

Independent

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Hub

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XVIII No. 335, Jamadi-ul-Awwal 28, 1445 AH Wednesday December 13, 2023, Pages 08, Price Rs.15

PM Kakar says Only plebiscite, not any country's court to decide future of Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): 370. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that as per the United Nations Security Council's resolutions, the sole method to determine the future of Kashmir and its people was through a plebiscite and no country's high court or supreme court possessed the authority to decide on the matter.

The prime minister, in an interaction with the participants of the 12th National Balochistan Workshop, said that he would be attending the special session of the AJK Legislative Assembly the day after tomorrow from where he would lead the movement against the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the revocation of Article

He said the laws could not help make colonies, though they could help establish occupation for a limited period. The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan would continue extending moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris and would raise the issue at the European Union and other multilateral forums.

To a question, he said taxation was one of the biggest challenges for the country as 80% of the economy was undocumented with the informal private sector being a non-contributor but beneficiary of the government's initiatives and facilities. Besides, the formal private sector feels resentful of undue taxation, he added



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the 12th National Balochistan Workshop.

25 soldiers martyred, 27 terrorists killed in separate incidents in Dera Ismail Khan: ISPR

Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country," military's media wing says; Delivers strong demarche to Afghan govt; seeks action against perpetrators of DI Khan attack: FO

ISLAMABAD (APP): The security forces on Tuesday killed twenty-seven terrorists in various intelligence-based operations, conducted to contain the increased activities of terrorists in Dera Ismail Khan District, while successfully thwarting insurgents' attacks at a military post in Daraban area.

According to Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release: "The night of 11 and 12 December 2023, witnessed heightened activities in Dera Ismail Khan District, wherein a total of twenty-seven terrorists were sent to hell during various operations."

The Security Forces conducted an intelligence-

based operation in the general area Darazinda on the reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of operation, terrorists' hideout was busted and seventeen terrorists were sent to hell.

In another intelligence-based operation in the general area Kulachi, the Army troops effectively engaged terrorists' location as a result of which four terrorists were sent to hell.

However, after the intense exchange of fire, two brave sons of the soil, having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat (martyrdom).

The killed terrorists were actively involved in numerous terrorist activities

as well as the killing of innocent civilians. The forces recovered weapons, ammunition and explosives during the operations.

However, in the early hours of December 12, a group of six terrorists attacked a security forces' post in the general area Daraban.

The attempt to enter the post was effectively thwarted which forced the terrorists to ram an explosive-laden vehicle into the post, followed by a suicide bombing attack.

The resulting blasts led to the collapse of the building, causing multiple casualties; twenty three brave soldiers embraced Shahadat, while all six terrorists were

effectively engaged and sent to hell.

"Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist present in the area, as security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve," the ISPR said.

Meanwhile Following the deadly attack that took place in Dera Ismail Khan on Tuesday and claimed by a terrorist group affiliated with the TTP, Pakistan delivered a strong demarche to the Afghan Interim Government calling for the investigation and strict action against the perpetrators.

CM condemns terrorists' attack at DI Khan police station; pays homage to martyr cops

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has condemned the terrorists' attack at a police station in Darban area of Dera Ismail Khan.

According to an official notification issued here on Tuesday, the Chief Minister paid homage to the police cops martyred in the terrorism act in DI Khan and expressed condolence and sympathy with the bereaved families.

He said that the morale of security forces can't be down through such cowardly terrorism acts.

Mir Ali Mardan Domki said that the sacrifices of the security forces would not be let wasted at all. Nor the sacrifices of security personnel can be forgotten at all, he maintained.

He also said that the entire nation pays homage to the martyrs rendering sacrifices of their lives.

The Chief Minister prayed for the departed souls of martyr security personnel.

He also prayed that may Allah Almighty give enough strength and patience to the bereaved families to bear the tragic loss of their dear ones.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Caretaker Federal Minister for Petroleum Muhammad Ali addressing a press conference at PID Media Center.

Govt gave 24-hour deadline to hoarders to end shortage of Fertilizers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interim federal minister for interior Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday gave twenty-four hours deadline to the cartels involved in creating artificial shortage of fertilizers to end the shortage or ready to face the music.

Addressing a press conference flanked with the minister for information and minister for petroleum, the interior minister said that all Chief Secretaries and Inspector General of Police (IGPs) were directed to take administrative measures against cartels involved in creating artificial shortages of fertilizers. He said the government observed abnormal price hike of fertilizers due to self-created shortage in the market upon which the Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Kakar took notice.

He said the government took strict measures against

illegal hoardings in August/September but the mafia once again united to and started hoarding of fertilizer and created artificial shortage in the market which caused price hike.

He said that the government decided to initiate a ruthless crackdown against the mafia upon the clear directions of Prime Minister.

He said the no one would be spared and they will be arrested under 16 MPO or 13 MPO to ensure to end the artificial shortage of fertilizer.

He said that the government intends to ensure that the fertilizer is delivered to the grower/farmer at his doorstep. The minister said that the government provides subsidy to facilitate the general public or the farmer and not to encourage the middle to make money out of the subsidy.



QUETTA: Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai in a meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Captain (ret'd) Mir Zubair Ahmed Jamali

Whole nation standing by police against terrorism, maintain caretaker Ministers

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Ministers, Jan Achakzai, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali and Sardar Ejaz Ahmed Khan Jaffar have strongly condemned the terrorism attack at the Police Station in Dera Ismail Khan districts.

In their separate condemnation statements issued here on Tuesday, the interim Ministers for Home and Information and PHE expressed condolence over the martyrdom of police cops in the terrorists' attack and prayed for the departed souls and bereaved families.

Mir Zubair Jamali said that the incident of terrorism is sorrowful, and added that the sacrifices of martyrs

would not be wasted at all.

He said that our police force countered and retaliated the terrorism act bravely and courageously.

He said that the whole nation is standing by the security forces. He said that we share the grief and sorrow with the bereaved families in the critical time. He also paid homage to the martyred police cops.

He prayed for the departed souls of martyrs besides for early recovery of those injured in the terrorists' attack.

Similarly, the Minister Information the security forces can't be demoralized by carrying such cowardly acts of terrorism. He also paid rich tributes to those embraced martyrdom in the terrorists' attack.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi signing the Instrument of Accession to the Marrakesh Treaty for the Visually Impaired Persons in a ceremony, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Education Dept. announces winter vacations in colleges & schools from Dec 16

Independent Report QUETTA: The Education Department, Government of Balochistan has announced winter vacations in the colleges and schools of districts fall in the winter zone of the province.

According to an official notification issued here by the Colleges Department on Tuesday, the winter vacations are due to com-

mence in the colleges and schools of winter zone from December 16, and would remain continued till February 28, 2024.

As per the notification, the educational institutions would reopen on March 1, 2024.

It may be mentioned here that almost 18 districts of the Balochistan province fall in the winter zone.

CJP calls SJC meeting on December 14

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has called meeting of Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) on December 14 (Thursday) in connection with proceedings against Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi.

As per sources meeting will take place on Thursday in Judges block conference room.

Secretary SJC has sent notice to all the five members.

It is pertinent to mention here Justice Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi had filed his reply to the notice of registrar Supreme Court.

He had taken plea in the reply that he had filed two constitutional petitions in Supreme Court.

Pakistan joins Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access of visually impaired persons to published work

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Tuesday became a signatory to the Marrakesh Treaty aimed at providing access to published work for visually impaired persons.

President Dr Arif Alvi inked the instrument of accession to the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) administered Marrakesh Treaty, at a special ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The Marrakesh

Treaty aims to help the visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled people have access to books and literary works in accessible formats.

Signed in Morocco on June 27, 2013, and joined by a large number of countries in the world, the Treaty enables the reproduction of published materials into accessible formats, such as braille, large print, and audio editions.



QUETTA: Containers have been placed to closed the redzone area after the family of Balach, who was allegedly killed during the CTD operation, reached Quetta on foot from Turbat Kech for sit-in in the Red Zone area of Quetta until the arrest of the CTD officials, while demanding the formation of a judicial commission for an independent inquiry into CTD's action, in Quetta.

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto presidential reference: SC appoints 9 amici-curiae

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has appointed 9 amici curiae in presidential reference regarding former Prime Minister (PM) Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto besides adjourning the hearing of the case till second week of January 2024.

It has been said in court's order notice will be issued to amici curiae and reply will be sought from them. If any heir of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto wants he can join the court's proceedings.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa remarked every legal heir has right to be heard. Hearing of the case is being broadcast through live link.

The question is this if it is a presidential reference then can government want to run it now too.

The CJP inquired will any one tell why the mention of repentance was made in court's order. A 9-member larger bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the presidential reference for hearing Tuesday.

Attorney General (AG) said Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto execution case was heard in 2012 last time. Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari filed application for becoming respondent in the case.

8 injured in gas leakage explosion

QUETTA (APP): At least eight persons including women and children got injured in an explosion presumably caused by a gas leakage in Sabzal Road Quetta, Balochistan on early Tuesday morning.

According to a Rescue source, the incident took place due to a gas leakage at a house, as a result, eight people sustained injuries.

Police said the incident occurred after the gas cylinders blasted into a house. Soon after the incident, rescue teams reached the scene and shifted the injured to Burns ward of Quetta Hospital for treatment, a private news channel reported.

The blast caused massive damage to the building. However, the authorities are investigating to ascertain the cause of gas leakage.

Clears another legal hurdle in way of elections Nawaz Sharif acquitted in Al-Azizia reference

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday acquitted former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in the Al-Azizia reference.



A division bench, led by IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, conducted the hearing of the case, with Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb as the other judge on the bench. The PML-N supreme appeared before the court in

court.

An IHC divisional bench consisting of Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb pronounced the verdict a few minutes after it was reserved.

The court also rejected the National Accountabil-

ity Bureau's plea to send the case back to the trial court and heard the case on merits.

Earlier, the IHC reserved its verdict on the appeal filed by Nawaz Sharif against his conviction in the Al-Azizia reference.

Before that, while again turning down the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) request to send the reference back to the accountability court (AC), Chief Justice (CJ) of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) Justice Aamer Farooq said it emphatically that the bench would hear the case on merit.

"The purpose of hearing the appeal is to ascertain whether the verdict given in the case was based on proofs," the CJ said, adding, "Wajid Zia had himself admitted that there existed no material to suggest that the property belonged to the PML-N supreme."

Governor Kakar to inaugurate job fair at BUITEMS

Independent Report QUETTA: The 6th edition ojob fair is scheduled to be held at Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) here today (Wednesday).

The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar would be the chief guest at the job fair and would formally inaugurate it.

Different companies and institutions would be setting up the stalls at the job fair.

ATC hands over Khadija Shah to Quetta police on 3-day remand

Independent Report QUETTA: The Anti-Terrorist Court (ATC) Quetta handed over the activist of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Khadija Shah to Police on three-day remand here on Tuesday.

The ATC Judge, Mr. Saadat Khan Bazai heard the case where Khadija Shah was produced.

The investigation officer present in the court

from Quetta police pleaded for 14 days remand of the PTI activist. However, her lawyer, Iqbal Shah Advocate confronted it and pleaded that there's no justification of two weeks remand of his client.

However, the court approved three days remand of the PTI activist and thus handed her over to the Quetta police on the remand.

US denies any role in choosing Pakistani leaders

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States (US) does not play any role in choosing the leaders of Pakistan, State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said.

In a daily briefing, Matthew Miller said, "We engage with the leadership shown by – or the leadership decided by the Pakistani people, and we will continue to engage with the Government of Pakistan on all these issues." Upon Pakistan-Afghanistan ties, Matthew Miller said the US is concerned about the situation.

"Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan, obviously we support a diplomatic resolution to all of the various issues between those two countries. It's something that we have been engaged on."

Miller said that the US has initiated a process to name former Afghanistan Parliament members to the corrupt leaders list that will bar them from entering the United States.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

A grave injustice

The Indian supreme court has validated the great injustice committed by New Delhi against the people of held Kashmir in August 2019. Hearing a number of petitions challenging the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian constitution over four years ago, the court on Monday ruled that the said article "was an interim arrangement", and that the BJP-led government's dubious decision to scrap the disputed territory's limited autonomy was the "culmination of the process of integration". Pouring salt on the Kashmiris' wounds, one of the justices observed that a 'truth and reconciliation commission' should be set up in the occupied region to probe rights' violations. The learned judge should know that successive Indian governments have systematically denied the Kashmiri people their fundamental rights, and no one believes that an administration that treats Kashmir as conquered territory will seriously look into the abuses perpetrated by its own troops.

Amongst the petitioners were parties that have always been loyal to New Delhi; the Indian state rewarded them for their 'loyalty' by reportedly putting Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah under house arrest before the verdict was announced. The decision is likely to give the BJP's Hindutva juggernaut a further boost in next year's elections, while it is also an attempt to rewrite history. The world recognises Kashmir as a disputed territory, even though India is trying to create new facts on the ground.

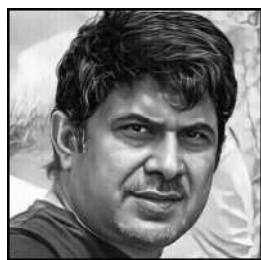
The abrogation of Article 370 has allowed India to change held Kashmir's demographics, and effectively turn Kashmiris into a minority in their ancestral land. In a related development, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah recently told the Lok Sabha that "Nehruvian blunders" had hurt New Delhi's case vis-à-vis Kashmir. The 'blunders' he was referring to were Jawaharlal Nehru's acceptance of the ceasefire during the 1947-48 Pakistan-India war, and taking the dispute to the UN. He added that if these 'mistakes' had not been made, Azad Kashmir would today be part of India. Again, these are reflections of the Sangh's revisionist, revanchist thought, as other Indian ministers have also made irresponsible statements about 'taking back' Gilgit-Baltistan.

The court's decision may strengthen India's stranglehold over Kashmir, but it cannot extinguish the Kashmiris' strong desire for freedom and dignity. No amount of Indian legal subterfuge, or brute force, can stop the Kashmiris from demanding their legitimate rights.

Though Pakistan has rejected the Indian court's decision, unfortunately, successive administrations here have failed to adequately highlight the Kashmir issue diplomatically on the global stage, which has added to India's brazenness.

Sadly, not all occupations are deemed equal by the 'international community', as evident in the fact that the occupation of Kashmir and Palestine is conveniently brushed aside, whilst the occupation of Ukraine is cast as an existential battle between democracy and authoritarianism.

Climate action



Masood Lohar

Contrary to initial doubts, apprehensions, and explicit criticism from activists and environmentalists, COP28, set to conclude today, seems to have proved itself productive and on point.

Before the start of COP28, there was intel-lectual chaos across sectors and regions. Some organisations even boycotted the event, protesting the appointment of Dr Sultan Al Jaber, the CEO of UAE's national oil company ADNOC as the president of COP28. Critics were sceptical about holding the summit in one of the world's top 10 oil-producing countries, fearing bias towards the fossil fuel industry. Controversy escalated when Dr Al Jaber was quoted as saying that there was "no science" indicating that a phase-out of fossil fuels is needed to stop global warming, later clarifying that he was misquoted.

Despite the early scepticism, progress and commitments at the event have made it unique. COP28 has seen unprecedented momentum, inclusivity, and a willingness to adapt. There was optimism for groundbreaking developments, with early consensus reached on the loss and damage issue, setting a positive tone for the remaining agenda items.

Furthermore, the summit has given rise to uncommon occurrences in the UAE, such as protests. Despite the country being seen as an autocracy where political parties and labour unions are prohibited, COP28 has compelled the rulers to allow the entry of human rights researchers from organisations normally frowned upon by the state. Activists argue that the UAE government's motive is to enhance its international image, but they emphasise that only limited protests are permitted, subject to prior approval.

One notable instance involved protesters gathering in solidarity with the Palestinians. Another noteworthy procession took place a few days ago, demanding the release of pro-democracy activists imprisoned in the UAE and Egypt. Described as "historic" by Saudi and UAE human rights researchers, this protest stood out for its audacity and significance.

Almost near to the conclusion of the summit, Dr Al Jaber talked about the historic progress made at the summit, emphasising its uniqueness. He said, "We can all agree COP28 has been different, and I am sure we will agree that COP28 has already made history." The COP28 president has actively engaged with all participating parties, stakeholders, NGOs, civil society, observers, businesses, and industry to advocate for unprecedented ambition in COP history.

This approach challenges the conventional belief that climate diplomacy and environmental conservation should solely rely on traditional UN bureaucracy and less action-oriented NGOs and government departments. Some argue that, for-profit and innovative tech companies can handle climate challenges more efficiently.

The COP leadership, historically held by government officials and diplomats, is now witnessing a shift.

Amid COP28, significant progress has been achieved, including

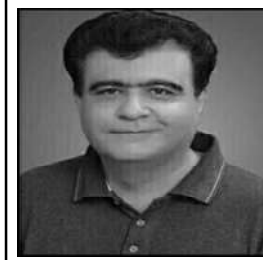
the establishment of a Loss and Damage Fund, launching a \$30 billion private market climate vehicle, and commitments from 51 oil companies and 119 countries to decarbonise and triple renewable energy, respectively. This progress raises questions about whether climate diplomacy is increasingly led by the polluting industry and for-profit tech businesses.

The UAE is positioning itself as a frontrunner in climate innovation by making substantial investments in decarbonisation. In September, a significant carbon capture and storage project was introduced, designed to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those produced annually by half a million petrol-powered cars. ADNOC accelerated its net-zero greenhouse gas target for operational activities, now aiming to achieve this goal by 2045, five years earlier than initially planned. The company has ceased routine methane venting and flaring, seen as a demonstration of a commitment to emissions reduction ahead of its industry counterparts.

Dubai is striving to attain 75 per cent of its total power generation from clean energy sources by 2050 — a potentially transformative move. How did this massive green initiative come about in a region abundant with oil wealth? And that also nearly two decades ago, back in 2006? An approach, predating the widespread adoption of solar technology and climate innovation has the potential to reshape the climate discourse and translate into concrete actions on the ground.

This paradigm shift in the climate narrative brings to mind the expression 'Moses in the house of pharaoh', symbolising a transformative force emerging from an unexpected place. -- Courtesy Dawn

Pakistan regionally



Dr Niaz Murtaza

We lag economically even in South Asia. This lag is well-known but not its huge scale. To display that, I compare Saarc economies using World Bank data which runs up to 2022 and thus excludes our poor 2023 data. I focus on the state we left (India) and the one that left us (Bangladesh) to show our lag even against ones with similar DNAs.

GDP: South Asia (mean), Bangladesh and India's GDP per capita in 2022 were about \$2,200, \$2,700 and \$2,300, but ours was only \$1,600. Their 10-year mean GDP growths were about six per cent but ours only 4.4pc and inflation was 5.3pc, 6.2pc and 5.6pc. Ours was 8pc (and 30pc inflation in 2023).

The investment-GDP ratio of the other three is 30pc but ours only 15pc. Only high investment and productivity ensure long-term high GDP growth. Our low ratio shows that our brief growth spurts under Musharraf, the PML-N and PTI came from high fiscal and external deficits and money supply growth and caused economic crises in 2008, 2018 and 2023.

External balance: We do worse here. Since 2000, we have had seven economic crises that led us to IMF against three for Bangladesh and none for India. This mainly reflects our poor exports, foreign investment and reserves flows. South Asia, Bangladesh and India's 10-year mean export-GDP ratios were about 19pc, 14pc and 21pc; ours only 10pc. Foreign reserves-external debt ratios were 69pc, 60pc and 82pc but

ours only 20pc. Our current account deficit and foreign investment-GDP ratios are also the worst.

Public finance and debt: The regional data here is patchy. India's recent tax-to-GDP ratio is about 20pc, ours 13pc and Bangladesh's 8pc. Yet its debt-GDP ratio was about 40pc in 2021 against 70pc for us, 80pc for India and 86pc for South Asia. But our 10-year debt service-exports ratio is 23pc vs only 12pc, 8pc and 11pc for South Asia, Bangladesh and India.

Our education and health outlay ratios were the lowest but the defence outlay ratio the highest over 10 years. Thus, on almost all key social and economic axes, we lag regionally. Even tiny Maldives (\$11,000), Sri Lanka and Bhutan (both \$3,000-plus) beat us on per capita GDP and Nepal on the human development index, leaving us ahead of only the Afghans. Why has the proud 'ideological' fortress created with so much hype and hope done so much worse than less pretentious states?

We think we were on the way to being an economic star under dictators but got waylaid under civilians. This is humbug. All our regimes used non-durable local or foreign stimuli to achieve transient growth that bust soon. People argue that mean GDP growth under Ayub was 5.8pc but 4.8pc under Bhutto.

Even this is not a big fall. But take Ayub's first five years only to fairly match Bhutto's term, and his falls to 4.9pc. Ayub gained from a booming global economy (capitalism's golden age), huge US aid and unfair milking of the Bengalis. Bhutto had oil shocks, global stagflation and big floods but not aid.

Yet Bhutto did better than Ayub on most key axes: poverty rose under Ayub but fell under Bhutto; our export-GDP ratio was only about

7pc under Ayub but 12pc under Bhutto (it being higher in the civilian 1990s at 16pc); the trade-deficit-GDP ratio was about -7pc under Ayub but only -4pc under Bhutto and investment growth only 12pc under Ayub but highest ever at 35pc under Bhutto.

His public investment fuelled high growth even under Zia initially before US aid became a transient stimulus. But there were big issues with Bhutto's autocratic era too. For example, nationalisation was overdone and state units badly run by a harassed and deskilled bureaucracy.

Later regimes, too, all used non-durable local and/or external stimuli to provide transient growth. But civilians faced the worst external shocks (2008 and Covid-19 global crises) and legacies from eras where the establishment dominated. The result is an unproductive, elitist and patronage-led economy run on transient stimuli and thus crisis-prone. How can change come?

In India and Bangladesh, civilians run the economy and politics. So, the establishment's hold in both realms must end. Civilians must then turn a patronage-led economy into a merit-led one. But our civilian leaders are more elitist than middle-class ones in the other two states.

Even our main middle-class ones offer empty populism. The best they may do if facing collapse is to turn a rapacious economy run by the Ishaq Dars and Shaukat Tarin into only a slightly better neoliberal one run by the Miftah Ismails and Shamshad Akhtars that is less crisis-prone yet more anti-poor and thus more conflict-prone. So, a fair and productive economy remains a distant prospect. The forces that can create it are still too weak. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

SBP maintains policy rate at 22% owing to inflation outlook

KARACHI (INP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Tuesday, decided to maintain the policy rate at 22 % while taking into account higher than expected impact of the recent gas price hike on inflation outlook.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) in its meeting assessed that the real interest rate continues to be positive on a 12-month forward looking basis and inflation was expected to remain on a downward path, said a statement issued here.

The MPC viewed that hike in gas prices may have implications for the inflation outlook, albeit in the presence of some

offsetting developments, particularly the recent decrease in international oil prices and improved availability of agriculture produce.

The MPC noted that the successful completion of the staff-level agreement of the first review under the IMF SBA program would unlock financial inflows and improve the SBP's FX reserves.

The quarterly GDP growth outcome for the first quarter FY24 remained in line with the MPC's expectation of a moderate economic recovery while recent consumer and business confidence surveys show improvement in

sentiments, the committee observed adding that core inflation was still at an elevated level and was coming down only gradually.

Taking stock of the developments, the Committee assessed the current monetary policy stance as appropriate to achieve the inflation target of 5-7 percent by end-FY25 and reiterated that this assessment was also contingent upon continued targeted fiscal consolidation and timely realization of planned external inflows.

The recovery in real GDP during FY24 is expected to remain moderate as real GDP grew

by 2.1 % on year on year basis in Q1-FY24 in comparison to 1.0 percent in the same quarter last year, the MPC noted. Recovery in the agriculture sector was the major driver of the growth while the manufacturing sector also recorded a moderate recovery, with growth in large-scale manufacturing becoming positive after contracting in the preceding four quarters, the committee viewed adding that, unlike the commodity-producing sector, growth in the services sector remained subdued. The MPC observed a significant improvement in the current account balance.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hassan Fawad chairing a meeting of the Privatisation Commission Board.

Fawad chairs meeting of Privatisation Commission Board

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Privatisation Fawad Hasan Fawad on Tuesday chaired a meeting of Privatisation Commission Board.

The Board approved draft Privatisation Commission (Government to Government Agreement Mode-Manner and Procedure) Rules, 2023, according to a press release. The Board also granted approval for a six months extension to the contract of audit firm with

no additional fee for completion of Privatisation Commission audits for the period July 2013 to June, 2022.

Furthermore, the Board referred the decision for transfer of ten percent shares of the OGDC in the name of Petroleum Division to the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP) as the divestment of shares had not been allowed by the CCOP/Cabinet earlier in 2021.

Ethiopia seeks financial sector collaboration with Pak for attracting Pakistani investors

ISLAMABAD (online): The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on Tuesday sought collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in the Financial Sector for attracting investment from Pakistani investors in its flourishing economy.

Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan, expressed the desire for the collaboration in a meeting

with Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs H.E. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interests including different initiatives to deepening the already flourishing bilateral ties between the two countries.

H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker briefed the minister about the home grown economic reforms carried out by H.E. Dr.

Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, in five major sectors including agriculture, agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, technology and tourism.

He also highlighted the initiatives taken by the Embassy of the FDR Ethiopia in Islamabad during its first year for strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries through strong bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation.



ISLAMABAD: Jemal Beker Abdula, Ambassador of Federal Republic of Ethiopia to Pakistan, in a meeting with Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs Dr. Shamshad Akhtar at Finance Division, Islamabad.

Dr Gohar presents investment friendly policies at interaction with Chinese business leaders

BEIJING (APP): Federal Commerce Minister, Dr Gohar Ejaz presented Pakistan's investment-friendly policies at an interaction with prominent Chinese business and investment leaders here and invited them to invest in sectors such as textiles, food, agriculture, livestock and technology, infrastructure and energy.

In an initiative to boost economic and

investment ties between business communities of Pakistan and China, the commerce minister engaged in constructive interaction with prominent Chinese business and investment leaders at the Business networking dinner at a local hotel in Beijing.

Dr Gohar Ejaz along with the top 20 business executives from Pakistan interacted with Chinese business leaders

representing over 150 Chinese enterprises and presented Pakistan's investment-friendly policies, highlighting the country's strategic location, special economic zones, skilled workforce, and potential for business growth.

He emphasized Pakistan's dedication to providing a favourable business environment and facilitation.

ICCI calls for slaughter house and a separate market for poultry sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday said that a new slaughterhouse is a longstanding demand of the business community of the meat sector for enhancing their trade and ensuring the supply of fresh meat to their customers. He urged the

Capital Development Authority in consultation with the stakeholders to establish a state-of-the-art slaughterhouse in the vicinity of the federal capital to promote trade and exports of meat products, besides establishing a separate market for the poultry sector to boost its business activities.

PSX witnesses bullish trend, gains 414 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 414.46 points, a positive change of 0.63 percent, closing at 66,426.78 points against 66,012.33 points the previous trading day. A total of 969,630,378 shares valuing Rs.26.931 billion were traded during the day.

Dubai DET unveils plans to welcome more Pakistani visitors in 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dubai's Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) is making significant strides to increase tourist arrivals from Pakistan, with an ambitious plan for continued growth in 2024.

With Dubai welcomed 13.90 million international visitors from January to October 2023, surpassing the pre-pandemic performance of attracting 13.50 million visitors for the same period in 2019. Pakistan currently stands among Dubai's top 10 source markets, delivering a noteworthy year-to-date visitation of 254,000 overnight visitors from January to October, said a news release here on Tuesday.

CM Naqvi visits PIC, reviews upgradation project

Urges everyone, including himself, to fulfill their duty hours

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Punjab Institute of Cardiology (PIC) here on Tuesday and assessed the ongoing construction activities.

He reviewed the quality of work in the emergency block, which is currently under completion. He directed the authorities to finish the emergency block upgrade project by the end of December and instructed the upgrade of the Punjab Institute of Cardiology's OPD. He stated that the PIC OPD upgrade project would commence next week.

Present at the visit were Provincial Ministers Amir Mir, Dr Javed Akram, Secretary Communication and Works, Secretary Health, CCPO, Commissioner Lahore Division, and other relevant officials.

Talking to the media, the CM mentioned that the PIC's design, developed through consultation, is scheduled for completion by December 30. Addressing the shortage of beds, he announced the addition of 108 more beds post-upgrade. To alleviate patient waiting times for tests, satellite clinics have been initiated in Kot Khawaja Saeed and Shahdara, with

consideration for a clinic at Mian Munshi Hospital.

The chief minister highlighted that the renovation of the OPD would commence next week.

He commended the dedicated team working tirelessly on the ongoing hospital upgrades, including the progress on PIC Third Floor, Ground Floor, and Irfan Block. Additionally, heart clinics are under development in Sahiwal, and work on the incomplete Heart Hospital in Dera Ghazi Khan is underway.

The focus on cardiology facilities extends to Multan and Sialkot as well.



FAISALABAD: Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi is visiting the Allied Hospital Faisalabad to inspect ongoing upgradation projects of Surgical Emergency and OPD Wards.

India's apex court has no legal standing in matters of Kashmir: AJK minister

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Finance Minister and spokesman of the State government Majid Khan has said that the Supreme Court of India has no legal standing in the matters of Kashmir as New Delhi had occupied the territory illegally against the will of the Kashmiri people.

Terming the court order as unfair and politically motivated, Khan said in a statement issued on Tuesday that the verdict

was tantamount to deprive Kashmiris of their basic political and human rights guaranteed to them under the UNSC resolutions and other rights treaties.

Describing Kashmiris as masters of their destiny, Khan made it clear that neither the Indian Parliament nor the Supreme Court of India has any right or authority to determine the political future of Kashmir. Referring to the UNSC resolutions, he said, that under these covenants

only Kashmiris have the right to decide their future. "Jammu and Kashmir stretched over eighty-four thousand square miles is an indivisible entity", he said.

The state of Jammu and Kashmir, he said, has never been a part of the Indian Union. "Kashmir has had a distinct identity even at the time when the entire subcontinent was divided into more than five hundred small states known as Rajwads", the minister added.

KP govt provides mobile hospitals to remote tribal areas

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has provided facilities of mobile hospitals for the basic health facilities in the needed remote areas of the merged districts. Ten vehicles were provided to the health department officials in the merged districts for use as mobile hospitals in areas where basic health facilities are not available.

As a result of this facility, minor operations, laboratory examinations, X-rays, dental treatment and maternity needs can be fulfilled. The said vehicles were donated by the German Development Bank KFW under the Mobile Hospital Centralized Programme for Tribal Areas in 2013 but were lying dysfunctional due to required repairs.

Similarly, seventeen more vehicles will be repaired and provided to these districts for health facilities.

In this regard, a ceremony was held at Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Tuesday wherein the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Industries Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamer Abdullah, Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister on Health Dr. Riaz Anwar, Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, Special Secretary Health Habibullah, Senior Planning Officer of the Department, District Health Officers of the merged districts and other relevant officials participated.



HYDERABAD: Participants are holding awareness walk on the eve of International Human Rights Day organized by Directorate of Human Rights Hyderabad, in Hyderabad.



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan addressing during the 5th sitting of the 27th session of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly under the chair of Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate.

UNDP commemorates Intl human rights day with local community

FAISALABAD (Online): Christian and Muslim community members, Faisalabad Catholic Church, National Commission for Human Rights, Government of Punjab's Human Rights & Minority Affairs Department, civil society organisations along with local businesses, and UNDP Pakistan, jointly marked the International Human Rights Day voicing a shared message

of solidarity, respect, equality, peace, non-discrimination, dignity for all and a core commitment to building a strong, inclusive and rights-based society in Pakistan.

The event organized by UNDP with the support of the Embassy of Norway in Pakistan, aimed at emphasizing and reinforcing the values of inter-faith harmony, equality, inclusion, the right to work.

ANF seizes over 320 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations across the country managed to recover 320 kg of drugs and arrested three accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that in an operation conducted in Gali Jalal Khak of the Qila Abdullah area and recovered over 271 kg of hashish hidden in a house was recovered. 48 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Charsadda while two accused were arrested during the operation. 1.2 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle near Chungi No. 26, Islamabad and an accused was arrested.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act were registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process and companies, providing valuable opportunities for students while meeting the talent needs of companies.

WDD launches gender parity report

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Women Development Department has launched the "Punjab Gender Parity Report 2022," a comprehensive annual publication aimed at fostering gender equality and women empowerment here on Tuesday.

Compiled by the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women, a dedicated institute under the Women Development Department, with collaboration of UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), the

report provides a detailed analysis of gender-disaggregated data across seven thematic areas, including demographics, governance, education, health, economic participation and opportunities, justice, and special initiatives.

The unveiling ceremony was attended by Javid Akram, Provincial Caretaker Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Social Welfare, and Baitul-Mal, who served as the chief guest.

Speakers call for consistent role of education institutions to eradicate corruption

PESHAWAR (APP): Speakers at a seminar here on Tuesday said that corruption was a social evil and proactive role of educational institutions was imperative to eradicate it completely from the society.

The speakers were including Director, National Accountability Bureau, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mian Muhammad Waqar, Director NAB KP said that corruption was like a cancer and its

eradication was inevitable for sustainable economic growth, supremacy of merit and fostering prosperity of Pakistan.

In addition to weakening the social fabric of the society, he said corruption leads to poverty, unemployment and undermined merit. He said there were different types of corruption in developing countries including Pakistan and cooperation of all stakeholders including educational institutions.

International News

Nuclear warnings serve Putin's purpose as he bids for new term

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The prospect of six more years in power for Russian President Vladimir Putin is likely to mean no let-up in nuclear tensions with the United States, as time runs out on the last remaining treaty that limits the number of warheads each side can deploy.

Putin has boasted since launching his 2022 invasion of Ukraine that Russia has the world's most advanced nuclear arms and said it could wipe out any aggressor.

On Monday, three days after announcing he

would stand for re-election in March, he presided at a flag-raising ceremony for two new submarines including the Emperor Alexander III, which last month tested a nuclear-capable Bulava intercontinental ballistic missile.

While denying that Moscow is "brandishing" nuclear weapons and resisting calls to adopt a more aggressive doctrine on their possible use, he has placed his nuclear forces on raised alert and announced the deployment of tactical nuclear missiles in Belarus, his neighbour and ally.

Last month he signed

a law revoking Russia's ratification of the global treaty that bans nuclear testing, although Moscow says it will not carry out a test - which would be its first since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union - unless the United States does so.

Some security analysts say nuclear weapons have assumed greater importance in Putin's thinking and rhetoric as his conventional forces have struggled in Ukraine and as Western countries have weakened themselves off Russian energy, weakening his ability to exert pressure by cutting off oil and gas.



A Palestinian looks on at the site of Israeli strikes on houses amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

Born and killed in Gaza war: grandmother weeps for one-month-old Idres

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Baby Idres was wrapped in a white shroud and a light blue blanket with dots, his grandmother holding his tiny body close to her chest and weeping uncontrollably as she knelt next to a row of corpses lined up on the floor of a Gaza hospital.

Born a month ago as war raged around him, Idres al-Dbari had been living in a tent in Rafah, southern Gaza, with his displaced family when he and his mother Wafaa were killed by an Israeli air strike

overnight on Tuesday.

After the strike, the dead bodies of over a dozen adults and children had been placed on blankets spread on the ground at Abu Yossef Al-Najar hospital in Rafah, all wrapped in white shrouds with names and dates of death written on them in black. Among the bereaved relatives with bowed heads surrounding the dead was Um Zeyad al-Dbari, grandmother of Idres, who gently unwrapped the top of the shroud so that she could see his face and stroke his soft black hair as she cradled him.

Gazans say hunger is growing, fuelling fears of exodus into Egypt

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Fighting between Israel and Hamas intensified across Gaza on Monday, fuelling fears flagged by the United Nations at the weekend of a breakdown in public order and a mass exodus of Palestinians into Egypt.

The narrow coastal strip has been under a full Israeli blockade since the start of the conflict more than two months ago and the border with Egypt is the only other way out. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been driven from their homes.

Brazil's first lady X account hacked, authorities open investigation

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: Brazilian First Lady Rosângela "Janja" Silva had her account on social media platform X hacked on Monday, prompting local authorities to launch an investigation and request that the Elon Musk-owned company freeze her profile. The alleged hacker posted several messages on Janja's account, including insults against the first lady and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

China's Xi visits Vietnam in bid to counter US

Monitoring Desk
HANOI: China's President Xi Jinping called Tuesday for a "new stage" in relations with Vietnam as he began his first visit in six years, seeking to counter the United States' growing influence with the communist nation.

Xi will meet the leader of Vietnam's ruling Communist Party, Nguyen Phu Trong, later on Tuesday, after Hanoi upgraded diplomatic ties with Washington when US President Joe Biden visited in September.

Biden's visit was part of US efforts around the world to contain China's rising economic power—and to secure supplies of crucial materials needed for

high-tech manufacturing.

Speaking after his arrival at Hanoi's airport, Xi said he would talk with Vietnamese leaders on "the overall, strategic, and directional issues of China-Vietnam relations, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, in order to push bilateral relations into a new stage", according to Chinese state media. Vietnam has long pursued a "bamboo diplomacy" approach, striving to stay on good terms with both China and the United States. It shares US concerns about Beijing's increasing assertiveness in the contested South China Sea, but it also has close economic ties with China.



Climate activists attend a protest against fossil fuels at Dubai's Expo City during the United Nations Climate Change Conference COP28 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

EU gives Mahsa Amini rights prize as Iran blocks family attendance

Monitoring Desk
STRASBOURG: EU lawmakers on Tuesday present a top rights prize to Mahsa Amini, whose death in Iranian custody sparked mass protests, but her family won't attend after being blocked by Tehran.

The award—also for the broader "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement—is the latest international recognition for the women challenging Iran's religious government after jailed activist Narges Mohammadi was given the Nobel Peace Prize.

Amini's mother, father and brother will miss the ceremony at the Euro-

pean Parliament in the French city of Strasbourg as Iran's authorities confiscated their passports and barred them from flying to collect the EU's Sakharov Prize.

Iranian Kurd Amini died on September 16, 2022 at the age of 22 while being held by Iran's religious police for allegedly breaching the Islamic republic's strict dress code for women.

Her death triggered major protests in Iran and a global movement known as "Woman, Life, Freedom", calling for the end of the Muslim cleric-led government in Tehran.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy walks next to U.S. Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) as he arrives for a meeting with all U.S. senators at the Capitol in Washington, U.S.

Hong Kong 'patriots only' elections see lowest-ever turnout

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Hong Kong's first "patriots only" district council elections saw a turnout of 27.5 percent, the government said Monday, a record-low number for a race that had shut out all opposition candidates.

The city last held district council elections at the peak of huge, sometimes violent, democracy protests in 2019, recording a historic-high 71 percent turnout that delivered a

landslide victory for the democracy camp.

But a clampdown on dissent—aided by a sweeping national security law imposed by Beijing—has included a drive by authorities to weed out from public office anyone deemed politically disloyal after the protests.

Sunday's voting day stretched to midnight, after a rare 90-minute extension was granted following a failure in the digital system used to confirm voters' eligibility.

UK PM Sunak 'deeply sorry' for pandemic deaths as he faces inquiry

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday said he was "deeply sorry" for those who lost family during the Covid pandemic as he was quizzed about his actions as finance minister during the global health emergency.

Sunak is expected to face questions at the public inquiry into the UK's handling of the crisis over whether his "Eat Out to Help Out" scheme to boost the struggling hospitality sector during the pandemic spurred the spread of Covid-19. But he started the session by saying "how deeply sorry I am to all of those who lost loved ones, family members through the pandemic".

He also explained that he had lost WhatsApp messages sent during the crisis as they had not transferred over to his new phones.

Ex-Afghan troops 'abandoned' by UK face deportation threat

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Around 200 Afghan special forces personnel, stranded in Pakistan while awaiting relocation to the UK, are facing deportation back to the country they escaped from in 2021, according to BBC.

The report says the personnel, trained and funded by the UK, fled to Pakistan after the Afghan Taliban took over Kabul.

was revealed the government also rejected calls from senior British diplomatic and military figures to offer asylum to key Afghan leaders whose lives were in danger.

The future of the Afghan soldiers appears to be in limbo after it was revealed that the UK government did not pay heed to the call for "urgent help" for 32 former governors and officials who worked with the UK and US in Afghanistan's Helmand province.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhhi chaired the 37th Inter-Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) in Islamabad.

CDWP meeting approves vital development projects valued Rs.36.219 Billion

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Dr. Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan, deliberated on vital development projects spanning diverse sectors including Physical Planning and Housing, Transport and Communication, and Water Resources.

Secretary Planning, Mr. Awais Manzoor Sumra, Members of the Planning Commission, representatives from line ministries, provincial P&D departments, and officials from the Planning Ministry attended the meeting.

CDWP discussed a comprehensive overview of 4 significant projects, collectively valued at Rs. 36.219 Billion. Among these, 3 projects received

recommendations for further consideration by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC), while 1 secured approval from the CDWP forum.

It is noteworthy that the CDWP accorded highest priority to the Post-Flood reconstruction and rehabilitation initiatives. Four projects were discussed under the Post-Flood 2022 Reconstruction Program namely "Resilience Enhancement and Livelihood Diversification in Balochistan (Public Health Engineering/Water Supply Infrastructure Sector, with the total cost of Rs. 2800 Million, Resilience Enhancement and Livelihood Diversification in Balochistan (Road Infrastructure CW and PPHD), worth Rs. 13,809.544 Million,

Resilience Enhancement and Livelihood Diversification in Balochistan (Irrigation Infrastructure) worth Rs. 8250 Million, and Livelihood Interventions for integrated Flood Resilience and Adaptation Program (IFRAP) with the total cost of Rs. 11,360 Million.

The Post-Flood 2022 Reconstruction Program emphasizing resilience enhancement and livelihood diversification in Balochistan (road infrastructure CW&PPHD), with a total cost of Rs. 13,809.544 Million, was recommended to ECNEC. This project, funded by the World Bank, aims to strengthen transportation infrastructure by constructing resilient roads and bridges, significantly reducing travel time for the residents.



KARACHI: Group photo of 6th Maritime Security Workshop participants on board PNS Taimur during visit.

NPMC reviews prices, supply situation of essential commodities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday chaired a meeting of the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC). The meeting discussed prices and supply of essential commodities, margin between wholesale and retail prices, and availability of essential items, a news release said.

The Chief Statistician of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) presented the price movement of 51 essential items collected from the markets of 17 cities. Minister Sami Saeed urged participants to ensure prices' stability across provinces, seeking their oversight of the supply of essential items, available stock levels and the monitoring of pricing mechanisms. He also urged Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Com-

missioners to strictly employ the Decision Support System (DSS) App developed by the PBS for price monitoring. He emphasized the critical role of administrative oversight and monitoring for maintaining price stability.

Moreover, the meeting utilized by the prospective utilization by the provinces of remote sensing technology facilitated by SUPARCO for better monitoring of cropped areas and the likely supply situation of essential food items.

The minister encouraged the exploration and implementation of remote sensing capabilities to bolster the monitoring and oversight capacities. Sami Saeed emphasized the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures for smoothing supply to address fluctuations in commodity prices.



ISLAMABAD: Provincial Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan in a group photo with President Allied Health Professional Council (AHPC) Pakistan after a meeting.

Preparations reviewed: Quaid-e-Azam Day to be observed in befitting manner in Ziarat

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Quaid-e-Azam Day would be observed on December 25 in befitting manner.

In this regard, the necessary preparations have been started in Ziarat.

A meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Hamoodur Rehman reviewed the arrangements being made in Ziarat on Tuesday.

The meeting was attended by the Assistant Commissioner Ziarat Muhammad Hanif Noorzai, Executive Engineer Road, Nausherwan Muhammad Shahi, Executive Engineer, PHE, Esa Marri, and other concerned. The meeting finalized

preparations for observing the Quaid Day in befitting manner.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner vowed to observe the Quaid Day in befitting manner.

He announced that an impressive ceremony would be held at the Quaid-e-Azam Residency.

The high ups would be attending the ceremony, the Deputy Commissioner added.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner Ziarat visited the Quaid Residency.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner directed to improve the cleanliness system further.

PTI intra party election: EC adjourns hearing till Thursday

ISLAMABAD (Online): Barrister Zafar Ali while giving arguments in the case of PTI intra party election in Election Commission (EC) said Tuesday election was coming near and we want the case is decided soon.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) said "you did not hold election for 5 years too which is not correct in our sight."

PTI intra party election matter came up for hearing before a bench of EC presided over by CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja Tuesday.

Barrister Ali Zafar said we held intra party election within twenty days on the directives of EC. We don't want the largest party be kept from election symbol. Election is getting close and we want case is decided soon.

The CEC said you did not hold election for 5 years which is not correct in our sight.

Barrister Ali Zafar said we held election as per your order. Peshawar High Court (PHC) said EC cannot make final decision.

Siraj ul Haq says: Those fearing to be held accountable giving proposals to delay polls

LAHORE (INP): Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), Sirajul Haq has said that those who fear of being held accountable are forwarding proposals to delay general elections.

Talking to media persons at Mansoorah on Tuesday, he argued that even in democratic countries at war, citizens are not deprived of their voting rights.

Sirajul Haq dismissed justifications for election delays based on security concerns or adverse weather conditions in less than one percent of the country's area, labeling them as mere excuses to deny voters their right to choose leadership. He emphasized that the continuity of democracy is crucial for establishing peace and prosperity and emphasized the constitutional responsibility of the government to ensure public protection and safety.

Sindhi urges provinces to work with fed govt in resolving education sector problems

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Mr Madad Ali Sindhhi Tuesday said that all the provinces need to work together with the federal government to resolve all education-related problems.

He was chairing the 37th Inter-Provincial Education Ministers' Conference (IPEMC) held here yesterday. The Meeting has been specially called on by the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Mr Madad Ali Sindhhi to deliberate on the "Formulation of Uniform National Strategy to Cater the issue of Out of School Children (OOSC)".

Speaking on the occasion, Madad Ali Sindhhi said that Out of school children is the biggest challenge we face in addition to quality of education. Madad said that these issues have been given top priority.

He said that the qual-

ity of education needs to be improved at all levels including schools, colleges and universities. Madad said that we have enough resources to make a difference, we just need to work hard with honesty.

Madad Ali Sindhhi said that the Education Ministry was ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken to devise strategies that benefit students, teachers and parents in every province.

Madad Ali Sindhhi in his remarks said that the meeting was going to play an instrumental role in developing a cohesive plan for providing access to education in all corners of Pakistan.

He reiterated that IPEMC's contributions were going to be significant in the enrollment of Out of school children (OOSC) including the distance learning interventions.

He also assured the provinces that maximum

facilitation would be given to them for reaping benefits from these projects.

Madad said that the Federal Government has a steadfast commitment to address school-related challenges, which is why we have organised this conference to foster an inclusive environment for all provinces to fully participate. Each province will be given the platform to present its plans and formulate practical strategies to address challenges related to out-of-school children.

Madad said that he hopes that the conference successfully fulfils its objective of formulating a uniform national strategy to tackle challenges faced by children outside the school system. The minister was told that Rs. 25 Billion has been allocated to address the out-of-school problem.

He was apprised of the out-of-school children crisis, in addition to pivotal updates on education initiatives.



QUETTA: Haji Sultan and Haji Abdul Malik Lehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar.

Balochistan police acquire PITB services

LAHORE (APP): Following the success of Punjab Information Technology Board's (PITB) office automation system in Punjab, the government of Balochistan also approached PITB. E-Foas has also been implemented in the Central Police Office Quetta.

According to PITB spokesman here Tuesday, the Balochistan Police Department has acquired PITB's services for the implementation of e-Foas, following the success of the e-filing and office automation system developed by the Government Digital Services Wing, under the guidance of PITB Chairman Faisal Yusuf. The team under the supervision of DG Government Digital Services Wing Muhammad Waseem Bhatti imple-

mented e-Foas in the Central Police Office Quetta within a short span of time. From now on, the CPO Office Quetta will distribute all departmental matters digitally rather than on paper.

In this regard, IG Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh praised the PITB team for implementing the system in the police department within the stipulated time. The Director General, Government Digital Services wing PITB, stated that the wing was not only performing its services for the improvement of the governance system in Punjab, but also the Central Police Office of Balochistan had also been equipped with a digital system. It will not only speed up departmental affairs, help solve public problems.

PM to join AJK LA's special session on situation post Indian SC's verdict on IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar will attend the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir's (AJK) legislative assembly to discuss the situation after the verdict of the Indian Supreme Court on Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). This was decided in PM Kakar's meeting with the prime minister of AJK Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq held here at the PM House, PM Kakar said Pakistan rejected the decision of India's top court to uphold the Indian government's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).



QUETTA: Chief Guest caretaker Provincial Minister for Health Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogeza addressing participants of PPF ceremony.

Pak seeks stronger ties with China: Envoy Hashmi

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan's desire for stronger ties with China reflects the mutual benefits and shared interests that exist between the two nations.

This strategic partnership encompasses various areas such as economic cooperation, infrastructure development, renewable energy, and cultural exchanges, said Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi.

In an interview with China Economic Net, Hashmi elaborated the flourishing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Belt & Road Initiative (BRI), emphasizing the need for enhanced industrial cooperation, trade, and investment between the two nations.

The Ambassador identified the key areas of focus, including agriculture, information technology, livelihood, and green development, aligning with the priorities outlined during Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng's recent visit to Pa-

kistan from July 30 to August 1, 2023.

"We need to quickly improve our productive capacity because the Phase-1 of CPEC was primarily to develop infrastructure and energy.

In terms of the next phase of CPEC, it is the establishment of five corridors, the corridor of growth, innovation, green development, livelihoods, and inclusiveness. These are all areas which are in alignment with our priorities," he stated.

Khalil Hashmi said that the recent trade protocols signed between China and Pakistan opened up around \$30 billion market for Pakistan, covering items such as heated beef, dried chili, Pakistani dairy products, and animal skins.

The Ambassador commended China's efforts for creating & enabling conditions for trade, including regulatory adjustments and the provision of dedicated officers in the Chinese embassy to assist Pakistani exporters.

ZAB Presidential Reference is test for Judiciary, Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Presidential Reference is a test for Judiciary.

Some forces still do not want justice for Bhutto.

The court should correct the history and rectify the blunder. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's killers should be exposed.

While talking to media after hearing on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Presidential Reference in Supreme Court (SC), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that reference was heard after 12 years.

Petition was filed in 2018 that reference should be heard immediately. We want justice for leader of nation Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

He said that we believe that we will get justice. This matter should come before people that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was innocent. We want answers of those questions which were raised in Reference.



QUETTA: Special Secretary Finance Habibur Rehman Jamote attending a meeting with IMF regarding implementation of provincial budget.

Implementation Committee reviews progress on Diامر Basha, Mohmand Dams

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Implementation Committee on Diامر Basha and Mohmand Dams (ICDBMD), constituted by the Supreme Court of Pakistan reviewed progress on both projects in its meeting held here Tuesday at ICDBMD Secretariat.

The meeting which met with Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA)/ ICDBMD Chairman Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) in the Chair, was also attended by Chief Secretary Gilgit Baltistan, Additional Secretary (Budget) Finance Division and Secretary/Senior Member Board of Revenue Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) via Zoom, said a press release.

Additional Chief Secretary (Development) KP, Joint Secretary PM Office, ICDBMD Secretary/Joint Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Representative of Chief (Water) Planning, Development and Reforms Division and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

The Chairman WAPDA while addressing the meeting, expressed satisfaction over the progress made by the ICDBMD and its Sub Committees for early implementation of Diامر Basha and Mohmand Dam Projects.

The Chairman said that the Dams Committee has been contributing towards the implementation of both vital projects. He thanked the participants and expressed that the ICDBMD forum can play a pivotal and effective role in overseeing and resolving the issues being faced during the execution of both projects.

Member (Finance) WAPDA later briefed the meeting on the financial matters of the two projects. General Manager Land Acquisition & Resettlement, Chief Executive Officer Diامر Basha Dam Company and General Manager Mohmand Dam also made detailed presentations to the participants about the progress and the issues relating to both Projects.

Allied health profession education being given priority, says Secretary

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has stated that the allied health profession education is being given priority to improve healthcare services by developing human resource in the province.

The Secretary Health was speaking to the President Allied Health Professional Council (AHPC) Pakistan, Zamrud Khan to whom he called on Tuesday.

During the course of meeting, Secretary AHPC

and other representatives were also present.

The Secretary Health said that the plan is under consideration to upgrade the medical faculty in the intermediate education board.

He said that the proposed plan would be presented for up-gradation of multi purpose school Balochistan at the college level.

The President of the council assured whole-hearted cooperation to the provincial Health department.



QUETTA: Journalists Zafar Baloch and Behram Baloch meeting with Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai.

QESCO recovers over 2 bln from electricity defaulters

QUETTA (APP): Quetta Electric Supply Company has recovered over billion from the defaulters in an operation during last three months, a QESCO handout issued here on Tuesday said. Some 30 crore rupees have been collected from illegal electricity users as detection and fines.

As per details, on the special instructions of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), Quetta Electric Supply Company is conducting indiscriminate actions against defaulters in all operation circles across the province.

In this regard, during the last three months, QESCO teams carried out operations in all operation circles across the province, including the provincial capital Quetta.

Similarly, FIRs have also been registered in various police stations against 492 electricity thieves.

In addition, 69 lakh 12 thousand 247 electricity units were charged as fines for detection during the action against illegal electricity users by QESCO teams, of which it has received about 30 crore rupees so far.



QUETTA: Residents of Sariyab road are holding protest demonstration against low pressure of sui gas in their area, outside Sui Gas Office in Quetta.

Balochistan sports, youth, cultural festival kicks off in Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): Balochistan Sports, Youth and Cultural Festival kicked off in Gwadar on December 10. Several events are being organized on sports grounds, beaches, and colleges.

The 6-day festival will end on December 15th, 2023. According to the Sports & Youth Affairs Department, Government of Balochistan, the Sports Festival includes Football, Cricket (Men, Women), Volleyball, Boxing, Body Building, futsal (Men, Women), and many beach games. Leading multiple organizations in Quetta and social activist Muqaddas Riaz said that it's promising to witness the convergence of sports and youth

capabilities, envisioning a future where Balochistan nurtures polished gems and experts. She said that there is a lot of potential in Balochistan in sports. There should be several sports complexes and playgrounds and training academies for all kinds of sports with hostel facilities to attract sportsmen, bringing investment, and better competition for the improvement of sports.

Gwadar, located in Balochistan has been developing rapidly, and local authorities often organize various events, including sports festivals, to promote tourism, cultural exchange, and community engagement. Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.