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Interim govt's marvelous job; completes road project of Quetta Dev. Package in four months

Caretaker CM Balochistan inaugurates Link Badini road extension project; vows to complete remaining projects of Quetta Development Package as well

Independent Report

QUETTA: The interim Balochistan Government did a marvelous job by completing a road project under the Quetta Development Package in short span of four months, which otherwise pending for last seven years.

The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki formally inaugurated the Link Badini Road extension project.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister regrettably pointed out that the pace of projects of Quetta Development Package was very slow, however, provision of necessary funds was ensured for the road project by the interim government.

In addition to this, the hurdles were also removed in way of execution of the projects by extending complete administrative support.

Moreover, all available resources were also mobilized for providing benefits of the projects, he mentioned adding that the foundation stone of the Sabzal road to link road Samunli cross via Shabo to Airport road has also been laid.

He also said that the pending project of Link Badini road has been completed during the period of caretaker government.

Mr. Domki said that it is our utmost endeavour to complete the public projects of collective important nature at the earliest.

He also said that the welfare of masses is included in priorities of the caretaker government.

He was of the view that there would be marked improvement in flow of traffic with completion of the roads and communication projects in Quetta city. The general public would also have the facility of alternate roads instead of the

crowded ones in the city, he added.

The caretaker Chief Minister vowed that other projects of Quetta Development Package would also be completed soon. The projects of Sariab road, Sabzal road and Anscumb road would also be completed in short period, he pledged.

He also assured to extend wholehearted assistance to the important initiative of public nature and importance.

Earlier, the caretaker CM inaugurated the Link Badini road extension project. He also performed groundbreaking of another road project.

Also present on the occasion were additional Chief secretary planning and development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Project Director Quetta Package, Rafiq Baloch, commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat besides others.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki addressing inaugural ceremony of Link Badini Dual Road completed under Quetta Development Package

Pakistan to observe day of mourning on demise of Amir of Kuwait

PM Kakar to travel to Kuwait to convey condolences on death of Amir Sheikh Nawaf

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has declared Monday, December 18 as a day of mourning in Pakistan as an expression of fraternal solidarity on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan, with the royal family, the

government, and people of Kuwait on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

The national flag shall fly at half mast throughout the coun-

try on the day. Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday will undertake a one-day visit to Kuwait.

He will convey to the Royal Family, the government and the people of Kuwait the sympathies and condolences of the Government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al

Jaber Al Sabah, Foreign Office Spokesperson said on X on Sunday.

FM urges UN to ensure implementation of resolutions on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani has called on the UN Security Council to ensure full implementation of its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

According to a press release of the Foreign Office, the Foreign Minister in his letters to the leadership of the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the European Union has invited their attention to the illegality of the recent judgment by the Supreme Court of India on the status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The Foreign Minister also called on the interna-

tional organizations to urge India to end the grave and systematic human rights violations in IIOJK and to reverse all its illegal and unilateral actions undertaken since 5 August 2019. In these letters, the Foreign Minister underscored that under international law, domestic legislation and judicial verdicts cannot be invoked to determine the final status of an internationally-recognized disputed territory.

He also condemned the unlawful measures of the Indian authorities to consolidate their occupation of IIOJK and persistent suppression of the rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Jan Achalzai expresses solidarity: Victims of Methodist Church tragedy remembered on 6th anniversary

QUETTA: The anniversary of Methodist Church Quetta tragedy was observed here in the metropolis on Sunday.

A special memorial service was held at the Methodist Church in which the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achalzai especially participated.

The religious personalities of the Christian community including priest Simon Bashir and others also participated in the event.

Moreover, the men, women and children belonging to the Christian

community including the heirs of those lost lives in the tragedy also participated.

The special prayers were offered for the victims and affectees of the terrorism incident occurred on December 17, 2017.

The caretaker Minister Information expressed solidarity with the victims of the Methodist Church tragedy. He said that Islam and other religions of the world condemn the terrorism acts.

It may be mentioned here that some nine persons had lost lives while over 50 injured in the suicide blast hit the Methodist Church.

Evidence of foreign weapons use against Pakistan by terrorists expose

RAWALPINDI (Online): Evidence of the use of foreign weapons brought from Afghanistan in terrorist attacks in Pakistan again came to light.

According to security sources, the Pakistani army has been fighting the war of terrorism against the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for the past two decades. Weapons are also available.

The supply of arms to TTP has caused significant damage to the security of the region, especially as terrorism has increased in Pakistan.

The Baloch Liberation Army also attacked FC camps in Nushki and Panjgur districts in February 2022, using the same weapons. TTP also used American weapons in the July 12, 2023 attack on Zhob Garrison. On September 2023, TTP terrorists armed with the latest American weapons attacked two army check posts in Chitral. In the Mianwali Air Base attack on November 4, the weap-

ons recovered from the terrorists were foreign-made, including RPG-7, AK-74, M-4 and M-16/A4 were used on December 12 in Dera Ismail Khan. Night vision goggles and American rifles were also used by the terrorists in the terrorist attack in Daraban area. In the terrorist incident in Tank on December 15, modern American weapons were found with the terrorists.

In the attack, 3 policemen were martyred and 5 Terrorists went to hell, terrorists used M16/A2, HE Grenades, AK-47.

On December 13, customs and security forces recovered modern American weapons from a vehicle coming from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Arms were covered in sacks of onions. The weapons included modern American M4, American rifle, grenades.

Pakistan's smuggling of advanced American weapons from Afghanistan and the TTP's use of American weapons against the secu-

city forces and the Pakistani people are a big question mark on the claims of the Afghan Transitional Government not to use them against its own land, Pakistan.

According to Eurasian Times, US-made weapons are also being used in the operations of TTP terrorists in Pakistan.

Pentagon said the U.S. delivered a total of 427,300 combat weapons to the Afghan military, with 300,000 remaining at the time of withdrawal, which has seen a massive increase in terrorism in the region over the past two years.

United States provided \$18.6 billion in equipment to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces between 2005 and August 2021. These weapons helped the TTP carry out cross-border terrorist attacks after the U.S. withdrawal. All these facts indicate that the Afghan regime is not only arming the TTP but also providing a safe haven for other terrorist organizations.



ISLAMABAD: Peoples Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) President, Asif Ali Zardari in meeting with renowned religious scholar and former federal minister Hamid Saeed Kazmi, held at Zardari House in Islamabad.

Changez Hayee Baloch joins National Party: Let masses elect their representatives in elections, pleads Dr. Malik Baloch

Independent Report

QUETTA: The son of late senior Baloch nationalist politician, Changez Hayee Baloch joined the National Party (NP) here on Sunday.

Changez Hayee Baloch announced his joining in the NP in presence of the party leadership including President, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, secretary General, Jan Buledi, Kabir Muhammad Shahi and others.

Addressing the presser, Changez Hayee Baloch said that National Party is a voice of oppressed nationalities as it has proved it through its constant struggle.

He pledged to wage struggle for rights of the people of province together

with the party's leadership. He said that the excellent political history of the province is being tainted.

Speaking on the occasion, NP President Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch welcomed Changez Hayee Baloch in the party.

He stressed that free and fair elections must be conducted in the country, as if it was not the case, then the differences and gaps would be increased between the people of Balochistan and the federation.

He pleaded that the masses may be given right to elect their representatives.

He also vowed to continue the process of dialogue in the province from where it was abandoned in the past.

Our freedom, politics, economy is at stake: Fazlur Rehman

MARDAN (Online): Jamat Ulema E Islam-Fazl (JUIF) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that our freedom is at stake, our politics and economy are under pressure.

Foreign agents are guilty of blasphemy: Fazlur Rehman

We will thwart every conspiracy against Madrasah, JUIF chief said the world is watching the genocide of Palestine, Pakistan has an atomic bomb, but we do not have the power to do so, we are the guarantors of the protection of human rights.

CM condoles over demise of Amir of Kuwait

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the death of Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

The Caretaker Chief Minister prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and courage for the bereaved family.

"People of Pakistan are equally grieved and share their grief with the Kuwaiti Royal Family and the people of Kuwait at this moment of sorrow, the CM said.



QUETTA: National Party (NP) Central President, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch along with others addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

PEC vows to play wholehearted role for ensuring free, fair and peaceful general elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Election Commissioner, Ejaz Anwar Chohan has pledged to play wholehearted role for ensuring free, fair and peaceful general elections in the province. He assured that all the political parties would be provided level playing field. Moreover, the political parties and their candidates would also be equally treated.

The PEC said that we would call Pak army if needed, in addition to the Police, Levies and Frontier Corps (FC).

The newly appointed PEC was speaking to the media after addressing the returning officers at their training session conducted at a local hotel on Sunday.

The PEC maintained that he has met the Inspector General of Police, who has informed that the situation happens to be quite difference in Balochistan as compared to other parts of the country.



Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi talking with media men during his visit to Uthal

PPP won't make alliance with PTI: Zardari

PESHAWAR (INP) - Former President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday said that the PPP would not make an alliance with the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He expressed these views during a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and party leaders at the Governor House. The discussion also touched upon matters concerning the allocation of tickets.

The former president asked a prompt resolution of internal party differences.

PkMAP leaders call for meeting demands of Chaman dharna

Abdul Rahim Zariatwal says PkMAP ready for general elections; Chaman protest to be on election agenda

QUETTA: The leaders of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) have demanded of the government to meet the demands of participants of dharna being staged in Chaman.

If the demands of participants of dharna were not met, then protest demonstrations and dharnas would be staged in the southern districts of Balochistan.

The senior leader of PkMAP Abdul Rahim Zariatwal was addressing press conference along with Dr. Hamid Khan Achakzai, Kabir Afghan and others here at the Quetta press club on Sunday.

Abdul Rahim Zariatwal said that the people of Chaman live on one side of the border while they do business on the other side of border.

Under the given circumstances, it is not possible to enforce passport in the border area, Mr. Zariatwal asserted.

The senior leader of

PkMAP said that we don't want to increase hardships of Pakistan, rather want to decrease them.

But, we are being punished for speaking of democracy.

He regrettably pointed out that the people are forced to lead miserable in Chaman life just because they are deprived of the livelihood. It has become hard for them to make their both ends meet, he added.

The PkMAP leader also said that we want such a system and mechanism under which people of both sides move across the border. He also said that the PkMAP is ready for taking part in the general elections.

However, the issue of Chaman would be our agenda in the elections, he announced. Mr. Zariatwal said that the matters about the electoral alliance or seat adjustment would be decided in coming days.

He also referred to the protest dharna saying that it is continued for last two months, but the government is not taking it seriously.

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Effective CT plan

The state has failed to evolve an effective counterterrorism strategy to deal with the resurgent militant threat, with the result that the outgoing year has seen an alarming rise in terrorist attacks, and an unacceptable loss of life, particularly among security personnel.

Just days after at least 23 army men were martyred in Dera Ismail Khan in the highest casualty attack this year, five more security personnel fell in the line of duty on Friday in separate attacks in KP's Tank and Khyber districts.

In the Tank attack, three policemen were martyred after militants stormed the local police headquarters. In Khyber, two FC men were martyred when terrorists struck a checkpoint. The fact that these attacks took place so soon after a major act of terrorism reflects a considerable security and intelligence lapse.

The area in focus — the southern part of KP and neighbouring districts in Balochistan and Punjab — has become a new hotbed of militancy, particularly after the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul in 2021, though it should be remembered that this region was amongst the locations from where the banned TTP initially sprang. A new actor has emerged from the nebulous world of militancy in the form of Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan, believed to be a TTP front. This outfit has been involved in some of the deadliest attacks this year.

While it is true that militant groups often take on new monikers, their leadership, networks and goals remain largely the same. Therefore, CT efforts should not be distracted by names, and focus on the leaderships of these groups, their sources of funding and supplies.

The state has directed much of its wrath at the Afghan Taliban government for failing to rein in anti-Pakistan terrorists believed to be active across the Durand Line. While Kabul's rulers certainly cannot be absolved of their duty to prevent militants from jeopardising Pakistan's security, the responsibility for securing our territory is ours alone, and we cannot blame others for our lapses.

By all means, Kabul must be told that Afghan soil cannot be used to harbour terrorists, and diplomatic pressure should continue if the Taliban fail to deliver. But implementing an effective CT strategy is the government's duty. It should not be forgotten that many of those involved in acts of terrorism are locals, while the socioeconomic marginalisation of the vulnerable geographic area has also fuelled radicalisation. Therefore, a rejuvenated NAP is required to quell the violence, while longer-term efforts are needed to address the deprivation of the affected areas. Pakistan can ill afford a new full-blown militant insurgency. Unless steps are taken now to address the threat, that is exactly what stares us in the face. The caretaker set-up and the incoming government must deal with this threat resolutely.

Pak-US relations



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

At the outset, it is important to recognise that the US has already chosen its strategic partner in South Asia: India. The US requires India's cooperation in pursuit of its priority national security objective: strategic competition with China and containing the latter's economic rise. The US might perceive Pakistan to be a hurdle in two respects: its close friendship with China and its mutually hostile ties with India. This bigger picture is not likely to change soon.

To complicate matters, perceptions about Pakistan in the US and the latter's image in Pakistan have been deeply bruised by the US-led 'war on terror'. Many Pakistanis believe that America dragged Pakistan into a war that was not ours; one which caused enormous human and financial losses to our country. There is a view that America befriends Pakistan only when it requires help to advance its security agenda. For its part, the US perceives Pakistan as a country that impeded its military victory in Afghanistan by providing sanctuaries to the Taliban. US officialdom also accused Pakistan of playing a double game.

Nevertheless, the US, it appears, would still like to engage with Pakistan for two reasons. First, it would not like to see Pakistan completely slip into China's sphere of influence. Secondly, the US might adopt a more balanced approach to South Asia because of India's tendency to exercise its strategic autonomy, in-

cluding ties with America's rivals, such as Russia.

However, the process of boosting ties with the US will be incremental, with no likelihood of high-level structured engagement at this stage. Nor is any major initiative expected from either side.

Fortunately, people-to-people relations between the two countries has survived the roller coaster nature of government-to-government ties. Both countries will benefit from investing in areas that enjoy popular support in Pakistan. For instance, IT professionals would want to strengthen their links with Silicon Valley. Pakistani students would welcome enhanced opportunities for higher education in American universities. And the US healthcare system has been a preferred destination for Pakistani physicians for several decades.

Meanwhile, US agriculture experts are held in esteem for their contribution to creating crop varieties in Pakistan in the early life of the country. Even today, agriculture remains a potential area of bilateral cooperation. Corporate America might also want to invest in Pakistan's rich mines and minerals industry, particularly in Balochistan.

It would be in our interest to attract investments into the country from the West to build their stakes in the stability of Pakistan. This can be done by facilitating further people-to-people ties and opening new special windows or economic zones for businesses from the West with incentives comparable to those offered to any other foreign investor in Pakistan.

The revival of close economic relations with the US should not be a zero-sum exercise in the context of Pakistan's ties with China, which remain deep-rooted. It would be a folly to view these two important relationships as

an either-or choice for Pakistan. It is heartening that the leadership of the US and China have announced that there will not be another Cold War and that they would not like to see the world divided into camps.

Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics will also be facilitated if we maintain close ties with all countries, including the US and China, to help Pakistan bolster its economic growth and development. Those who argue that Pakistan should pick its side and not sail in two rival boats are not factoring in the point that in a multipolar world, multi-alignments are the order of the day.

In seeking to enhance our relations with the US, it would be important to reorient this bilateral relationship from a counterterrorism and security-centric angle to the mutually beneficial fields of trade and investment, underpinned by strong people-to-people ties.

China, which has been a reliable development partner all these years, is not likely to resent Pakistan's close economic ties with the US. Yet, it would be in our interest to keep Chinese and other investors in Pakistan on board with our desire to diversify the sources of investment in the country. The latter would also be better served by adopting transparency and equal opportunity approach for all investment projects.

The Special Investment Facilitation Council has opened an attractive 'single window' for investments by facilitating entrepreneurs in the sectors of agriculture, mines and minerals, IT, and energy. It would be useful if, besides investment partners from the Gulf countries, corporate America also took advantage of the SIFC to invest in Pakistan, given its high-dividend market. -- Courtesy Dawn

Bad business



Muna Khan

In my lectures about audience metrics — who and how audiences view and share stories — I always bring up Freaks and Geeks, a 1999 TV show that was cancelled after just one season.

The show enjoys cult status today but met a terrible fate for various reasons, including a difficult relationship between the creators and the network. Its air time was unsuitable — Saturday 8pm when teenagers, the prime target audience, did not watch TV. It was competing against Who Wants to be a Millionaire, a popular game show which drew 18 million viewers followed by a new show, Friends, which had 14m. The 12 episodes of Freaks and Geeks, which had an erratic schedule as it went on a few weeks' break, had 6.7m views, so the network didn't think it was worth renewing.

Every year I bring up this show, fewer students know about it, but inevitably every student who watches it returns to tell me they loved it. And ask why it didn't work. Popularity is not an indicator of quality. It is also not the same as truth.

This may help us understand why the well-known anchor Mehdi Hasan's show on the American cable network MSNBC was cancelled. The British political commentator is known for his tough style of interviews; he challenged guests, was progressive and humanised Palestinians — things you don't see on TV news, at least not in the US. This is why most people believe Hasan's pro-Palestinian stance caused the show's cancel-

lation. Ayman Mohyeldin's programme will be extended to two hours to replace Hasan's show so one can't cite anti-Muslim discrimination. Hasan himself has not spoken on the issue other than to echo the MSNBC press release on the issue. Many 'media insiders', however, say his show was axed because it had poor ratings.

Of course, it did. It aired on the weekends when rarely anyone watches TV, a medium with fewer takers. This is probably hard to believe given how you've likely come across at least a few of Hasan's clips on social media — where he's obliterating Israel's point of view. The audiences for TV and social media are different, with different expectations. Advertisers, however, have one expectation.

Advertisers don't want controversial TV anchors challenging dominant views. Neither do media owners who want to protect their business interests that audiences may know about. When it was owned by General Electric, MSNBC was pro-Iraq war and even fired Phil Donahue, who was anti-war and promoted those voices, when few dared to question the Bush administration. An internal company memo described Donahue then as a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war" giving "a home for the liberal anti-war agenda at the same time that our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity". Then too they cited poor ratings as the reason for his show's cancellation but we know General Electric was a huge defence contractor.

Donahue reflected on his firing 10 years later. "They were terrified of the anti-war voice," he said in 2013. "Anti-war voices were not popular. And if you're General Electric, you certainly don't want an anti-war voice on a cable channel that you

own: Donald Rumsfeld is your biggest customer." He also described how audiences perceived anti-war voices. "We were scolds. We weren't patriotic. American people disagreed with us. And we weren't good for business." News media is a profit-driven business. That model, which does not practise journalism in the public interest, creates a less-informed citizenry. In his book Democracy Without Journalism the media scholar Victor Pickard writes how journalism is at the mercy of the marketplace. News organisations supported by advertising will continue to be in trouble especially in the face of economic uncertainty. The market decides the news agenda and how much news audiences will receive. He also says social media companies profit from disinformation.

It's why we need to amplify voices calling for public journalism. Pickard's book reminds us that such models exist and he advocates for government intervention in ensuring the public has access to information that allows for democracy to function. A government supporting free press may sound like anathema but Pickard writes how governments have invested in communication systems, like the postal system, that gave people access to information. Governments fund public broadcast systems everywhere; it can work provided journalism reflects the communities it is meant to serve, not the media owners. We will soon — hopefully — have a new government. I request them to read Pickard's prescription: create a robust public fund to support a public media system, one that is run by partnership of policymakers, academics and journalists who want to strengthen democracy, not the market, not the owners, not the politicians' rich friends. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Business community, experts hail govt's economic strategies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Despite challenges, the comprehensive strategies implemented by the caretaker government have led to notable economic progress, evident through various indicators and recognized by both the business community and experts.

The business community and economic experts described the reduction in oil prices stability of the exchange rate and outstanding performance of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) as positive for the country's economy.

Talking to APP, they said, the petrol price has come down from Rs 331.38 in January 2023 to Rs 267.34 now, showing a decrease of Rs.65 rupees,

adding it would result in a decrease in the inflation rate; further strengthening the exchange rate and lead PSX towards more positive performance, besides helping in promoting local market and external sectors of the economy.

President of Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Irfan Iqbal Sheikh told APP that the government had decided to give the benefit of the fall in international prices to the industry and the domestic consumers.

The President of FPCCI said that it will have a good impact on domestic industry including internal and external sectors.

Sheikh said that stability in the exchange rate, which has crossed the limit of Rs 300 and is now between Rs 280 and Rs285, is proof of the success of the government's administrative measure.

He said that there has been an upward trend in the stock exchange for the last few months, which is pleasing.

The President said that the government needs to take more measures to give industry businesses a chance to grow in the country.

Talking to APP, President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the reduction in petrol prices will reduce inflation in the country and more buyers will come to the market.



ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying warm clothes in Landa bazaar at G-10 Sunday weekly bazaar in Federal Capital.

CAB Intl launches first ever curriculum for organic cotton production training

MULTAN (APP): CAB-International launched the first-ever compiled curriculum for organic cotton production training in Pakistan.

The representatives of CAB-International, Muhammad Waseem Ishaq, Dr Saif Ali, Dr Muzammil, and Dr Yusuf Zafar, while addressing the two-day training program during the unveiling of the curriculum training ceremony, said that lack of information on agriculture, especially organic cotton production, was a major

issue in Pakistan. The cotton experts from all over the country, representatives of the Ministry of Federal Agency for Food and Agriculture Protection, industry, brands, and research institutions participated. The organic agriculture team of CAB-International has compiled this syllabus in Urdu and English to guide the experts. The participants and experts appreciated the efforts and added that the publication of this syllabus would guide organic cotton production practices and certification.

Transport fares reduced in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): The district administration has made reduction in transport fares from 3 to 5 percent for passengers of various routes.

A spokesman for the local administration said here on Sunday that after a decrease in the prices of petroleum products, officers of the district administration held a meeting with transport owners and made them reduce transport fares.

3rd Int'l Hydropower Conference to be held on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third International Hydropower Conference, themed "Hydropower: A Renewable Energy Source for a Sustainable Future," will be held here on Wednesday. The global convergence of energy experts is going to be organized by The Energy Update in collaboration with the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and the International Hydropower Association (IHA).



ISLAMABAD: CEO of Centaurus Mall Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan inaugurates Versa exhibition organized by Rawalpindi women's chamber of commerce and industry.

FTO Coordinator warns taxpayers of scams and fraudulent schemes

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday urged taxpayers to remain vigilant against scammers, fake websites, non-existent charities, fictitious emails and dummy tax notices.

Addressing the business community at an awareness session on the directives of FTO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, Sitara-Imtiaz and Hilal-Imtiaz, he

said that it was his duty as coordinator to bring their knowledge to a pressing matter that requires immediate attention, the escalating prevalence of scams and fraudulent activities targeting taxpayers across Pakistan, said a news release issued here.

He said, "FTO has noticed a disturbing surge in deceptive practices, including fraudulent emails, fabricated notices,

sham websites and the creation of non-existent charities, all designed to exploit unsuspecting taxpayers, adding, these malicious tactics excel at mimicking official communication channels, posing a significant threat.

He said that taxpayers received calls or messages promising hefty tax refunds in exchange for a fee from impersonating tax authorities.

Railways ask officials to recover outstanding dues federal, provincial depts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has asked its officials concerned to initiate the procedure to recover outstanding dues from the federal and provincial departments for using its land and services.

The Ministry of Railways has asked the federal and provincial departments to pay their outstanding dues worth billions of rupees on account of using its land and other services, within the least possible time as the department was facing economic

issues, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

About the amount payable against the different departments, the official said that over Rs 8,375 million (over 8 billion) are payable by different departments on account of using its land and various services.

He said the federal departments had to pay an amount of Rs 709.084 million, provincial departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs 5685.736 million.

PFC delegation China visit to open new business opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The visit of Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation to Guangzhou, China is likely to contribute to the growth and diversification of the furniture market, opening up new opportunities for businesses on both sides.

The visit serves as a platform for fostering collaboration and understanding between the Pakistani and Chinese furniture industries, said a news release here.

LCCI welcomes increase in FDI, emphasizes more efforts

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) Sunday welcomed rise in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and called for more aggressive efforts to maintain the good momentum. LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here that rise in Foreign Direct Investment is an encouraging sign for the economy.

They said that the net Foreign Direct Investment in the first four months of the current financial year (July-October 2023-24) stood at USD 524.7 million, exhibiting an increase of 7 percent as compared to USD 488.9 million in the same period of FY 2022-23. There is a need for concrete efforts to enhance the level of FDI in the country.

The LCCI office-bearers said that Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) can play an instrumental role in materializing the signed agreements with UAE and Saudi Arabia for bringing investment in diverse sectors of the economy.

PESHAWAR: Mechanics busy in repairing work of Gas Heaters and stoves as demand of gas heater increased in city during winter season, at his shop located on Lahori Gate in Peshawar.

Workshop held to review GLOF-II Project progress

GILGIT (APP): The Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), in collaboration with the GLOF-II Project, organized a one-day provincial-level stakeholders' communication and coordination workshop aiming to deliberate on the strides achieved under the GLOF-II project in 2023.

The workshop served as a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange, bringing together representatives from various government and non-governmental

organizations. Speaking at the event, Director-General Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA) Safdar Khan highlighted the global significance of Pakistan being ranked fifth among countries most affected by climate change. The impact of climate change has led to natural disasters causing significant losses of human life, property, and infrastructure.

Gilgit-Baltistan, with its geographical sensitivity, faces challenges such as glacier melting, the risk of glacial lake outburst floods, and other sorts of disasters.

CM KP declares anti-corruption "Jihad"

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Sunday has called for a collective effort to combat corruption, emphasizing a zero-tolerance policy for negligence in duty across all institutions. He expressed these views while talking to various delegations at KP House Abbottabad.

The Caretaker CM said that Abbottabad has been officially declared a sister city with Azerbaijan, marking the commencement of various developmental projects. The government is determined to ensure transparent and fair

elections in Abbottabad, prioritizing the resolution of local issues.

Following meetings with various delegations, Delegations from Azerbaijan, along with key officials such as Health Minister Dr Riaz Khan and Mineral and Planning Minister Dr Sarfraz Ali Shah, were present at the occasion.

During the discussions, the Chief Minister acknowledged the existing issues in the district, particularly concerning water, electricity, and cleanliness. The Commissioner informed about devised solutions for these problems.

Chief Minister Arshad Hussain outlined a comprehensive strategy to tackle unemployment, aiming to train half a million youth within a year. Task forces have been formed in various institutions, offering courses ranging from four months to four years. The goal is to provide employment opportunities, both domestically and internationally, based on demand. Additionally, Chief Minister Arshad Hussain announced the Quantum Valley declaration for Haripur and Abbottabad, ensuring that youth will no longer face employment issues.

Returning of illegal foreigners from KP continued

PESHAWAR (APP): Likewise, a total of 260,909 people have been deported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan via Peshawar, Torkham border, an official of the Home and Tribal Affairs said here Sunday.

He said another 92 people were deported from Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 82 more illegal foreigners from Peshawar, Punjab will be deported through the Torkham border, the official of the Home Department said.

He said a total of 6452 migrants were sent to Afghanistan and a total of 5249 migrants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 125 from Islamabad, 1045 from Punjab, and 34 from Azad Kashmir were sent to Afghanistan.

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CM directs DCs to ensure cut in transport fares

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has assigned a task to officials concerned to ensure reduction in the inter-city transport fares in proportion to the cut in the prices of diesel. He ordered all deputy commissioners across Punjab to meet the deadline for reduction in fares. CM Naqvi stated that the benefit in the reduction of petroleum prices should be passed on directly to the people of the province.

Seminar on "Youth role in nation building" conducted

SARGODHA (APP): National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) in collaboration with University of Sargodha media studies department conducted a seminar titled 'Importance of Youth in Nation Building' at Community Development Center here on Sunday. Founder Director Pakistan Human Development Fund Parvaiz Iodhi was the chief guest of the seminar.



FAISALABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Rana Sana Ullah Khan, President of Muslim League-N Minority Wing Punjab Khalil Tahir Sandhu and others cutting the Christmas cake during a Christmas Milan Party ceremony in the city.

NCA teachers, students visit CTI

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of teachers and students of National College of Arts (NCA) here Sunday visited the Carpet Training Institute (CTI) and they were briefed on various stages of manual carpet manufacturing and its export. Chairperson CTI Ijaz-ur-Rehman welcomed the delegation and gave them a detailed briefing about the handmade carpet industry.

Ijaz-ur-Rehman said that strong linkages between educational institutions such as the National College of Arts and various

industries, especially the handmade carpet industry, have strategic significance and through which key support can be provided in increasing production and availability of skills required by the industry. "Promoting cooperation between the two institutions can also be effective for entrepreneurship," he added. He said that working together would yield best results and especially those who are doing their business can get best support.

Four of a family injured in a gas stove explosion

SIALKOT (APP): As many as four people of family including a child suffered burns in gas stove explosion here at mohallah Islampura, Sialkot.

According to Rescue 1122, the blast occurred due to gas leakage as the stove was placed in room. Nazeer, owner, (55) Musarrat (55), Atiqa (28) and a year-old Mishal suffered injuries.

KP to include skills as subject in contemporary education: Dr. Aamer

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries, Commerce and Tribal Affairs, Dr Aamer Abdullah has agreed with the proposal to equip the students with various technical schools and courses during their academic period as feasible, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

He has further directed the furnishing of a

feasible proposal for the pilot project, with a possible partnership between higher education and technical education with clear possibilities of the success and usefulness of the project.

In this regard, a meeting was held here at Civil Secretariat Peshawar with the Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries, Commerce, and Tribal Affairs, Dr Aamer Abdullah, in the chair.

PU PSC organises talk on Quaid's Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University Pakistan Study Centre organized a panel discussion on "Quaid's Pakistan: Contemporary Challenges and Future".

Director Pakistan Study Centre Prof Dr Naumana Kiran, Dr. Erum Muzaffar from Pakistan Study Centre, Karachi University, Director PSC Jamshoro University, Sindh Dr. Mukaish Kumar, Director PU Centre for South Asian Studies, Dr Naheed S Goraya, Associate Professor Dr. Amjad Abbas Magdi, Dr Ahmad Ajaz, faculty

members and students were present on the occasion.

In her address, Dr. Naumana welcomed the participants and recalled the vision of the Quaid about Pakistan. She said that Quaid-i-Azam desired Pakistan to be a modern, egalitarian and democratic state based on the principles of Islam i.e. fraternity, equality, democracy and fair play. She said that Jinnah had laid down the basic principles that could lead to national integration and cohesiveness, if followed in true spirit.

Voters eye on political parties' manifestos for generation of employment, education chances

PESHAWAR (APP): In democratic setups all over the world including Pakistan, manifestos play a significant role in deciding the fate of political and religious parties during general election and take the countries forward on path of prosperity.

Prior to general election, political leaders announce their parties manifestos for information of millions of electorates about their future programs and priorities for well being of masses and resolution of the country's problems if voted to power.

Despite

announcement of the election schedule by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), most of political and religious parties have yet to announce their manifestos.

"The people of KP eagerly awaited of the political parties' manifestos for solution of their problems such as unemployment, poverty, price hike and illiteracy," said Professor Dr H.R.Hilali, former Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

"Except

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who has recently announced key points of his party's election manifesto including construction of three million houses for poor, launching of welfare cards for labourers, patients and farmers besides increasing BISP assistance during various public addresses in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the other political parties have yet to announced salient features of manifestos and long delay in this regard may counterproductive for it to attract voters during election campaigns," he

said.

He said that thousands of graduate voters wanted dignified jobs and any political party have a solid program for employment creation would take an edge over others on February 8, 2024.

Dr Hilali said that unfortunately, unemployment has increased in last few decades in the country due to lackluster approach of the past governments.

He claimed that unemployment rate in Pakistan was 6.42 percent in 2022, a 0.08 percent

increase from 2021 while in 2020 it was 6.55 percent, showing a 1.72 percent increase from 2019 besides 4.83 percent in 2018, a 0.75 percent increase from 2018.

He said over 21 million voters were added to the electoral rolls since 2018 elections in Pakistan where the number of women voters had swelled from 46.73 million in last polls to 58.47 million in 2023 due to population explosion that put extra burden on all resources besides increasing unemployment and illiteracy.

International News

North Korea fires suspected ballistic missile, condemns US for raising tensions

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korea fired an unidentified ballistic missile on Sunday, Japan's Coast Guard and the South Korean military said, as Pyongyang condemned US-led military shows of force as tantamount to "a preview of a nuclear war".

The missile was launched towards the sea off North Korea's east coast, according to the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff.

About 20 minutes after initially reporting the launch, the Japanese coast guard said the missile had already fallen.

It appeared to have fallen outside Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), broadcaster NTV

reported. No further details were immediately available.

The launch came after warnings from officials in Seoul and Tokyo that nuclear-armed North Korea was preparing to test fire a missile, including one of its longest-range inter-continental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) this month.

All of North Korea's ballistic missile activities are banned by United Nations Security Council resolutions, though Pyongyang defends them as its sovereign right to self-defence.

Less than half an hour after the launch, North Korean state media carried a statement from the defence ministry criticising "mili-

tary gangsters" in the United States and South Korea for raising tensions with drills, displays of force and nuclear war planning.

The statement by an unnamed ministry spokesman cited the arrival of the US nuclear-powered submarine USS Missouri in the South Korean port city of Busan on Sunday.

"The armed forces of the DPRK will thoroughly neutralise the US and its vassal forces' attempt to ignite a nuclear war and thus reliably ensure peace and security in the Korean peninsula," the statement said, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida greets Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. upon arrival for the opening session of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting at the Hotel Okura Tokyo in Tokyo, Japan.

61 migrants drown in shipwreck off Libya: IOM

Monitoring Desk
LIBYA: Sixty-one migrants, including women and children, drowned following a shipwreck off Libya, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Libya said.

IOM, in a post on social media platform X, quoted survivors as saying the boat, carrying around 86 people, departed the Libyan city of Zwara, about 110 km (68 miles) from the capital, Tripoli.

"The central Mediterranean continues to be one of the world's most dangerous migration routes," IOM said.

Deadly incidents this year included one in June, when a fishing boat packed with hundreds of migrants sank off Greece after departing from Tobruk, Libya.

The voyage, which was supposed to end in Italy, resulted in 78 recorded deaths with the fate of 518 others unknown, according to an IOM report.

Drowning was the main cause of death on migration routes globally in the first half of 2023, with 2,200 recorded fatalities in the period, according to the IOM report.

Severe storm strikes coastal city in Argentina, at least 13 dead

Monitoring Desk
BUENOS AIRES: At least 13 people have been killed in Argentina, a local city mayor said on Saturday, following a severe electrical storm that struck along the South American country's Atlantic coast.

Federico Susbielles, mayor of Bahia Blanca, confirmed the death toll in a post on X.

The city is near the southern tip of Buenos Aires province, one of Argentina's top grain-producing regions.

US wants shakeup of Palestinian Authority to run Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A succession of top US officials have travelled to the West Bank in recent weeks to meet with Mahmoud Abbas in the hope he can overhaul his unpopular Palestinian Authority enough to run Gaza after the crisis.

An architect of the 1993 Oslo peace accords with Israel that raised hopes of Palestinian statehood, Abbas has seen his legitimacy steadily undermined by Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank, which he over-

sees. Many Palestinians now regard his administration as corrupt, undemocratic and out of touch.

President Joe Biden has made it clear that he wants to see a revitalised Palestinian Authority which Abbas has run since 2005 — take charge in Gaza once the crisis is over, unifying its administration with the West Bank.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, met with Abbas on Friday, becoming the latest senior US official to urge him to implement rapid change.



A mourner reacts as Palestinian attend the funeral of Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa, who according to the Arabic broadcaster was killed by an Israeli drone strike while reporting on the earlier bombing of a school sheltering displaced people but Israel's military did not respond to a request for comment, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.



Deputy prosecutor Antoine Leroy speaks during a press conference in Toulouse about Alex Batty, an adolescent from Britain, who disappeared six years ago in Spain and resurfaced in southern France.

Aid enters Gaza through Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing for first time in war

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: The Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza opened on Sunday for aid trucks for the first time since the outbreak of the war, officials said, a move intended to double the amount of food and medicine reaching the enclave. The crossing had been closed after an Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and aid was being delivered solely through Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt, which

Israel said could only accommodate the entry of 100 trucks per day.

Two sources in the Egypt Red Crescent told Reuters that trucks were starting to enter on Sunday through the Kerem Shalom crossing on their way into Gaza. One said there were 79 trucks. Kerem Shalom, on the border of Egypt, Israel and Gaza, is one of the main transit points for goods in and out of Gaza.

Russia is not interested in extending Black Sea grain deal - RIA

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia has no interest in extending the Black Sea grain deal, the RIA news agency reported on Sunday, citing Russia's agriculture minister Dmitry Patrushev.

He added that to a large extent this is a political decision, but Russia will continue to export its grain, as it has its buyers.

"Our grain export volumes, taking into account the winding down of the grain deal, have by no means fallen, they even slightly increased," RIA quoted Patrushev as saying.

Italy's Meloni takes aim at influencer Ferragni over misleading claims

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Sunday criticised those who make money from misleading charity claims, in a clear reference to a recent antitrust sanction against the country's top influencer Chiara Ferragni. On Friday, Italy's antitrust authority imposed a 1.075 million euro (\$1.17 million) fine on companies controlled by Ferragni as a result of a probe into misleading advertising on

Christmas cakes last year.

Ferragni, a businesswoman and fashion influencer with nearly 30 million followers on Instagram, said the fine was unjust and she would appeal it. "The real models to follow are not the influencers who make a lot of money by wearing clothes and showing bags ... or even promoting expensive cakes that make people believe they are charitable," Meloni said, without explicitly mentioning Ferragni.

Australia confident of end to China wine tariffs early in 2024

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: Australia's government on Sunday said it was confident punitive tariffs on Australian wine introduced by China in 2021 would be lifted early next year.

"I would be very confident that early in the new year we will get a favourable result from the Chinese authorities to lift the ban on Australian wine," Trade Minister Don Farrell told Sky News television on Sunday.

Zuma says he will not vote for ANC in South Africa's election

Monitoring Desk
JOHANNESBURG: Former South African president Jacob Zuma said he will not campaign for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party in the 2024 general election and will vote for a new party, a sign of growing divisions within the ANC ahead of the vote.

Zuma, who said he remained an ANC member, has previously lashed out at his successor Cyril Ramaphosa, accusing him of failing as a leader and betraying the ANC with his stance against corruption.

Zuma repeated the accusations and cited among

other issues the expulsion from the party of its former secretary general after he was found guilty of violating the party's constitution.

"The ANC I know was never focused more on expelling members without implementing proper processes to establish if such action was appropriate," Zuma told journalists as he also cited rolling power cuts as a sign of economic mismanagement by Ramaphosa's government.

"I have decided that I cannot and will not campaign for the ANC of Ramaphosa in 2024."

Media urged for factual reporting on CPEC, countering propaganda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at the training workshop here on Sunday called upon the Pakistani media to engage in objective and factual reporting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and counter the negative propaganda against the game-changer project.

The journalists are the source of information for the public and their impartial reporting can convey authentic information about CPEC to the people of Pakistan, they said.

The speakers expressed these remarks during a three-day training

workshop organized by the Center for Democracy and Climate Studies (CDCS) for the journalists of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Bao Zhong, Counselor of the Political and Media Section, Embassy of China to Pakistan while speaking to the participants said that the Pakistani media was playing a vital role in promoting CPEC and creating a positive image of the China-Pakistan bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields beneficial for both the nations.

She however said the fake news and negative propaganda against the CPEC

still exist in some sections of the media which should be countered by the journalists.

She said that the Chinese embassy was always open to answer queries about CPEC or information related to any project initiated by the Chinese embassy.

She urged the journalists to do factual reporting on CPEC and play their role against malicious media campaigns and disinformation against the projects.

Expressing deep affection for Pakistani friends, Ms. Zhong, with over six years of service in the coun-

try, emphasized the robust foundation of the China-Pakistan relationship, attributing it to the profound political trust, particularly exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

She expressed the confidence in ongoing collaboration with the Pakistani government and encouraged media and citizens to contribute valuable insights for the continued success of China-Pakistan relations. She highlighted the warm reception of Pakistani visitors in China, underscoring the reciprocal treatment she and her family receive in Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: Students are solving paper of Entry Test for Information Technology (IT) Courses under the supervision of Saylani Welfare International Trust and arranged by Aziz Jan Trust.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki distributing appreciation certificates among officers on completion of Quetta Development Package project

Saddam Khan Tareen says Sending Shoab Shaheen back to Lahore from Quetta not democracy

Independent Report
QUETTA/HARNAI: The sun of Tehreek-e-Insaf's success will rise on February 8. We love Pakistan, will raise its flag all over the world, under the leadership and ideology of Imran Khan the destiny of Harnai will be changed in the light of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Saddam Khan Tareen, president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, while addressing the party workers' convention in district Harnai, said that the people of Harnai have woken up who rejected these so-called nationalist and religious political parties.

On February 8, the sun of Tehreek-e-Insaf's success will rise. Sending

senior lawyer Shoab Shaheen back to Lahore from Quetta is not democracy but the worst example of dictatorship.

Workers Convention was led by Provincial General Secretary Salar Khan Kakar, Nawab Khan Domar, Zakir Khan Tareen, Sardar Akbar Tareen, Syed Mir Ali Agha, Aziz Kakar and others, said in their statement that Congratulations to Saddam Khan Tareen for organizing the historic workers' convention and also thank the people of Harnai, on 8th February 2023, the people of Harnai will stamp the bat and reject the so-called self-interested political parties and change the destiny of Harnai with success.

ECP resumes DROs, ROs training ahead of General Elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has resumed nationwide training for District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs), with a focus on election procedures, rules, and other administrative aspects.

An ECP spokesperson stated that the training, led by senior commission officers, will conclude for ROs on Monday (December 18) and for DROs on Tuesday (December 19).

The extensive training for 144 District Returning Officers (DROs) and 859 Returning Officers (ROs) commenced on December 13 but was initially paused due to Lahore High Court orders prompted by a petition from PTI objecting to selecting election supervisory staff from the executive.

However, it later resumed following orders from the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Durrani says Thorough investigations needed into supply of US weaponry to terrorists

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former federal minister and senior politician Muhammad Ali Durrani has said that source and trafficking of the latest American weapons and technology to terrorists in the war against Pakistan was matter of grave concern.

Demanding thorough investigations into the matter, he questioned, "Where are the terrorists fighting against Pakistan obtaining the latest American weaponry?" In a statement issued here on Sunday, Muhammad Ali Durrani said that it was imperative to undertake these investigations to root out terrorists and eliminate the

source of terrorism.

The United States of America (USA) should assist Pakistan with cutting-edge technology which was in the interests of both the US and global security, he emphasized. "The possibility of another 9/11 cannot be ruled out if the supply of the latest weaponry to terrorists is not curtailed," he urged. Durrani said that the availability of sophisticated arms to terrorists is a matter of concern for regional and global security.

"A new war is being orchestrated against Pakistan through the latest American arms," he said. In such circumstances, the US should support Pakistan

with latest technology in the war against terrorism. "It is the interest of the US to play a role for peace in the region," he said.

The former minister said that American weapons and technology are being used against Palestinians by Israel and against Pakistan by terrorists. The presence of such weaponry and technology among terrorists raises numerous questions that cannot be ignored, he added. Senator Durrani said that the responsibility lies with the United Nations and especially with the United States to prevent the supply of new technology and weapons to terrorists.

Petrol price declines by Rs 64.04 per litre in three months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The caretaker government has decreased the price of petrol by Rs. 64.04 per litre and diesel by Rs. 52.99 per litre during the last three months.

A chart shared by the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum on the official social media account shows that the price of petrol at Ex-depot was Rs. 331.38 per litre in October, and now, the price has decreased to Rs. 267.34 per liter in the current month, directly benefiting consumers and

alleviating the financial burden on fuel expenses. Similarly, the price of diesel in October was Rs. 329.18 per litre and has now dropped to Rs. 276.19 per litre, providing consumers with a benefit of Rs. 52.99. The drop in the price of petroleum products is expected to contribute significantly to easing the financial impact on consumers. These reductions are anticipated to have positive implications for various sectors of the economy, offering a reprieve to consumers and businesses alike.

ECP bans registration and deletion of votes from electoral rolls

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has banned registration and deletion of votes, citing. According to media reports, the electoral body has imposed ban on registration of new votes, deletion, change and correction of votes in electoral rolls.

ECP has also imposed ban on leaves of its officers, other employees and returning officers. The election commission's regional offices will remain open today (Sunday) for provision of voter lists and other material.

The ECP has also imposed ban on transfers and postings of provincial and federal government employees. It is to be mentioned here that the election commission had issued the

election schedule for the February 8 general elections in compliance with the Supreme Court order on Friday.

The development came hours after the apex court ordered the ECP to announce the election schedule as it suspended a Lahore High Court (LHC) order on the appointment of returning officers (ROs) and district returning officers (DROs) from bureaucracy, which had cast a shadow over holding of general elections.

During a chat with newsmen, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja vowed to provide level-playing field to all political parties. "I had never said the elections would be delayed in the country."

No permanent peace in South Asia without Kashmir solution

ISLAMABAD (INP): There can be no permanent peace in South Asia without settlement of the lingering Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, said regional peace is hinged on settlement of the Kashmir dispute but India has been impeding the way for just solution of the dispute for the last over seven decades.

It said Kashmir dispute is a reality and its disputed nature is recognized by the United Nation, adding the Modi regime cannot suppress the Kashmiris' struggle to secure their inalienable right to self-determination.

The report said the

Modi regime's brutal actions in Kashmir are posing a grave threat to regional peace and stability and the Kashmiris have the right to seek the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as per their wishes and aspirations.

India must remember that its policy of repression is bound to fail in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, it said, urging the United Nations to play its rightful role to help resolve the long-pending Kashmir dispute as per its resolutions.

The report said the world community has a responsibility towards helping resolve the Kashmir dispute for durable peace in South Asia and India must be asked to fulfill its pledges made before the UN to settle the Kashmir dispute.

Customs foil bid of smuggling of huge quantity diesel

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Pakistan Customs foiled a major attempt of smuggling of huge quantity of Iranian diesel by three passenger buses in Khuzdar area on Sunday.

According to the spokesman of Customs, the Customs patrolling team intercepted three passenger coaches on way to interior country in Wango area. During the search, the Customs recovered around 39,000 liters of Iranian diesel, which was being smuggled from border areas to the interior parts of the country via Khuzdar.

The spokesman of Customs informed that the worth of smuggled Iranian diesel is around Rs. 60 million. The passenger buses have been impounded and further investigations have been started by the Customs.

Siraj rules out any electoral alliance with PML-N, PPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Jamaat-e-Islami will not form an alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz or the Pakistan Peoples Party in the upcoming elections, JI chief Sirajul Haq announced on Sunday.

In a statement released here, Siraj added that the Jamaat-e-Islami would contest the elections on the manifesto of peace, progress and prosperity, aiming to end the culture of governors' houses and commissioners' houses built on vast areas spanning 8 kanals.

The JI chief stated that his party would convey the message of real change to the people and would not compromise on

the public mandate in the impending elections.

Siraj stressed that his party would rectify financial management and fund utilisation, implement emergency measures in the education and health sectors, as well as establish rehabilitation training centres for the poor.

The JI chief ruled out any alliance with the PPP and the PML-N, blaming the two political groups for ruining the country.

According to Sirajul Haq, the JI has issued tickets to more than 50 percent of the party's election candidates.

He said if transparent elections were not ensured, the JI would not accept the results.

Sardar Latif Khosa joins PTI

LAHORE (INP): Legal expert and disgruntled PPP stalwart Sardar Latif Khosa has joined the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Latif Khosa, the former Punjab governor, confirmed his decision to join the PTI during a press conference in Lahore on Sunday. The PTI also officially announced his membership on X, erstwhile Twitter, sharing a video of Latif Khosa being welcomed into the party, draped in the customary flag. During the interaction with media, Khosa stated, "Today marks a journey towards happiness."



QUETTA: International player Fida Muhammad Dummar presenting a shield to Caretaker Minister Sardar Asifur Rehman Dummar

Artificial rain ends smog in Lahore, Karachi on top in pollution

LAHORE/KARACHI (Online): Due to the artificial rain made in Lahore, the smog in the city ended and Karachi became the first place in the world in pollution.

According to the details, Karachi is on the top of polluted cities list across the globe.

The air quality index in Karachi was recorded at 332, due to which the air quality in Karachi is unhealthy.

Health experts advised citizens to wear masks to avoid harmful air.

Meteorological department said that the weather in Karachi is likely to remain cold and dry. Cold winds may increase the intensity of the cold.

The temperature of the city was recorded at 14 degrees Celsius early in the morning. The maximum temperature today is It is likely to

stay up to 28 degrees Celsius.

The humidity ratio in the air is 82%, the winds are blowing from the northeast at a speed of 6 km per hour. The Department of Environmental Protection, Punjab, while releasing today's air quality index, said that after the artificial rain in the city, the pollution in Lahore has decreased. There has been a decrease and Lahore has moved from first to sixth position in the global ranking.

Air Quality Index (AQI) was 366 at Green Fort 2, 275 at Punjab University Lahore College of Earth. AQI of 366 was recorded at Town Hall Lahore. AQI 242 at Shale Valley Range Road Rawalpindi, AQI 163 was recorded on Lahore Faisalabad Bypass Road Sheikhpura.

Imran should apologise for May 9 events: Sana

FAISALABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanaullah asked the former chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to apologise for his actions that triggered the May 9 events.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that strong democratic government was vital for political and economic stability in country. Prof Sajid Mir said that commitment to ensure timely elections was laudable and role of Supreme Court in this connection was commendable.

He declared social media an easy progression to spread message of peace, education and awareness.

not getting a level playing field. They are saying cases are being filed against them. They wanted to do politics but their leader pushed them to the sidelines. They have crossed the red line on May 9," said the PML-N leader.

"It is not their right to attack the GHQ. The statues of the martyrs were thrown down. On May 9, the biggest defence office was attacked.

Those who do such things will face consequences," said Sana.

At the end, Sana said that he would talk to the caretaker chief minister for release of outstanding dues of Christian employees.

He said that Nawaz Sharif brought prosperity to the country, in 2017, the dollar was cheap and the country was developing. Nawaz Sharif brought an investment of 40 billion dollars through CPEC. Due to this, in 2018, many forces tried to block the path of PML-N.



FAISALABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Rana Sana Ullah Khan addressing during the Christmas Milan Party ceremony in the city.

ECP to hear PTI intra-party case today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will hear plea filed by PTI founding member Akbar S. Babar against intra-party elections on December 18 (Monday).

A five-member bench of ECP will take up the plea to address the challenges and concerns raised against PTI's intra-party elections. Prominent among those who filed the applications against the PTI intra-party polls were Akbar S. Babar, Raja Tahir Nawaz, and Naureen Farooq.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Gohar Ali Khan

in intra-party election case. The electoral watchdog also summoned the party's chief election commissioner Niazullah Niazi, Umar Ayub, Haleem Adil Sheikh, Yasmin Rashid, Ali Amin Gandapur and RO central secretariat Sardar Masroof.

Additionally, the notices were also issued to Returning Officer Central Secretariat Sardar Masroof Khan and Returning Officer Ansar Mahmood in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Central Secretariat. The PTI's founding member Akbar S Babar had termed the intra-party polls as drama. In a video statement, he said that the PTI has put the party and the election symbol of "bat" at stake.

Abbasi's to parts ways with PMLN

LAHORE (Online): Senior politician former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has decided to leave Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N).

According to the media report with reference to the sources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has decided to leave the PML-N after consulting the people of his constituency.

A formal announcement is likely to be made during a press conference in a few days.

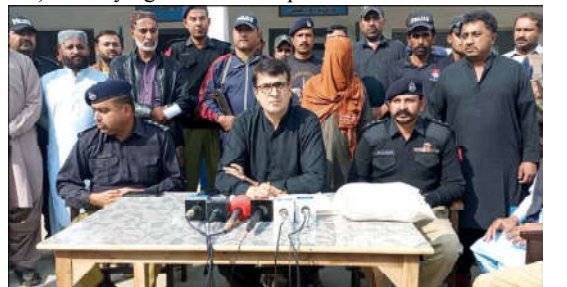
According to sources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, he clarified his position before the election and said that if PML-N gives ticket to Party, he will support it. Other than that there will be no support.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that he will not join any other party, he can form a new party after the election.

Drive against power theft continues; over Rs 53b recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the government's initiative, the fruits of effective actions against electricity thieves across the country began to emerge. "From September 1-December 10, the authorities has so far recovered 53.65 billion rupees with multiple individuals arrested nationwide under actions against power theft," according to PTV.

Similarly, from 3rd to 10th of this month 2.36 billion rupees have been collected while 222 people have been arrested.



NASEERABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Naseer Malik, Dr. Muhammad Sami Malik addresses to media persons during press conference held at City Police Station Dera Murad Jamali.