% estimated before the implementation of the BRT system. Due to the increasing popularity and demand, the system is constantly expanding. "Zu Peshawar is unwavering in its commitment to fostering inclusivity and embracing technological advancements. Our ongoing efforts to make the system more welcoming for specially-abled individuals reflect our dedication to ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from our services seamlessly, said the Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of TransPeshawar, Dr. Tariq Usman Saeed.

The transformative upgrades to the Zu app enhance user experience, offering features like recharging through Omni Shop, comprehensive travel histories, and NFC-supported balance uploads, he added. He said that their focus on network expansion for wider city coverage through new feeder routes aligns with our vision of creating a world-class transit system that caters to the diverse needs of our community while duly accounting for social equity.

Modern technology can make agriculture more profitable: UAF VC

FAISALABAD (APP): Modern trends and tangible researches should be disseminated at doorsteps of farmers to make agriculture profitable in addition to achieving food security in the country, said University of Agriculture Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan.

Chairing a meeting of the Punjab Agriculture

Strategy Plan 2023-2033, he said that agriculture was facing soil fertility, inputs, mechanizations, markets, water, seeds, fertilizers and other issues.

He said that the fertility of land was decreasing with the passage of time for which agricultural recommendations would have to be adopted.

Growers advised to water wheat crop timely

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised growers to water their wheat crops on time to get healthy and bumper production. A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that in most of wheat areas, growers did not care about timely watering wheat crops, which affected the quality as well as quantity of the production.

Call to equip youths with latest technologies to root out poverty, unemployment

FAISALABAD (APP): Youths must be equipped with latest skills and technologies to root out poverty and unemployment and in this connection government institutions must play their key role, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

In a meeting with Madam Bushra Nawaz, Senior Manager Public Relations and Marketing of the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTTC), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that youths are our most precious asset but we are not utilizing their capabilities for the uplift of

the country. He said that China and other countries had successfully revolutionized their economies by efficiently utilizing their youths. He said that 20 million youths were unemployed and we must devise strategies to train them in different market-driven skills.

"It will not only make them productive for themselves but also for the country", he said and added that the skilled human resource could start their own businesses instead of running after jobs. He said that Pakistanis in the world were sending hefty remittances which had saved Pakistan from bankruptcy.



ISLAMABAD: Chair-Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO) Farukh Amil, witnesses the Signing Ceremony for the IPO-Pakistan & Punjab Information Technology (PITB) landmark agreement regarding launching of PayZen Agreement at IPO-Pakistan Headquarters.

Hybrid seed can increase sunflower production manifold: experts

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised farmers to use hybrid seed of sunflower varieties as it can increase its production manifold.

A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that Pakistan had to spend Rs.300 billion per annum on the import of edible oil and the amount could be saved by promoting cultivation of oil-seed crops in the

country. He said that sunflower was a precious oil-seed crop as its seed had 40 to 50 percent oil and its production could play a major role in trimming down the export bill of edible oil in addition to catering to domestic needs. He said that the growers should prefer seed of hybrid varieties as it could give maximum production and help them mitigate their financial constraints.

Punjab Governor says: Circumstances under which Bangladesh separated reminded of a painful past

Independent Report
LAHORE: High Commissioner of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed promotion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and education during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Tuesday.

The Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh Qazi Humayun Fareed was also present on the occasion, says a handout issued here by the Governor's media team.

Governor Punjab

Muhammad Balighur Rehman and Bangladesh High Commissioner expressed concern over the Israeli bombardment and atrocities on the Palestinian people. Muhammad Balighur Rehman said the circumstances under which Bangladesh was separated reminded of a painful past. He said Pakistan and Bangladesh have once been a nation and country, and both of them share common faith, history, and culture.

The Governor Punjab said both countries can move forward as good neighbours, adding that goodwill existing between both countries needs to be

translated into even stronger economic, trade, investment, educational, and cultural linkages to the benefit of both nations.

He said it is heartening to know that Pakistani medical and dental students are studying in Bangladesh on scholarships. He said that there should be maximum exchange of student delegations in the educational institutions of the two countries. He said that he would also talk to the Higher Education Commission for scholarships for Bangladeshi students in Pakistani educational institutions.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the under construction work of Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-III Project.

Governor KPK highlights women's educational achievements

Independent Report
ABBOTTABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has emphasized the crucial role of education in global competitiveness.

He said that the enrollment of female students in the province now surpassed their male counterparts in both primary and higher education. He not only highlighted the greater number of female students

but also their excellence in getting prominent educational positions.

Addressing at the first convocation of the Government Women's College of Commerce and Management Sciences here Tuesday, the Governor urged the female students not to let their education go to waste, emphasizing the transformative impact educated women can have on societal and national development.

Minister visits MMC inquires health of patients

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Industries, Technical Education, and NMDs Affairs Amir Abdullah visited Mardan Medical Complex (MTT) last night and inquired about the health of the patients and the availability of medicines and doctors.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Saeedullah Jan, was accompanying him. On the arrival of the caretaker minister, Dr Azam Manan, DMS of Mardan Medical Complex, welcomed him.

The provincial

minister visited various wards of Mardan Medical Complex, including the OPD, Accident and Emergency Ward, Neurosurgery Ward, Orthopedic Ward, Medical Ward, and CCU (Cardiology Ward).

The Caretaker Minister said that the provincial government has launched the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa program to improve the provision of various services, under which the ministers are going to various districts to review the facilities provided to the people to improve them further.

Two die, jeep plunges into deep ravine

Independent Report
BALAKOT (Online): A jeep is reported to have plunged into deep ravine in the area of Ghanol Thanwan in Balakot leaving two persons including a local councilor dead.

According to Rescue authorities the accident was so fatal that two persons including local councilor who were on board the jeep died on the spot. Rescue is shifting the bodies to hospital.

Transgender killed in firing incident

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): A transgender was killed in a firing incident by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle near Government College Chowk within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Guffat Hussain police station on Monday.

Upon receiving the report, Superintendent Police Faqirabad Division Osama Amin Cheema and ASP Faqirabad Muhammad Aleem promptly responded, securing the crime scene and initiating an investigation. The victim's body, lacking any identification documents, has been taken into custody and transferred for post-mortem examination.

Naqvi reviews progress on Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project marks a significant stride towards completion, reaching the 60 percent milestone.

Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing progress at Adda Plot Raiwind, personally inspecting the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project.

The chief minister examined the ongoing construction activities spanning 8 km from Adda Plot Raiwind to Maraka Multan Road. He closely observed the works on the

entire route, including the construction of bridges. In response, the CM issued directives for the expeditious completion of the project.

During a meeting at the FWO (Frontier Works Organisation) camp office chaired by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Colonel Jamal and Colonel Ahmed provided a detailed briefing on the project's progress. The meeting addressed various issues related to the project. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that the completion of Ring Road Southern Loop 3 would enhance transportation facilities for the public.



LAHORE: Bangladesh High Commissioner in Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-ur-Rehman.

Election 2024: Candidates blow horns to attract voters after submitting nomination papers in KP

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): The candidates of all mainstream politico-religious parties and independents have expedited election campaigns and corner meetings to inform the masses about their election manifestos after submitting nomination papers for different constituencies for general election 2024.

The scrutiny of nomination papers continued in the respective offices of returning officers in all 37 districts of KP where the process would be completed by December 30, 2023. Eying on national and provincial assemblies, the

stalwarts of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), Awami National Party (ANP), Jamiatul Ulema Islam-F (JUI-F), Jamaat Islami Pakistan and Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) have mostly fielded political heavyweights to clinch maximum seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and form government for next five years. On NA-28 Peshawar-I, a total of 33 candidates filed papers including former member national assembly, Noor Alam Khan of JUI-F, former minister KP, Taimur Salim Jhagra of PTI and ex-speaker KP assembly.



RAWALPINDI: Workers of Pakistan Peoples Party light up the candles in memorandum of Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed), at her targeting place, Liaquat Bagh in City.

Kundi calls for free, fair general elections

Independent Report
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party and candidate from NA-44, DI Khan-I, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday called for ensuring free and fair elections scheduled for February 8 2024, adding that it is imperative for democracy.

While addressing the press conference in DI Khan, he demanded a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the general elections to ensure a free, fair, and transparent electoral exercise. He asserted that

no party should be coerced or marginalized in the political process, advocating for equal opportunities for everyone to engage in politics.

"The masses will not accept any government unless free and fair elections are ensured. The credibility of the Parliament will be nothing if transparent elections are not conducted in the country," he added. He said that this time if the selection process was adopted instead of transparent elections, the nation would not accept it because now there was a majority of conscious young people.

CM visits Bibi Pakdaman shrine

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): With the completion of 97 percent of the renovation and expansion works, the historic Bibi Pakdaman shrine is set to reopen its doors to pilgrims before December 31st.

Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the site on Tuesday to review the progress firsthand. Accompanied by provincial ministers and officials, Chief Minister Naqvi closely inspected the ongoing finishing touches on the main shrine structure and iconic domes.

He emphasized the importance of high-quality craftsmanship and directed officials to prioritize the completion of the widened pathway surrounding the shrine to ensure smooth movement for pilgrims.

Furthermore, Chief Minister Naqvi stressed the need for a dedicated space for lamp-lighting rituals and instructed the installation of aesthetically pleasing lighting.

International News

US carries out air strikes on sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US military carried out strikes on three sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq on Monday after an attack wounded three American personnel earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

Washington has repeatedly targeted sites used by Iran and its proxy forces in Iraq and Syria in response to dozens of attacks on American and allied forces in the region since the October 7 outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

"US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by Kataeb Hezbollah and af-

filiated groups in Iraq," Austin said in a statement. "These precision strikes are a response to a series of attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias, including an attack by Iran-affiliated Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups on Arbil Air Base earlier today," he said.

That attack wounded three US military personnel, one critically, US National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement.

President Joe Biden was briefed on the attack — which was carried out with a one-way attack drone — and directed the

strikes in a call with Austin and other national security officials after ordering the Defense Department to prepare a response, the statement said.

Biden "places no higher priority than the protection of American personnel serving in harm's way. The United States will act at a time and in a manner of our choosing should these attacks continue," the statement added.

The drone attack was claimed by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a loose formation of armed groups affiliated with the Hashed al-Shaabi coalition of former paramilitaries that are now integrated into Iraq's regular armed forces.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israel launches more Gaza strikes as Netanyahu says Hamas must be destroyed

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli shellfire slammed into central Gaza on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged no respite in attacks on Hamas, as residents of the coastal enclave mourned more dead in a war that has cost more than 20,000 Palestinian lives.

Israel is determined to pursue its goal of destroying Hamas despite global calls for a ceasefire in the 11-week-old war, amid concerns the conflict could spread with U.S. and Iran-aligned forces attacking

each other elsewhere in the region. Since Hamas made the deadliest Palestinian militant attack on Israel in the country's 75-year history, Netanyahu has responded with an all-out assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said 160 soldiers have so far been killed in Gaza since ground operations began on Oct 20.

"Seventy-five years of suffering, our rights taken, our country seized, and our people slaughtered.



King Charles, Queen Camilla, Prince William, Princess Catherine, Princes George and Louis, and Princess Charlotte, arrive at St Mary Magdalene's church to attend the royal family's Christmas service.

Turkey's parliament set to debate Sweden NATO bid

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: The Turkish parliament was Tuesday set to resume debate on approving Sweden's bid to join NATO, a thorny issue that was further complicated after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan linked it to Ankara's request for F-16 fighter jets from its ally the United States.

Sweden and Finland dropped decades of military non-alignment and sought to join the US-led defence organisation after Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

Their bids won fast-track approval from all

NATO members except Turkey and Hungary. The two ultimately relented and Finland was accepted as NATO's 31st member in April.

Turkey and Hungary remain the only North Atlantic Treaty Organization members left to ratify Sweden's bid 19 months after it applied for membership.

In November, the Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee failed to reach agreement on a text for a full floor vote and will meet again on Tuesday afternoon.

Baghdad condemns US strike on Iraqi military positions

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq's government condemned on Tuesday overnight US air strikes on Iraqi military positions that it said killed one serviceman and wounded 18 other people, calling them a "clear hostile act".

The United States has carried out retaliatory air strikes on Monday in Iraq after a one-way drone attack earlier in the day by Iran-aligned militants that left one US service member in critical condition and wounded two others.

The government condemned the US strikes as "an unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty."

Philippines is not provoking conflict in South China Sea, its military says

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines is not provoking conflict in the South China Sea, its military spokesperson said on Tuesday, responding to China's accusation that Manila was encroaching on Beijing's territory.

It was the latest salvo amid rising tension as the two have traded accusations in recent months over a series of maritime run-ins, including China allegedly ramming a ship this month carrying the Philippines' military chief.

"The Philippines is not provoking conflict,"

Medel Aguilar told state broadcaster PTV.

"We follow international law and we are only implementing our domestic law, meaning the limits of our territorial waters and exclusive economic zone, where we have sovereign territory."

The comments came a day after the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, wrote that the Philippines had relied on US support to continually provoke China.

This "extremely dangerous" behaviour seriously harmed regional peace and stability, it added.



A fighter of the Iraqi Kataeb Hezbollah militia group and a man inspect the site of a U.S. airstrike, in Hilla, Iraq.

Ethiopia becomes Africa's latest sovereign default

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Ethiopia became Africa's third default in as many years on Tuesday after it failed to make a \$33 million "coupon" payment on its only international government bond.

Africa's second most populous country announced earlier this month that it intended to formally go into default, having been under severe financial strain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a two-year civil war that ended in November 2022.

It had been supposed to make the payment on Dec. 11, but technically had

up until Tuesday to provide the money due to a 14-day "grace period" clause written into the \$1 billion bond. According to two sources familiar with the situation, bondholders had not been paid the coupon as of the end of Friday, Dec. 22, the last international banking working day before the grace period expires.

Ethiopian government officials did not respond to requests for comment on Friday or over the weekend, but the widely expected default will see it join two other African nations, Zambia and Ghana.

35th Convocation ceremony of PNEC Self-sustenance inevitable for success in the world: President

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that self-sustenance is inevitable for the success in the world and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would progress and develop. Addressing as chief guest on the occasion of the 35th Convocation ceremony of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) at Baharia Auditorium here, he said that the world needed intellect at the moment and there was no dearth of it in Pakistan.

Rector National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Lt General @ Mehmood and Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem were also present. During the convocation, a total of 368 graduates were awarded Bachelors' and Postgraduate degrees including the foreign students. The President also awarded 39 medals to the students on their outstanding performance.

Addressing the convocation, President Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated the efforts put in by the PNEC for maintaining high standards of education by providing quality engineers to the evolving industry of Pakistan.

He emphasized that responsibility of PNEC has further increased in present realm of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. He also acknowledged that foreign students were a testimony to the College's credentials in the engineering sector. He highlighted that NUST PNEC will continue with its legacy of being the premier engineering and technology institution, fulfilling present day engineering needs of the country.

The President felicitated the graduating students and their parents and advised the graduates to be active members of society in building a stronger and

prosperous Pakistan and keep themselves abreast and with fast changing advancements in technology. President Dr. Arif Alvi termed the completion of degrees by students as an opening of the doors to the knowledge for the students and said, they must learn more and more. Earlier, Commandant PNEC Commodore Tauqeer Ahmad Khawaja apprised that PNEC was making all out efforts to provide the best engineering education to its students in multiple disciplines.

Further, he highlighted the achievements of students in various events held at national and international levels. He highlighted the opportunities provided to the students at different forums in order to groom and nurture the young engineers. The ceremony was attended by a large number of military and civil dignitaries and parents of graduating students.



KARACHI: President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) Convocation 2023.

Govt to extend all-out support for uplift of KP merged districts: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that despite the availability of limited resources, the government would extend all possible support to the provincial government for uplift and welfare of the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters about KPK, said that being cognizant of their problems, the federal government stood with the government and people of the province.

He also instructed the authorities concerned to resolve the issues confronting the KPK province that had rendered immense sacrifices against terrorism. The prime minister instructed to form a secretarial committee to resolve the KPK's financial matters and formulate recommendations regarding the payment of net hydel profits and the royalty of oil and gas. To be headed by the federal finance secretary, the committee would consist of federal secretaries of planning, water resources, and petroleum.

Government to follow Senate recommendations on employees' salaries, allowances: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday assured the Senate that the government would follow House recommendations regarding the salaries and allowances of government employees, including Balochistan.

In response to questions during the question hour regarding the less representation of officers from Balochistan at the federal level, the minister asked the lawmakers to formulate a policy and make recommendations if there was any perceived injustice.

Responding to questions from Senators Fauzia Arshad, Mohsin Aziz, and Danesh Kumar, he welcomed the suggestions from

Senate members regarding the use of zig-zag technology in rural areas for making bricks.

He acknowledged that zigzag technology was effective in reducing emissions of pollutants and increasing efficiency, though it was still expensive.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui's question about the non-allotment of plots to retired employees, the minister assured that he would inform the House after obtaining information from the department.

If the chair deemed it appropriate, the matter could be referred to the privilege committee, he added.

In response to Senator Mushtaq Ahmed's question, the caretaker federal minister said that the

issue of F14, F15, and Bhara Kahu sectors should be sent to the relevant standing committee. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani referred the matter to the concerned committee for further investigation.

The minister said that currently, no caretaker minister was using bulletproof vehicles. He said that all details regarding the use of bulletproof vehicles by ministers and advisors during the previous government had been shared with the House.

Murtaza Solangi said that Senators have the right to criticize the decisions and policies made by the previous government regarding the provision of bulletproof vehicles to ministers and advisors.



QUETTA: Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai photographed with participants of a workshop organized by Women Media Center

Project of fruit & vegetable market Chaman enters in final stages of completion

Independent Report
QUETTA: The crucial project of fruit and vegetable market Chaman has entered the final stages of completion.

The sources of Planning and Development Department, Government of Balochistan informed that the vital project is likely to be formally inaugurated in mid February next year.

It may be mentioned here that the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki had taken special interest in the project of fruit and vegetable market in the border town Chaman and directed

to the concerned authorities to complete it at the earliest.

According to the official sources of planning and development department, the state of the art project being constructed with mutual financial cooperation and partnership of the federal and provincial governments.

The project would play important role in socio-economic development of the province.

The project that would cost Rs 1656.936 million would include truck & bus terminals, taxi stand, Dual road and mosque.

Pakistan determined to take fraternal ties with China to new heights: PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad Tuesday.

The Prime Minister expressed his best wishes for Ambassador Khalil Hashmi on assuming office. Ambassador Khalil Hashmi took guidance from the Prime Minister regarding China-Pakistan relations.

The Prime minister said Pakistan is determined to take its fraternal relations with China to new heights. He urged the newly appointed ambassador to play role for strengthening Pak-China relations.

Court grants bail to Pashteen in two cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-terrorism Court of Islamabad on Tuesday granted bail to Manzoor Pashteen in two separate cases filed against him at the CTD Police Station.

ATC Judge Ahsanul Haq Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the bail application of Manzoor Pashteen. During the hearing, the prosecutor pleaded that Pashteen's application should be rejected as he had spearheaded a gathering, where he spoke against the state institutions.

Soyem of GM Taj to be held today

Independent Report
QUETTA: The soyem of the Ex Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan and former officer of the civil services of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Taj is scheduled to be held between Zuhur and Asr prayers today (Wednesday) at Arman Manzil, opposite Saryab Police station, Saryab Road, Quetta. Dua would be held at 3:30 pm.

The late Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Taj was the father of Secretary Government of Balochistan, Sheryar Taj and brother of Engineer Umar Farooq, Fateh Hussain and Fateh Ali Taj.

PEMRA prohibits broadcast, distribution of surrogate company ads

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on Tuesday prohibited "broadcast/distribution" of advertisement of surrogate companies in any manner whatsoever with immediate effect.

The Authority, in its prohibition order, warned all the licensees, including satellite television (TV) channels, radio stations, all landing rights permission holders and distribution network operators of legal proceedings under relevant provisions of PEMRA laws in case of non-compliance and/or on repeated violation.

It said that the order was issued in continuity of its earlier letters "wherein office memorandum/advisory issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad with regard to "Zero Tolerance for Surrogate Companies" were circulated among licensees for compliance".

"The Authority, while exercising powers vested under Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2023, hereby prohibits broadcast/distribution of advertisement of surrogate companies (in any manner whatsoever) which are promoting gambling/betting in different sports events being telecast/broadcast/rebroadcast in the country and refers the matter to Council of Complaints (Islamabad) for appropriate recommendations to the Authority," it added.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has already vowed zero tolerance against the surrogate companies of the "betting houses".



QUETTA: Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Raisani talking with media

PIA's privatization being carried out under govt's policy: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister on Aviation Air Marshal (Retd) Farhat Hussain Khan on Tuesday informed the Senate that the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was being carried out under the government's policy to privatize loss-making entities.

Responding to a question during the Question Hour, he said the process of privatization of PIA is being completed transparently through open tender. The Adviser said initially, PIA will be privatized as a flight entity and the decision on its other properties will be made later by the Privatization Commission.

Regarding outsourcing of airports in the country, the Adviser mentioned that a Transaction Advisory Services Agreement (TASA) had been signed between the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a subsidiary of the World Bank Group. This agreement, approved by the then Federal Cabinet in line with the Public

Private Partnership Authority (P3A) Act and its relevant regulations, aims to outsource the operations of three international airports in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, he told.

The Adviser highlighted that the IFC would act as a transactional advisor for the outsourcing of airports. Islamabad International Airport has been selected as the first airport to be outsourced. The outsourcing period for Islamabad International Airport is set at 15 years, while the time frames for the remaining two airports will be determined by the Federal Government based on a detailed study prepared by IFC, he added.

The Adviser said, the successful bidder for Islamabad International Airport will be disclosed after the bidding process is completed and the award of concession for outsourcing is expected to be completed before June 2024.

The Adviser clarified that only the operation and management of specific airport components would be outsourced.

Gwadar University delegation visits Pakistan-China Institute

ISLAMABAD (APP): An eleven-member delegation of students of the University of Gwadar has visited the Pakistan-China Institute (CPI) under the Balochistan Youth Engagement Programme.

"This multifaceted endeavour, strategically crafted to deepen bilateral relations between Pakistan and China, unveiled a comprehensive agenda, aimed at enriching the understanding and collaboration between Pakistan and China," a news release said on Tuesday.

The initiative's primary focus is to empower the vibrant youth of the Balochistan region, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping the future landscape of both nations.

At the core of this enlightening experience was the 8th CPEC Media Forum, providing an immersive platform for the delegation to gain profound insights into the far-reaching impact of the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Balochistan.

Beyond a conventional information-sharing session, this forum facilitated dynamic and thought-provoking discussions, fostering a nuanced and deeper comprehension of this transformative strategic initiative.

The students had an exclusive session with Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director of the Pakistan-China Institute, which provided a unique space for a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives, amplifying the depth of understanding for both the delegation and the hosting institute.

The delegation further enriched their experience with a guided visit to the Parliament House and Senate of Pakistan.

Engaging with Muhammad Mushtaq, Special Secretary/Advisor (Legislation), National Assembly Secretariat, provided valuable insights into the

intricate legislative processes shaping the nation's policies.

Renowned communication strategist at Institute of Regional Studies Reema Shokat brought her expertise to the forefront, emphasizing the paramount role of effective communication in both academic and diplomatic spheres between Pakistan and China.

In another session, Moin ul Haque, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, shared experiences and perspectives, offering a historical lens on the evolution of diplomatic relations.

Beyond the confines of formal engagements, the delegation actively cemented diplomatic ties with a visit to the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad.

The delegation had a chance to meet with Bao Zhong, Counsellor of the Political and Media Section at the Embassy of China in Pakistan.

EC directs to provide name of DC, IG Islamabad till today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has directed to provide name of Deputy Commissioner (DC) and IG Islamabad till today (Wednesday).

On the other hand interior secretary has requested the EC not to transfer both the officers in view of the security threats facing the federal capital.

The case regarding transfer of DC and IG Islamabad came up for hearing before 4-member bench of EC Tuesday.

Interior secretary appeared before the commission. He told the commission that EC orders with reference to advisor to Prime Minister have been implemented. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) inquired has he brought its notification.



QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator, Jabbar Baloch in a meeting with Municipal Officers held at QMC.

Non provision of level playing field: PTI files contempt of court plea in SC on non implementation its orders

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) respondents. All the four chief secretaries and IGs have also been made respondents.

PTI has taken plea in the petition that harassment and arrests of PTI candidates be got stopped. PTI candidates were prevented from filing nomination papers despite court's orders.

The PTI has requested SC to ensure implementation of its December 22 orders.

PTI in its petition has made federal government, provincial governments and

sources as an ex-officio member. She said since the Parliament only comprised of the Senate as the National Assembly did not exist so nominations for the Caucus should be made from the Senate.

"The honourable Chairman Senate may also be authorized to make nominations from the Senate to the Caucus and make changes in its composition as and when required.

Zardari pays tribute to Shaheed BB, vows to continue her mission

KARACHI (INP): Former President of Pakistan and President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Asif Ali Zardari paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on martyrdom anniversary and reiterated to continue her mission regarding struggle for a free and independent Pakistan, empowered Parliament and the rule of the Constitution.

In his message on the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, he said that eliminating poverty, unemployment and economic misery

from the country was the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and the completion of this mission was top priority of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Asif Zardari said that the martyred party chairperson was neither afraid of dictators nor did she fear the extremists. Her bravery was the legacy of the leadership and workers of Pakistan Peoples Party, he added. He said that the time was not far away when Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan will be the realization of a Pakistan free of political, social and economic exploitation.



HUB: Members of Civil Society are holding protest demonstration for the establishment of local committee, outside Civic Center building.