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Army's help sought for general elections amid police shortage

ECP says all IGPs have informed it about a collective shortfall of over 270,000 police personnel

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Monday sought the help of the Pakistan Army to ensure the law and order situation during the general polls, set to take place on February 8 next year.

In the lead-up to the polls, all political parties have geared up for a face-off, while the ECP has notified the final list of delimitation of constituencies of the national and four provincial assemblies.

The electoral watchdog is also expected to announce the election schedule, later this month — 54 days before the polls in line with the law.

During the elections, the security situation is a grave concern for the authorities concerned and to ensure that nothing goes south, law enforcers are deployed at polling stations and they are also on patrol.

"While the ECP takes all necessary steps to organise an election, [...] it also expects the same commitment from the executive authorities and law enforcement agencies to maintain law and order in the area of the constituencies during the conduct of elections," the ECP's letter to the interior ministry read.

In its bid to prepare for the elections, the ECP had sought a report from all inspector generals of police to determine the availability of police personnel for the polls.

Responding to the ECP's request, IGPs from all the provinces and the capital said that they did not have enough personnel. Around 4,500 were short in Islamabad, 169,110 Punjab, 56,717 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 33,462 Sindh, and 13,769 in Balochistan — totalling 277,588.



LAHORE: Chief of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman meeting with PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif.

Nawaz, Fazl discuss possibilities of seat adjustment

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Monday met Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam chief Fazlur Rehman and discussed collaborative efforts, including seat adjustments and a joint presidential candidate.

Rehman visited the central secretariat of PML-N at Model Town where he received a warm welcome from Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif.

The participants in the meeting included PML-N chief organiser Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Senator Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal and Khawaja Saad Rafiq.

The leaders discussed the current political landscape of the country, strategising for the upcoming elections. They deliberated upon the seat adjustment formula between JUI-F and PML-N.

Saad Rafiq briefed the participants on the status of political negotiations with the MQM in Sindh.

They reached a consensus on MQM's proposed nationwide local government system, agreeing to support a constitutional amendment for its implementation in the next parliament.

The two parties decided to form an electoral alliance with the MQM and like-minded groups. In Sindh, the three parties will collaborate on seat adjustments, entrusting the decision of candidates to provincial leader Bashir Memon, and the nominated leaders of MQM.



GWADAR: Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Fire broke out in Musakhail-Shirani forests overcome

Caretaker CM appreciates DC, Levies force for timely response

Independent Report

QUETTA: The extensive fire erupted in the forests situated in the Musakhail-Shirani district mountainous range was overcome in wee hours of Monday.

The fire was broken out in Toi Laghara Tehsil on Sunday evening, which was extinguished with co-operation of the Levies force and local community on Monday morning, confirmed Deputy Commissioner Musakhail, Zulfiqar Karrar.

According to the Deputy Commissioner Musakhail, the operation remained continued whole night to control the fire in the forests. During the op-

eration, fire balls were also used ensuring that the fire may not spread further.

Meanwhile, the caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki highly appreciated the efforts made by Deputy Commissioner Musakhail, Levies and local community for extinguishing the fire in the forests.

In an official statement issued here on Monday, Chief Minister said that fire was overcome by having an access to the difficult mountainous range.

He recalled that the precious forests had been destroyed due to the fire broken out in the forests located in the same area last year.



GWADAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar unveils the plaques to inaugurate the completed Pak-China Friendship Hospital Project and the China-Aid Gwadar Seawater Desalination Project.

Pakistan's development linked with development of Balochistan: We are determined to develop Gwadar as international city: CM

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that development of Pakistan is linked with the development of Balochistan, and we are determined to make Gwadar an international city.

The Chief Minister said that the local people would get quality healthcare facilities with construction of the Pak-China friendship hospital in Gwadar.

The dwellers of Gwadar city would be available around 500,000 gallons of water daily from desalination water plant.

With this, the long-standing issue of the dwellers of Gwadar would be resolved.

This and similar other views were expressed by the Chief Minister while

addressing the inauguration ceremony of Pak-China friendship hospital and desalination water plant in Gwadar on Monday.

The caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar, Ambassador of China to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong, federal ministers and other high ups were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Chief Minister said that our full attention is on development of Balochistan at every level.

He said that we are determined to put Gwadar on path of development and prosperity.

He said that the local people would get ample opportunities of employment with completion of different departments projects of worth billions of dollars in the province.

Moreover, the economic activities would be accelerated in the region, he

added. The Chief Minister also said that the CPEC has progressed tremendously because of the vastness and farsightedness of the leadership of Pakistan and China.

He said that the CPEC is major project which has the status of economic game changer.

He said that the invaluable partnership between Pakistan and China would be put on sustainable lines further.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki on the occasion congratulated the caretaker Prime Minister on his successful visit to United Arab Emirates.

He termed the PM's visit to UAE as biggest economic success.

In the end, the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki presented souvenir to the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister Amjad Rasheed, Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem and Sohailur Rehman meeting with Caretaker Interior Minister Mir Sarfaraz Khan Bugti

No crisis in meeting ECP's financial needs for holding general elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday ruled out any "crisis on meeting the financial needs of the ECP" in order to hold free, fair and transparent general elections in the country.

"The Cabinet had approved Rs 42 billion for the budgetary needs of the ECP. An amount of Rs 10 billion was already released," the minister wrote on X formerly Twitter.

He said the Election Commission of Pakistan had approached to release Rs 17.4 billion, out of the budgeted amount.

"Whatever budgeted amount is needed by the ECP, will be released as per its needs accordingly,"

Solangi added.

He said the caretaker government firmly stood behind the ECP in holding free and fair elections as mandated by Article 218(3) of the Constitution.

CPEC journey to move forward; detractors to lose relevance very soon, says PM Kakar

Unveils Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital and Desalination Plant in Gwadar

GWADAR (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday urged the people of Balochistan, particularly the youth to avail the historic opportunity of development in their province as the detractors of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) were about to lose their relevance very soon.

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration ceremony of Pak-China

Friendship Hospital and Gwadar Seawater Desalination Plant here, said the journey of CPEC would surely move forward, not the backward, so joining the development course would be a prudent decision.

"Those who think to change the course (of CPEC) by force, violence or any other means are committing historic blunder as their relevance will be over very soon. The prudent decision

in the nation's fate is to join the course of development, instead of resisting it and miss the opportunity," he remarked. The ceremony was attended by federal ministers Sami Saeed and Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Mardan Domki, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and the Chinese and Pakistani officials attended the event.



GWADAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki addressing the inauguration ceremony of Pak-China friendship hospital and desalination water plant

Will name ex-COAS Bajwa, US embassy officials as witnesses in cipher case: Imran

Monitoring Desk

RAWALPINDI: Former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on Monday stated that he will include former army chief General (ret) Qamar Javed Bajwa and US embassy officials as witnesses in his defence in the cipher case.

"Will include General Bajwa and US embassy officials as witnesses [in the case], General Bajwa did everything on Donald Lu's directives," claimed Khan during an informal conversation with journalists in Adiala jail during the cipher case hearing.

A special court estab-

lished under the Official Secrets Act 2023 held an open court hearing in Adiala jail where Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi are incarcerated. The court is conducting the trial afresh after the Islamabad High Court nullified the jail trial on November 21. Both of them were indicted on October 23 but the indictment stood cancelled after the IHC order.

Speaking to the media person today, the former prime minister predicted that his party would win the February 8 polls, adding that he was arrested under a plan.

Khan said he was

thankful to those PTI leaders jumping the ship.

He also rejected reports that he held negotiations in jail. In November, PTI President Parvez Elahi claimed that officials of the European Union and the International Monetary Fund routinely visit Imran Khan at Adiala.

He also shared that he did not face any difficulties in jail.

Khan also spoke about the allegations put forward against him by Khawar Maneka — the former husband of his wife Bushra Bibi. He stated that he saw his wife's face for the first time after their nikkah.

Dr. Nadeem Jan says: Pakistan gets \$100m support for polio eradication

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday said that a support of \$100 million had been obtained from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the eradication of polio. Addressing the "Reaching the last mile" forum related to Polio in COP-28 in UAE, the minister said that this was a major accomplishment. He said that the efforts towards the eradication of polio had achieved significant success.

He expressed special gratitude to the IDB, the United Arab Emirates and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for their support in providing assistance for the eradication of polio.

Dr. Nadeem Jan pledged full determination for the eradication of polio from Pakistan. He said that the grant allocated for the eradication of polio was being efficiently utilized, ensuring effective expenditure.

Dr. Al-Otaibi says: Saudi Arabia seeks closer ties with Pakistani private media for collaborative ventures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Press Attaché Dr. Naif Al-Otaibi on Monday conveyed Saudi Arabia's eagerness to foster increased cooperation with private broadcasters in Pakistan in a bid to strengthen bilateral ties in the realm of media.

Briefing the media persons underscoring the significance of this development, he said, "We aspire to see a deepening of collaboration between private media institutions in Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Such cooperation holds immense importance as both nations share a mutual interest in each other's content."

The press attaché emphasized the people's desire in both countries to engage with the cultural offerings, particularly dramas and films, from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said this collaboration aimed to meet this demand by facilitating the exchange of content between the media entities of the two nations.

"We envision a future where the exchange of films and productions between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is increased. This will not only strengthen cultural ties but also provide an opportunity for both countries to showcase their rich histories and traditions through each other's media platforms," Dr. Al-Otaibi explained.



QUETTA: Director General Civil Services Academy Dr. Hafeez Jamali meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

NAB chief confesses to slow-paced working at corruption watchdog

LAHORE (INP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lieutenant General (ret) Nazir Ahmed has said that the perception about slow-paced working at NAB is true to some extent.

Speaking at an event here on Monday, NAB Chairman Nazir Ahmed said that 7 out of every 10 people are victims of some housing scheme fraud.

He said that the anti-graft watchdog is trying that

no injustice would be done to people. We will tighten our noose around the opportunists, he added.

He said that the purpose of starting an organized awareness campaign among the people is that the youth who will be a part of the awareness campaign, will become the ambassadors of the NAB. Lieutenant General @ Nazir Ahmed said that the impression of slowness about NAB is true to some extent.

We are determined to steer Pakistan out of all issues: More than 0.4 mln immigrants repatriated so far; desirous of early repatriation of remaining ones: Jan

Caretaker Provincial Minister Information urges Afghan government not to allow terrorists' dens use against any country

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the process of repatriation of illegal immigrants is continued at a fast pace.

Jan Achakzai said that more than 0.4 million immigrants out of total of 1.7 million have so far been repatriated to their country just because of the far-sighted policy of the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar and commitment of Chief of Army Staff, General Syed



Asim Munir.

The Minister Information stated so while addressing a hurriedly called

press conference at Quetta Press Club on Monday.

He said that while more than 0.4 million immigrants

have so far been repatriated to their homeland, we are desirous of expelling remaining immigrants at the earliest. The initiative of expulsion of the illegal immigrants to their country was also very necessary for relations of better future of both the countries, Jan Achakzai added. He said that every country has freedom to take steps under its constitution and law, so Afghanistan has also complete choice to make internal and external policies in accordance with the international rules and regulations.

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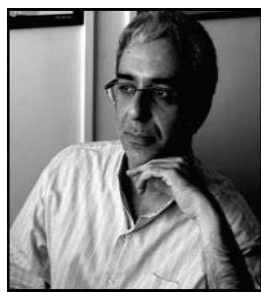
One crucial year of extraordinary achievements

Undoubtedly it was an extraordinary year of extraordinary achievements made by an extraordinary person. He is no other but the Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir who completed one year as the COAS recently. General Syed Asim Munir had taken command as COAS on November 29, 2022 at the times when Pakistan was really facing numbers of challenges, economic crisis, poor law and order condition and also the political instability. When we talk about the achievements during a period of just one year as Army Chief there are some of the most important goals and success which Pakistan achieve due to the efforts of General Asim Munir. During this year, under his leadership, the Pakistani armed forces and affiliated institutions tirelessly worked to make the country successful on every front. When General Asim Munir assumed command, the country was politically and economically vulnerable. There were fears that it might default in few days, leading to upheaval in the military. Things got to a point where rumors began to circulate about Pakistan's nuclear assets falling into the wrong hands. All in all, the entire country was gripped by a strong grip of panic and uncertainty. It was during those days that General Asim Munir stepped to the front with a determined resolve. The tenacity with which he steered the military towards pulling the country out of these challenges should be appreciated. He initiated steps to improve the economic and military aspects of Pakistan all the while focusing on a vision that aimed at the betterment of the nation.

Taking command during a crucial time, he recognized the necessity of the IMF program for the country. General Asim Munir engaged with strategic allies like Saudi Arabia and the UAE, ensuring them of credible progress during their diplomatic visits and managed to secure a \$3 billion deposit. This Saudi and Emirati injection of confidence, in turn, paved the way for Pakistan to enter the IMF program. Following this, a special Investment Council was established, based on General Asim Munir's vision, aiming to provide protection for investments within the country. As per the vision, this could only be achieved if all obstacles hindering economic stability were removed and steps taken to control inflation. General Asim Munir's personal efforts within the business community instilled confidence in the nation's progress. The Investment Council's long-term program for foreign investment includes the significant involvement of the COAS. Saudi Arabia acknowledged the success of General Asim Munir's efforts, pledging a \$25 billion fund solely for Pakistan. The UAE is also working on a \$20 to \$22 billion investment program. Meanwhile, chatter on the street celebrated that China's investment in Pakistan is evident. After General Asim Munir took charge, he revived projects under the CPEC. Some questioned the inclusion of the Army Chief in the Investment Council, but it should be remembered that going beyond its traditional role, the Pakistani military has played a crucial hand in bringing foreign investment, especially in projects requiring security clearance.

The military's support is vital for investment, and General Asim Munir's inclusion in this forum has provided credibility. Pakistan's deep-rooted relations with these countries and past experiences demonstrate that the military has played a significant role in enhancing ties when civilian leadership fell short.

Hell's architects



Zarrar Khuhro

Gaza wasn't always what it is today. Gaza wasn't always a giant prison that has now been transformed into a death camp; a hellscape of broken bodies and buildings and butchered babies.

Before 1948, Gaza was a wealthy territory in Mandatory Palestine. Located on the coast, it benefited from trade and fishing and was also blessed with fertile land, which led to a strong agricultural economy. Then came the Nakba, with Zionist terror militias — which later coalesced into the Israeli army — killing, looting and raping across the territory. The first Arab-Israeli war saw Egypt occupy the territory, which remained in Egyptian control even after Israel prevailed in the conflict that ended the war.

For a brief period during the Suez crisis, when Israel, France and the United Kingdom jointly attacked Egypt, and Israel occupied both the Sinai and the Strip, Egyptian military rule continued till the 1967 war, which saw the comprehensive defeat of the Arab armies and the military occupation of the Strip by Israel.

The usual formula of apartheid and Jewish settlements — under the guard of the Israeli army — began, and continued until 2005, when Israel's then prime minister Ariel Sharon withdrew its forces and dismantled the settlements. This is presented by pro-Zionist circles as a magnanimous step towards peace that was 'typically' spurned by the Palestinians, but it is instructive to see

what the actual architects of that move had in mind.

Israeli geo-strategist Arnon Soffer is considered to be the originator of the separation and withdrawal plan, and he is clear that Israel undertook this process not out of a desire for peace — a word he says he despises — but because the alternative would be the end of Israel as a Zionist state with Jewish supremacy as its cornerstone, because — if Gaza were to be integrated into Israel proper — the Jews would eventually be outnumbered.

And so, it was considered better to fence Gaza off from the world, with that fence eventually becoming a wall and with everything going in and out being at the whim of the Israeli authorities. The minimum daily caloric intake for a human being to survive on was calculated so that the average Gazan permanently remained on the brink of starvation.

This too was by design, because as Soffer himself says in a 2004 interview with Jerusalem Post titled 'It's the demography, stupid': 'It's a fence that we will be guarding on either side. Instead of entering Gaza, the way we did last week, we will tell the Palestinians that if a single missile is fired from the fence, we will fire 10 in response. And women and children will be killed, and houses will be destroyed. After the fifth such incident, Palestinian mothers won't allow their husbands to shoot Kassams, because they will know what's waiting for them.'

Soffer knew the consequences, and welcomed them. He continues: 'When 2.5 million people live in a closed-off Gaza, it's going to be a human catastrophe. Those people will become even bigger animals than they are today, with the aid of ... fundamentalist Islam.'

The pressure at the border will be awful. It's going to be a terrible war. So, if we want to remain alive, we will have to kill and kill and kill. All day, every day ... If we don't kill, we will cease to exist. The only thing that concerns me is how to ensure that the boys and men who are going to have to do the killing will be able to return home to their families and be normal human beings.'

When asked what the end result of all this killing would be, Soffer says: 'The Palestinians will be forced to realise that demography is no longer significant, because we're here and they're there. And then they will begin to ask for 'conflict management' talks — not that dirty word 'peace'. Peace is a word for believers, and I have no tolerance for believers — neither those who wear yarmulkes nor those who pray to the God of peace.'

For Soffer and those who agree with him — the majority of Israelis one would presume — Gaza is just the start.

He continues to say, a full 19 years before today's ongoing atrocity: 'The population increase of Israeli Arabs is going to present a major problem. But, if we no longer include the Palestinians, and we begin embracing immigrants, foreign workers, Druze, and Christians — who are now on our side, because they see what ... radical Islam is — then there won't be an Israeli Arab problem. While we're on the subject, you tell me what you need East Jerusalem for. Why do you need 300,000 Arabs as Israeli citizens? What's holy there? Anything that is holy we should annex.'

This has always been the plan and now it is one step closer to fruition. -- Courtesy Dawn

Labour inspection



Parvez Rahim

Prominent labour leaders in Sindh recently complained to the caretaker chief minister of the province about non-compliance with labour laws by some employers. In response, the CM asked the secretary labour to carry out inspections of all factories in Sindh and prosecute the violators. The labour leaders' concern was more focused on the contracting out of most jobs, non-compliance with the law on minimum wages, and termination of employment without notice.

It is an arduous exercise to keep track of the status of compliance stipulated in some 200 labour laws and rules. However, one can concentrate on those areas which are critical to the economic welfare of workers and workplace safety. The Employers' Federation of Pakistan recently developed a labour inspection questionnaire, covering questions regarding the maintenance of records, payment of wages, occupational safety, health and environment, work timings, overtime benefits, the right to organise, collective bargaining, disciplinary action, etc.

The questionnaire, taken by labour inspectors to factories, primarily comprises questions relating to record-keeping in pursuance of the rules framed under the Factories Act, 1934, Shops and Establishments Ordinance, 1969, and the Minimum Wages for Unskilled Workers Ordinance, 1969.

Rules relating to record-keeping, such as the display of notices, maintenance of various

registers, etc, were legislated decades before the advent of IT, when such work was done manually. However, despite electronic advancement, no effort has been made by successive governments to simplify the requirements or digitise them. In fact, the government, with the involvement of workers and employers' representatives, should review whether such record-keeping is required when lifestyles and technology have drastically changed over the last half century.

The following are some administrative requirements besides the maintenance of certain records and display of notices on factory premises, which might have been relevant decades ago, but are now obsolete, even absurd. A rule under the Factories Act, 1934, provides: 'A well for the supply of drinking water to a factory or for the purpose of humidification in a factory, shall not be constructed or located within 50 feet of any latrine, drain or other source liable to pollute the water in the well'. Similarly, the Factories Canteen Rules, 1959, provides that 'The canteen building shall be situated not less than 50 feet from any latrine...'

An entrepreneur, who has invested in establishing a factory, will discard such a primitive system and switch over to modern living standards. A labour inspector from Sukkur used to frequently visit an American MNC's state-of-the-art fertiliser plant in Daharki, where I worked in the 1970s. Mostly, he would be accompanied by his family and stay in our guest house for a few days. Taking advantage of the legal provision cited here, he would object to the distance of just a wall between the urinal in the washroom and the electric drinking water cooler in the corridor outside. During the inspection of factories or

establishments, inspectors ask employers to produce registers for employment, remuneration and leave, and the inspection book. They also check whether the employers have displayed the following notices near the main entrance: abstracts from the Factories Act, the Shops and Establishments Act, and a few other laws and rules, the day of wage payment, and a list of holidays.

Now that it has become more economical for employers to maintain electronic records, instead of age-old manual record-keeping, there will hardly be anyone still maintaining registers as required under the prevailing laws.

According to the laws, the notices to be displayed at or near the main entrance of the factory should contain abstracts of the laws and rules in English and Urdu. The purpose was to make workers aware of their rights and benefits, so that they were not kept in the dark. As most employers have adopted electronic record-keeping, the traditional time offices at the main entrance to the factories no longer exist. Such offices now cater only to the security staff, or to control the entry and exit of visitors and employees. Now that most people have access to Google and WhatsApp, who will be interested in reading abstracts from the acts displayed on the noticeboard? There is a dire need to simplify the requirements of inspection, besides converting them to electronic form.

The level of inspectors should also be raised, and their performance consistently monitored by superiors to ensure that they also start inspecting the establishments of those employers who do not bother to learn about the labour laws. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

German Dev. Bank boosts support for Pakistan's Power Transmission & Health Sectors

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Ministry of Economic Affairs and KfW, the German Development Bank, solidified their partnership with the signing of agreements aimed at enhancing the capacity of Pakistan's power transmission sector and supporting the health sector, particularly in areas affected by floods on Monday.

In a ceremony held in Islamabad, Mr. Sebastian Jacobi, Country Director of KfW and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs inked agreements that signify Germany's commitment to furthering the development goals of Pakistan.

Managing Director NTDC, Engr. Dr. Rana Abdul Jabbar Khan was also present on the occasion.

Under the accompanying Measures support to the "Promotion of Renewable Energies and Energy Efficiency" program, KfW, representing the German Government, will provide an additional grant of Euro 2.5 million to the National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC). This funding will assist NTDC in ensuring the effective operation and maintenance of installations, incorporating robust environmental and social management systems.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister of Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz meeting the Turkish Trade Minister H.E. Dr. Omer Bolat on the sidelines of the 39th Ministerial of COMCEC.

Services' exports increase by 3.34% to \$2,416 mln

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports of services increased by 3.34 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The services exports during July-October (2023-24) were recorded at \$2,416 million as compared to the exports of \$2,338 million during July-October (2022-23). The services' imports into the country also

increased by 19.57 percent by going up from \$2,729 million last year to \$3,263 million during the first four months of current fiscal year. Based on the figures, the services' trade deficit increased by 116.66 percent during the period under review by going up from \$390 million last year to \$847 million this year. Meanwhile, on year on year (YoY) basis, the services' exports from the country increased by 5.63 percent by going up from \$621.07 million in October.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCI) calling on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, at the Parliament House.

Sanjrani recognizes role of business community in driving economic progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Monday recognized the pivotal role of the business community in driving economic progress and affirmed the Senate's dedication to creating an enabling environment for sustainable economic growth.

During meeting with a delegation from the Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCI) who called on him, he expressed unwavering commitment to supporting

the chamber's endeavors in promoting economic growth and displayed keen interest in understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the business community in Gwadar. The discussions focused on fostering collaboration and addressing key economic issues, providing a platform for GCCI officials to share insights on regional economic development and trade dynamics, said a press release.

The economic policies, infrastructure development, and strategies to boost trade and investment in the Gwadar region were also discussed in detail.

He highlighted the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Gwadar Port as driving forces behind future economic initiatives in Pakistan. He emphasized that Gwadar Port is not only important for Pakistan but for the entire region.

The Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and Industries, represented by its officials, expressed gratitude to Chairman Senate for his time and attention to the economic concerns of Gwadar.

They underscored the importance of collaboration with the government to promote economic prosperity, attract investments, and facilitate a conducive business environment in the region.

Senator Palwasha Muhammadzai Khan and Senator Prince Ahmed Omer Ahmedzai were also present during the meeting.

KPTMA delegation calls on KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association (KPTMA) led by Ex-Senator, Salim Saifullah Khan called on the Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice Syed Arshad Hussain Shah here Monday.

The delegation apprised the chief minister of the problems faced by the textile industries of the province with special focus on the exorbitant price hike of gas for industrial sector.

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries, Aamir Abdullah, Secretary Industries, Syed Zulfiqar

Ali Shah, Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad and other relevant authorities were also present on the occasion.

The delegation expressed serious reservations on the recent decision of Economic Coordination Committee with regard to increase the price of gas for industrial sector and appealed to the chief minister to take up the issue with the federal government on urgent basis.

The ECC had taken a decision to enhance the price of industrial gas from Rs. 1238/MMBTU to Rs. 2400/MMBTU.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Florence Rolle, Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Pakistan called on Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik, Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research at Minister Office.

Minister, CCIs presidents visit Business Facilitation Center

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister of Industries and Commerce SM Tanveer along with presidents of various chambers of commerce and industry (CCIs) visited Business Facilitation Center (BFC), where the business community's representatives were briefed about the center's operations and facilities.

Punjab Industries Department Secretary Ehsan Bhutta, Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) Managing Director Asim Javed and other relevant officers were also present.

On this occasion, Provincial Minister SM Tanveer highlighted the Center as a revolutionary initiative by the caretaker provincial government to bolster investment. Completed within a month under the efficient leadership of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the center is poised to significantly benefit the business community and accelerate the pace of industrialization, he added.

SM Tanveer mentioned that the center houses officers from 17 to 20 departments of both federal and provincial governments, ensuring a comprehensive and streamlined service to the investors and business community.

Energy minister participates GRA session at COP 28

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Energy Mr Muhammad Ali participated in a session organized by the Renewable Energy Alliance (GRA) between the government of Pakistan and Renewable Energy Investors at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28).

Minister for Energy led the Pakistan delegation to discuss the investment potential for Renewable Energy in Pakistan, according to a statement received from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) here Monday.

Pakistan emerging as hub of ICT, digital innovation in the region: Dr.Saif

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MOITT), Dr. Umar Saif, said that Pakistan is emerging as the hub of information and communication technology (ICT) and digital innovation in the region.

During his address at the Pak-Qatar IT Conference in Doha, Qatar, he highlighted Pakistan's abundance of talent and success stories in innovation and entrepreneurship.

He said Qatar is home to abundant Pakistani knowledge workers, urging Pakistani IT companies to leverage this resourceful

Qatar diaspora to establish a foothold in the Qatari market.

Earlier, Dr. Umar Saif inaugurated the Pak-Qatar IT Conference, a collaborative effort mainly involving the Ministry of IT and Telecom (MOITT), the Embassy of Pakistan in Qatar, and Pakistan Business Council Qatar with support from the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC), said a news release received here on Monday.

This conference featured esteemed speakers from the public and private sectors, along with representatives from IT companies of both

countries, showcasing their expertise and strengths.

Dr. Saif also shared Qatar's forward-looking vision in expanding its knowledge economy, underscoring the potential for Pakistani businesses to not only offer tech solutions but also collaborate in global ventures.

The Minister further said that Qatar has taken a big leap in establishing data centres, bringing Microsoft Azure Cloud here, and Pakistan has a lot of capability in cloud management, data center operations, and cloud applications.

Governor Punjab says: Development of the country related to the promotion of education and research

Delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob called on Governor

LAHORE (Online): A delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob and Cadet College Hasan Abdal called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman at Governor House Lahore, here today. Governor Punjab welcomed the students and teachers to the Governor House.

The delegation included Prof. Khurshid Bukhari, Prof. Akbar, Prof.

Sardar Ali, Mirza Saeed Ahmed, Mudassar Hasan and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that the development of the country is related to the promotion of education and research.

He said that in today's modern era, learning new research and technology is very important. Governor

Punjab said that the students should adopt positive thinking and play their role in the development of the country.

He said that Cadet College Hasan Abdal is an institution of high traditions. He said that seats and scholarships are reserved for students of Balochistan in universities and medical colleges of Punjab. Governor Punjab said that the students of

Balochistan were also included in the laptop scheme so that the students of Balochistan can be brought at par with other provinces of the country in the field of education. He said that the country can progress only with the supremacy of merit. Governor Punjab said that continuity of policies is very important for development in other sectors including education.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman in a group photo with delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob and Cadet College Hasan Abdal called on at Governor House.



PESHAWAR: VC SBBWU Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, SRSP CEO Masaud ul Mulik and UNHCR KP Head Kofi Oshenana Dwomo giving shield to Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali during 1st International Women Conference on Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, Uniting Women's Voice for a Better World at Local hotel.

ANF seizes 31 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 31 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed a foreign passenger (Nigerian) who arrived from Bahrain by flight number GF-791 was arrested at Faisalabad International Airport. During the operation, 40 cocaine-filled capsules were recovered from his stomach.

1343 grams Ice and 558 grams heroin were recovered from a passenger's trolley bag at Jinnah International Airport. The accused was leaving for Jeddah by flight number PA-170.

240 intoxicated tablets (ecstasy) were recovered from two suspects arrested in the commercial market Rawalpindi. 3600 grams hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Hangu Road Kohat while an accused was also arrested during the operation.

CM launches one-window operation, unveils business facilitation center

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the first-ever one-window operation to streamline the services of investors here on Monday.

Under one roof, 20 provincial and federal departments now facilitate a swift system, issuing 106 NOCs within a remarkable 15 days. The inauguration ceremony, attended by the

CM, Provincial cabinet, and Consul Generals of China and Türkiye marked the official commencement of the Business Facilitation Center, also launching its online system. Chief Minister Naqvi, during the inspection of the center, emphasized the need for expediting NOC issuance to 15 days, down from 30, and sought plans for a 10-day timeline for overseas Pakistanis and foreign investors.

KP CM gives fee waiver to disable candidates in ETEA tests

PESHAWAR (APP): As an important relief to special persons, the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has decided to give waiver in test fee to the disable candidates appearing in all kinds of screening tests under Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA). Now onward, disabled candidates appearing in such screening tests will be exempted from test fee.

This, he decided while chairing the 31st meeting of the Board of Governors of KP, ETEA here on Monday. Provincial Caretaker Minister for Higher Education, Dr. Qasim Jan, Secretary Higher Education, Arshad Khan, Secretary Health, Mehmood Aslam and other members of the Board attended the meeting.

It was decided in the meeting to constitute a committee headed by Provincial Minister Justice

@ Irshad Qaiser for evolving a mechanism to dispose off the cellular phones confiscated from candidates during screening tests. The committee will come up with final proposals to this end after looking into all the legal and technical aspects of the matter. Various nuances related to curb the menace of cheating in examinations and screening tests came under discussion in the meeting and it was decided to put in place.

Election 2023: Great enthusiasm witnesses among female voters

PESHAWAR (APP): Great enthusiasm is being witnessed among female voters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ahead of General Election 2023.

Sidra Sheraz and her sister Samina Qaiser, the young female voters of Wapda Town Nowshera district were excited to exercise their right to vote for the first time in the February 8, 2024 General Election after their names were enrolled by ECP.

"We are eagerly awaiting the February 8 general election and would

cast our first vote and become part of the electoral process viz a viz decision making for setting of future Govt," said Sidra who associated with the teaching profession, adding that women were about half of the country's population and their votes would play key role in deciding fates of political parties.

"I would cast my first vote based on political parties' past performance record and manifestos," she said, adding votes of young voters, especially females

would be a deciding factor in February 8 General Election.

According to ECP's data, approximately 127 million registered voters would exercise their right of franchise in the upcoming general election.

About 72.31 million (56.9pc) of total voters were registered in Punjab, 26.65 million voters are in Sindh (21pc), 21.69 million voters (17.1pc) in KP while 5.28 million (4.2pc) of all registered voters in Balochistan were exercise their right of votes in 2024

general election.

The total number of registered voters was recorded in 2018 as 106 million which had increased to 127 million this year.

The gender gap among voters slashed with an addition of 11.74 million female voters compared to 9.28m male voters, to the electoral rolls since the 2018 general election raised the total number of registered voters to 127 million in 2023.

The total number of registered voters in the country in 2018 was nearly

106 million including 59.22m men and 46.73m women voters with 12.49 million defences in all provinces of Pakistan.

This difference of 12.49 million was further increased to an all-time high of 12.72m next year when 62.55 million men and 49.83 million women were found eligible to cast a vote.

A significant drop in the gender gap was witnessed last year when the total number of registered male voters slashed from 66.50 million to 66.40 million.

International News

Turkey's Erdogan says Israel's Netanyahu 'will be tried as war criminal'

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would eventually be tried as a war criminal over Israel's ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip, while slamming Western countries supporting Israel.

Turkey, which supports a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict, has sharply criticised Israel over its campaign in Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' rampage on Oct. 7. More than 15,500 people have been killed in the Israeli air and ground attacks, according to Gaza's health ministry.

In a speech to an

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) committee meeting in Istanbul, Erdogan said the Western nations supporting Israel were giving it "unconditional support to kill babies" and were complicit in its crimes.

"Beyond being a war criminal, Netanyahu, who is the butcher of Gaza right now, will be tried as the butcher of Gaza, just as Milosevic was tried," Erdogan said, in reference to Yugoslav ex-President Slobodan Milosevic who was tried for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes at a tribunal in The Hague.

"Those who try to skip over the deaths of all

those innocent people by using the excuse of Hamas have nothing left to say to humanity," he added, referring to Western powers, which he said were "blind and deaf".

Unlike most of its Western allies and some Gulf states, NATO member Turkey does not view Hamas as a terrorist group and hosts some of its members. Erdogan, whose ruling party has Islamist roots, said a so-called contact group of Muslim countries, which was formed by the OIC and Arab League last month to hold talks on Gaza with Western countries and others, would continue discussions until the fighting in Gaza stopped, but added more must be done.



RAFAH: An elderly woman, injured in an Israeli strike, appears to be in shock as she sits amid the rubble of her bombed-out building in the southern Gaza Strip.

Nowhere safe as Israeli army overruns Gaza

MONITORING DESK: Israeli forces overrun nearly all parts of the Gaza Strip on Sunday, as more than 700 Palestinians were reported to have been killed after Tel Aviv ended a week-long truce.

A statement from Israeli Chief of General Staff Herzi Halevi said that his forces were operating across north and south Gaza, with tanks and soldiers seen moving through the besieged territory over the weekend.

The death toll from Israel's relentless bombing has climbed above 15,500, including 280 medical staff, in more than eight weeks of Israeli aggression.

United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk voiced alarm that hundreds of thousands of Gazans "are being confined into ever smaller areas" in the southern of the territory.

"There is no safe place in Gaza," he said.

UN-OCHA said at least 160 Palestinian deaths were reported in two incidents in northern Gaza on Saturday: the bombing of a six-storey building in Jabalia refugee camp, and of an entire block in Gaza City.

In a new estimate, OCHA said around 1.8 million people in Gaza, roughly 75 per cent of the population, had been displaced, many to overcrowded and unsanitary

shelters.

Jumana Murad said her son Mohammad, 19, was killed as he tried to help women and children out of a tent inside a school.

"A piece of shrapnel hit him in the head," she told AFP before bursting into tears. Nasser hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis overflowed with both the wounded and the dead.

Hospitals in the southern Gaza Strip have descended into chaos since the resumption of hostilities, and WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that some patients there were being treated on the floor, in conditions "unimaginable for the provision of health care".



Delegates walk at the Dubai's Expo City during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Floods kill more than 20 people in northern Tanzania

DAR ES SALAAM: At least 20 people have been killed by floods after heavy rain in the Manyara region of northern Tanzania, the ministry of health said on Sunday.

Severe flooding caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon has killed hundreds of people in Kenya and Somalia in recent weeks.

The rains have also left a trail of destruction, ruining infrastructure like roads and submerging

towns in East Africa, displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

"We are very shocked by this event," President Samia Suluhu Hassan said in a video message posted online by the Tanzanian ministry of health.

She directed security agencies, the ministry of health and other relevant bodies to put in all efforts into ongoing search and rescue efforts to prevent more deaths.

Four killed in Philippines bomb attack

MONITORING DESK: At least four people died and several others were wounded on Sunday in a bomb attack on a Catholic mass in the insurgency-plagued southern Philippines.

The blast, claimed by the militant Islamic State group, happened during a morning service at Mindanao State University's gymnasium in Marawi, the country's largest Muslim city, which was besieged by militant groups in 2017.

Police Lieutenant General Emmanuel Peralta said four people were killed and around 50 wounded in the blast from an improvised explosive device.

Photos posted on the Lanao del Sur provincial government's Facebook page showed several overturned plastic chairs, shattered glass and debris around a black patch on the floor of the gymnasium.

University student Chris Jurado, said that the explosion happened during the first Bible reading of the morning mass at 7am.

Ukraine accuses Russia of killing surrendering soldiers

MONITORING DESK: Ukraine launched an inquiry on Sunday into what it said was an "execution" by Russia forces of two unarmed Ukrainian soldiers who had signalled their intention to surrender.

Ukrainian officials condemned the reported incident as a "war crime". There was no official reaction from Moscow.

Palestinian student shot in US is paralysed, says family

MONITORING DESK: WASHINGTON: One of the three college students of Palestinian descent who were shot in Vermont last month is paralysed from the chest down after a bullet lodged in his spine, the student's family said.

Hisham Awartani, a 20-year-old student at Brown University who grew up in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

China says a US Navy ship 'illegally intruded' into waters in the South China Sea

MONITORING DESK

BEIJING: The Chinese military said that an American naval ship had "illegally intruded" on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea. A Chinese naval force was mobilized to track the USS Gabrielle Giffords during the operation, according to a statement from the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater.

The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said the ship "was conducting routine operations in international waters... consistent with international law." Chinese and Philippine naval and coast guard

ships have confronted each other repeatedly around the shoal in the Spratly Islands in recent months as China tries to prevent the Philippines from resupplying and repairing a rusting warship that it intentionally ran aground in 1999 to serve as a military outpost.

Dwarfed by China's military might, the Philippines has sought America's help in its multiple territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. agreed to an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the country early this year and launched joint sea and air patrols with the United States late last month.



People move in a boat past partially submerged vehicles in a residential area following heavy rains ahead of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai, India.

Cyprus pushes Gaza corridor idea; leader to visit Egypt, Jordan

MONITORING DESK: NICOSIA: Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides will visit Egypt and Jordan on Tuesday as part of an initiative to establish a humanitarian aid corridor to Israeli-besieged Gaza.

Cyprus, the closest European Union member state to the Middle East, has offered to host and operate facilities for sustained aid directly into the Gaza Strip once hostilities between Israel and the Palestinian militant Hamas group cease.

Christodoulides planned to meet Egyptian

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and King Abdullah of Jordan. There were "technical discussions" on the matter between Cyprus and Israeli officials on Sunday. The Cypriot plan is aimed at expanding capacity for humanitarian relief directly to the coastal Gaza Strip beyond limited deliveries being made through the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Palestinian enclave.

Such an aid corridor faces logistical, political and security challenges - Gaza has no port and its waters are shallow.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Education Qadir Bakhsh Baloch, DG NAB Zafar Iqbal Khan and other participants addressing at ceremony of speech competition about anti-corruption

Report on the state of women's shelters launched in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said that in every report published on the situation of human rights, Pakistan is far better than our neighbour country. He said that violence against women, violation of minorities' rights and child abuse in India are worse than any other country. Khalil said like Pakistan no country exists in the world where women's rights have been ensured and also provided equal opportunities in every field. The minister said we should learn from these reports and work jointly to move the country forward. He said that further efforts should be taken to provide an environment like home in Dar ul Amans. He said that women's right is equal across the globe and Islam

is also talking about animal rights. He said the Ministry of Human Rights would initiate training programs for staff deputed in Dar ul Amans to protect the rights of residents. Minister Khalil George said that women's shelters are an essential component of a comprehensive response to violence against women. "The NCHR report on Dar ul Amans has revealed some very urgent issues. The availability and accessibility of women's shelters is an urgent matter," he added while stressing collaborative efforts to address these issues. The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and UN Women, launched "More than Shelters, Needs Assessment of Dar ul Amans and Shelters in Pakistan" - a comprehensive report on the state of women's shelters.

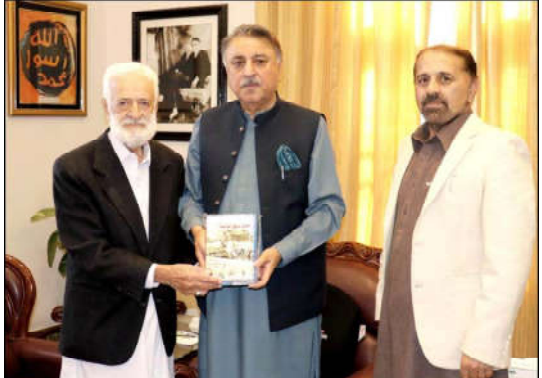


GWADAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presenting souvenir to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwarul Haq Kakar.

Nutrition Directorate set up to tackle food related issues in Balochistan: Security Health

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan here on Monday said that Balochistan was the first province where a nutrition directorate has been established to handle nutrition related issues. He expressed these views while chairing the meeting regarding World Food Program (WFP). The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Health Arif Khan, Provincial Head World Food Program Dr. Faria Ehsan, Program Policy Officer World Food Program Dr. Shahid Riaz Baloch, Mazhar Baloch, Planning Officer Dr. Shako, Program Associate Ahsan, World Food Program Security and Liaison Officer Ghulam Haider and Staff Officer Secretary Health

Shaukat Baloch. Provincial Head World Food Program Dr. Faria Ehsan gave a comprehensive briefing to Health Secretary on the ongoing projects in Balochistan and told that the WFP was focusing on strengthening health systems through community midwives through unique development programs and nutrition (Preventive and supplementation). The WFP is expanding its unique development program from the existing 72 state-of-the-art facilities across Balochistan by 31 March 2024, she said. The Secretary Health said that there was a need to integrate the initiatives of various UN agencies related to nutrition in Balochistan.



QUETTA: Writer Arbab Usman Khan Kasi presenting his book to Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

People get benefits after completion of projects in Balochistan: Dashti

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Secretary Communications and Works (C & W) Kamber Dashti on Monday said that people of the province would get benefits soon after the completion of ongoing projects in Quetta and other areas. He expressed these views while presiding over the meeting held regarding reviewing the progress of ongoing development projects in Quetta District Building Sector. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer Building Quetta Zone Ayub Khan, Deputy Secretary Technical Nimatullah, and Engineer Officers of Quetta District Building Zone. In the meeting, the Engineer Officers of Quetta District gave a detailed briefing to the Secretary, Communications and

Works regarding the progress of the ongoing projects. Secretary C & W Kamber Dashti said that the development projects of Quetta city have been stalled due to various reasons, saying that projects are in the final stages of completion due to strict continuous monitoring. He said that the people of the entire province would get the fruits of the ongoing projects after their completion. He also directed to accelerate works of ongoing projects to complete them with standard soon. The Secretary also instructed that all the financial and technical problems related to the ongoing development projects should be resolved as soon as possible.

PM invites Emarati investors to explore Pakistan's conducive business market

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar has said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East North Africa region with an average annual trade of \$9 billion and urged the UAE investors to explore Pakistani market for new avenues. In an interview with Gulf Today, he said Pakistan is planning a comprehensive investment promotion strategy in major countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE). PM Kakar said Pakistan's exports to the UAE include agriculture products, textiles and manpower, while the UAE exports petroleum, petrochemical products and hi-tech equipment to Pakistan.

The two countries also exchange services with each other. Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Financial technology are new areas of collaboration with much greater potential. Pakistan-UAE bilateral trade during 2022-23 amounted to \$9 billion, he said. He expressed satisfaction that Pakistan's exports to UAE surged to \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2022-23, highest in the last five years. On prospects of UAE's investment in Pakistan, he said attracting foreign investment in all sectors of Pakistan's economy was the government's top priority. "Pakistan's Investment Policy has been designed to provide a comprehensive framework for creating a conducive business environment for attraction of Foreign Direct Investment from all parts of the world including the UAE," he said. Currently, he said, there are over 1,000 multinational companies profitably operating in Pakistan, and for many, Pakistan is the most profitable part of their franchise. Foreign companies, individuals, multinational corporations can own 100 per cent shares in locally incorporated or unincorporated firms, he added. Stressing enhanced investment cooperation, the prime minister said the two countries could explore the areas such as agriculture, energy, mining, information technology, logistics and defence.

management and other schemes in the area. Executive Engineers Abdul Rehman Kakar, Chakar Khan Khatak, Muhammad Kazim Luni, Assistant Director Local Government Ahmed Nawaz Jatak and Sub-Engineer Syed Haider Shah briefed the member CMIT about details of the projects of their respective departments. The Member CMIT directed them to complete the projects ensuring quality of work.

MQM delegation meeting with CEC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) expressed concerns on constituencies and level playing field before Election Commission (EC). A delegation of MQM met the Chief Election Commissioner here in Islamabad and expressed their concerns. The visiting delegation included Farooq Sattar, Khalid Maqbool, Javed Hanif and Abdul Hafeez. Speaking to the media after the meeting, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said that under the supervision of Sikandar Sultan Raja.

Member CMIT Umeed visits ongoing development projects in Naserabad

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Member Chief Minister Inspection Team, Umeed Ali Khokhar visited several ongoing development projects in Naserabad district on Monday. During the visit, he inspected Mir Hasan road, new hospital, Public Health Engineering scheme of Goth Kora Khan, Dera Murad Jamali Eastern bypass road, tough tiles, street lights, on farm water



QUETTA: A delegation of Attached Department Officer Welfare Association meeting with Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran.

Rana says: PML-N ready for seat adjustment with JUI-F, other parties

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanaullah Khan has said that his party is fully prepared to contest upcoming general elections as its workers, voters and supporters are excited to actively participate. Talking to media here on Monday, he said "We are ready to fulfill the promise of country's development made by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Oct 21".

Justice Mazhar Akbar Naqvi submitted reply to Registrar's notice

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court Justice Mazhar Akbar Naqvi has submitted a reply to the notice of Registrar Supreme Court on the matter of complaint in the Supreme Judicial Council. Justice Mazhar Naqvi also sent the copy of the reply to the 3-member committee of the Supreme Court, in which it has been said that the registrar should not have the authority to follow the case or not. Registrar's notice has no constitutional or legal status. He said that I had filed

two constitutional petitions in the Supreme Court on November 20 and 30 but my petitions have not been numbered so far. Justice Mazhar Naqvi said that a miscellaneous application was also filed to set the constitutional petitions early but the case was not filed. Not setting the constitutional petitions is a violation of the Practice and Procedure Law. These constitutional petitions should be placed before a 3-member committee and both my constitutional petitions should be fixed for hearing.

ANP informs CEC about political transfers and postings, code of conduct violations

ISLAMABAD (INP): Seasoned politician and ANP leader Mian Ifthikhar Hussain on Monday said they had informed Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja about the repeated code of conduct violations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, saying any continuation of the ongoing practices would be considered as pre-poll rigging. He was talking to reporters after a meeting with

the chief election commissioner (CEC) on a day which also saw the MQM presenting their case about alleged injustices in the new delimitations and the support being extending to the PPP by the caretaker government in Sindh. Hussain said his party had especially pointed to the transfer and posting of district administration officers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which, according to him, were politically-motivated and being carried out under a special agenda. The deputy commissioners were pressing politicians for joining the particular parties to get favourable transfers and postings, he mentioned. Demanding posting of impartial officials, he said the ANP wanted free and fair polls according to the schedule announced by the ECP (Election Commission of Pakistan).

challenging the restoration of student organizations in the federal educational institutions. Ifran Siddiqui presided over the Senate Committee for Education and approved the bill for the restoration of student organizations at the federal universities and colleges. The meeting members considered a bill for the legislation on the student union in the education institutions in the federal. The chairman committee expressed displeasure over the absence of the education secretary and education minister and warned them to attend.



QUETTA: Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan presiding over a meeting regarding World Food Program.

President stresses upon attitudinal change as key to growth of any sector in economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday emphasized that attitudinal change in any sector of the economy could lead to its growth and development including the production and export of world famed Pakistani indigenous Basmati rice. The president, elaborating his viewpoint, said that technological and scientific research and inputs would pave way for the latest innovations in the agriculture sector and the rice exporters should utilize all available tools to enhance their yield by supplementing the country's exports. He was addressing the Biryani Festival and presenting of REAP journal organized by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event was attended by the REAP office bearers, members of the diplomatic corps, exporters, traders and mediapersons. The president underlined the need for inclusion and encouragement of women in the agriculture sector as the country was looking towards such initiatives, leading towards further women empowerment. "With such changes in attitude, they can stimulate

changes in the country's economy," he added. The president said that with proper scientific tools and knowledge, Pakistan could attain food autarky and cited Netherlands that was 19 percent smaller than Pakistan in size but had become the second largest food exporter in the world owing to usage of latest technology and research. Appreciating the role of REAP in boosting country's exports and the national economy, the president said that with organizing of festivals and road shows in different countries, they were providing huge business opportunities to the local Basmati rice growers and exporters. He also suggested for exploring the organic cultivation of rice crop as the world including Pakistan were facing water scarcity. He opined that if the world resources were properly utilized, about 7 billion world's population could be fed properly and regretted that along with the global trade, the exploitation of population and accumulation of wealth also continued. He said that hoarding of food stuff was also a rea-

son which led to food crises and it could be ended if priorities across the globe were set, adding that only \$1 trillion could be suffice to address the food scarcity in the world. Contrary to it, the Islamic teachings had made the wealth a source for channeling the uplift of entire community, leading to well being of the human beings, he added. The president also stressed upon measures to water conservation in the agri-sector, particularly during the rice cultivation as it was a water intensive crop. Besides, value addition products based upon rice crop, the exporters could increase Basmati outreach to different parts of the world, he said, and lauded REAP for projecting the soft image of Pakistan and promoting their culture, industry and livelihood. He said that certain things in the agriculture sector were possible and doable and expressed the optimism that the country would soon rise economically. Earlier, Chairman REAP, Chela Ram Kelwani, in his address, highlighted the contribution of the association in the country's exports.



QUETTA: Former Senator Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, Chairperson NCHR Rabia Jaweria Agha showing report on conditions of shelter homes for women from National Commission for Human Rights and UN Women to Caretaker Federal Minister Khalil George.

Customs Quetta seizes smuggled goods worth Rs 10 bln

QUETTA (APP): Pakistan Customs recovered goods of smuggling worth 10 billion rupees after foiling bids of smuggling during the last 5 months in respective areas of Balochistan. Spokesperson of Pakistan Customs Balochistan Superintendent Dr. Atta Bareach on Monday said that the value of the goods seized during the entire period was 10 billion rupees, never before has such a large amount of contraband been recovered in such a short period. He said that about Rs 2.22 billion worth of goods were seized in October, seizure of smuggling goods worth Rs 3.40 billion were recovered in November by respective areas of Balochistan. These seized smuggling goods including Chalia, Panprag, cloth, tires, cigarettes, non-customs paid vehicles, sugar, urea, auto parts, medicine and other things, he said.

Shehbaz promises equitable development, argues for Charter of Economy

LAHORE (INP): Shehbaz Sharif - the PML-N president and a former prime minister - on Monday promised an equitable development across Pakistan and again presented the proposal of signing a Charter of Economy - an idea that is based upon the Charter of Democracy (CoD) inked for two political rivals Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif back in 2006 to jointly fight for civilian supremacy in Pakistan. Only a consensus-based national manifesto can rescue Pakistan from the prevailing quagmire, he said about the suggestion he introduced as the leader of opposition during the PTI government while noting

that the entire had reached an agreement on the offer. The former prime minister asked the people to give a clear mandate [majority] in the February 8 elections and said they would work under the leader of Nawaz after a successful campaign as he had always delivered on the economic front. Shehbaz mentioned that economy would be vitalised through policy actions, not political and emotional statements, as he promised that the marginalised segments of the society - workers, daily-wage labourers, women and others - were to be the PML-N focus, if voted into power.

Senate committee approves student union bill

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senate Committee for Education on Monday approved the bill for the restoration of student organizations in the federal educational institutions. Ifran Siddiqui presided over the Senate Committee for Education and approved the bill for the restoration of student organizations at the federal universities and colleges. The meeting members considered a bill for the legislation on the student union in the education institutions in the federal. The chairman committee expressed displeasure over the absence of the education secretary and education minister and warned them to attend.



QUETTA: Balochistan Civil Secretariat Officers Welfare Association President, Abdul Malik Kakar addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Masood calls Pak, American physicians 'valuable asset'

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has lauded the immense contributions made by the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) towards strengthening Pakistan's healthcare system as well as in dealing with other challenges, including floods. "Our doctors have succeeded in the United States beyond imagination—it is a matter of pride for Pakistan and the diaspora community," he said at the 10th annual banquet of APPNA's Delaware Valley Chapter, which represents Pakistani doctors of Eastern Pennsylvania, Upper Delaware and South New Jersey. The ambassador said Pakistani-American physicians were a valuable asset

of Pakistan and the United States. Pakistan, he said, has problems, but they will be just a blip in the country's long history. "We will negotiate a transition. We have the wherewithal to do that." While Pakistan had lagged behind in some areas, it had also progressed in many walks of life, Masood Khan pointed out. "Our human capital is increasing," he said, adding this was not the time for the Pakistani community to be polarized. This, he added, was a moment to consolidate gains and to be part of the United States' mainstream. "You should not be on the fringes. You should be in the mainstream because you have the requisite competencies to do that," he told the gathering.