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Meeting with US think tanks

Pakistan wishes to develop as hub of connectivity: COAS

Says country has made unparalleled contributions, sacrifices in fight against terrorism; Stresses Kashmir settlement as per UNSC resolutions, Kashmiris' aspirations

(COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, said Pakistan was a country of consequence both from a geopoperspective and wished to regional connectivity and a gateway to Central Asia and

The Army Chief fur-ther said, "The country, however, eschews bloc politics and believes in maintaining balanced relationships with all friendly countries.

The COAS remarks came after he engaged in a candid discourse with and military leadership the members of promi-

tions (ISPR) news release issued here.

interaction, put across litical and geoeconomic Pakistan's perspective on security. develop itself as a hub of transnational terrorism, and the importance of maintaining strategic stability in South Asia.

General Asim Munir highlighted that Pakistan desired to broaden bilateral engagement with the U.S. through a long-term multidomain partnership. He highlighted, "His

interactions during the visit to the U.S. with political have been very positive, nent US think tanks and and he looks forward to tions.

RAWALPINDI (APP): media, according to an In-further strengthening the Chief of Army Staff ter Services Public Rela- relationship." The COAS also highlighted, "Pakistan stood as a bulwark against The COAS, during the transnational terrorism for decades, ensuring regional stability and global peace and security.

"It has made unparalleled contributions and sacrifices in its enduring fight against terrorism and will continue to fight til the logical end, in line with the aspirations of people in Pakistan," General Syed Asim Munir said.

The COAS also stressed the need for resolution of the Kashmir issue as per the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and the UNSC Resolu-



did discourse with members of prominent US think tanks and media, at

PM calls brain drain as part of talent hunt, foresees strength for Pakistan

SWABI (APP): Caretaker cations, they would be-Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq on Wednesday, calling the brain drain, a part of talent hunt, said those leaving Pakistan for better opportunities for better opportunities would eventually become a strength for the country, which ought to be encour-

The prime minister, in an interactive session with the students of Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology, exemplified the Indian nationals who had left their country and returned as an asset to contribute to their country.

Responding to a question about the measures taken by the government to stop the brain drain, he said those leaving the country were not going to vanish, rather they would seize better economic opportunities and skills, which should be encour-

He said after improving their skills and qualifi-

come a valuable asset and product as the world was in search of talent. "I consider their journey a part of the talent hunt," he

He said there was no evidence of any dramatic surge in brain drain in the prevailing circumstances rather it was a continuous process of skilled, semiskilled, and non-skilled people moving abroad for better economic opportu-

He said the export of human resources was an important component of the country's GDP.

To a question about the arrest of Imran Khan, he said the state had an inherent right to apprehend those who violated the laws. He was arrested under certain laws, not by the PML-N, PPP or JUI, he added. He urged the educated class to also debate their political attitudes besides asserting their

right to agitate. Prime Minister Kakar called for adopting the "all of us" approach, in addition to encouraging qualitative discussions for betterment of the so-

He said democracy should morph towards the performing democracy as the performance was the key indicator to judge the success of the democratic He said transitional

democracies like Pakistan could not turn into settled democracies for not giving due focus on performance.

To another question, he said every individual was responsible for defending the ideological frontiers of the nation.

He said Islam was not the name of a reactionary movement but a reformist movement that encouraged any type of dialogue that otherwise would impact society negatively.

that special attention is

being given on technical

The youngsters are

education in information

technology and other dif-

ferent sectors and thus

being guided in the right

directions, Mr. Domki

maintained. This is why,

we need to encourage the

technical and vocational

training institutions and pro-

duce skilled human resource

by making them functional

The Chief Minister di-

rected the special commit-

tee to take steps for mak-

ing the authority effective

by suggesting the mea-

sures in this regard.

Dr. Alvi, Raisi for coordinated efforts by Islamic states for an end to Gaza massacre

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi and President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran on Wednesday had a telephonic conversation wherein they underscored the need for coordinated efforts by the Islamic countries to bring an end to the ongoing massacre and crimes against humanity in

During the conversation that lasted almost 45 minutes. President Alvi voiced deep concern over the dire situation in occupied Palestine, including Gaza as a result of ongoing Israeli aggression and occupation.

He regretted that despite the deaths of over 19,000 Palestinians, including women and children, the United Nations Security Council had failed to impose a ceasefire and bring an end to the unspeakable Israeli atrocities.

President Alvi reiter-

the Palestinian question based on an independent and contiguous Palestinian State with Al-Ouds-Al-Sharif as capital was critical for lasting peace in the Middle East.

The president reaf-firmed Pakistan's support to all diplomatic initiatives to the end, and appreciated Iran's concerns and initiatives about the ongoing situation. He also appreciated the Iranian leadership for its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and its support for the Palestinian cause.

President Alvi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the government and brotherly people of Iran over the heinous terrorist attack on an Iranian police station in Siestan-Baluchistan on December He expressed

Pakistan's resolve to work with Iran to combat terror-



President Dr. Arif Alvi speaks to Iranian Presi-

Nawaz, Bilawal obtain nomination papers

Nawaz received nomination papers from NA-15

MANSEHRA (INP): Paki- for acquiring nomination stan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif including 14 other candidates Wednesday obtained nomination papers for NA-15 Mansehra to contest the upcoming general elections scheduled for Feb 8, 2024.

According to details, in the lead-up to the General Elections, the electoral landscape in Mansehra has gained momentum as 15 candidates, including former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. have successfully obtained their nomination papers in

papers was currently underway in the Mansehra district for participation in the upcoming elections. In the NA-14 constituency of Mansehra, 20 candidates, notably former federal minister Šardar Muhammad Yousaf from PML-N and provincial leaders such as Shujaat Saleem Khan from PPP, have secured their nomination papers.

Meanwhile Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received nomination papers nomination papers for NA-194 Larkana. According to sources, Bilawal Bhutto's political Secretary Jameel the NA-15 constituency.
The formal procedure

Soomro has received nomination papers in his place. Soomro has received nomi-

To put agriculture & livestock sectors on modern lines Governor calls for support, guidance of banking sector

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stressed that there is a dire need of guidance and support of the banking sector for providing soft term loans to the farmers and put the agriculture and livestock sectors on modern lines. The Governor was speaking to a delegation who called on him under leadership of Chief Manager State Bank Quetta, Sarfraz Ahmed Nadeem here on Wednesday.

Speaking to the delegation, Governor said that Pakistan is basically an agricultural country and major part of our population is still associated with the agricultural

He urged the banking sector to make it more effective, expand its jurisdiction, establish more branches and play active role in bringing investment besides giving representation to the province in board of the bank.

He said that there is a key role of the human resource development in the process of overall development in the present fast and developed era.

But we were left behind than other provinces in the human resource development just because of lack of attention. However, different institutions especially banking sector can provide cooperation to bridge the gap in this regard and develop human resource according to the modern requirements.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chief Manager State Bank Quetta, Sarfraz Ahmed Nadeem meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

SWABI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar inaugurates new building of Girls Hostel at Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sci-

Join national mainstream **BNA Commander Sarfaraz Bangulzai**

alongwith 70 companions surrender

QUETTA (APP): In a maior development towards restoration of peace in Balochistan, Commander of Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA) Sarfaraz Bangulzai, alias Murid Baloch, along with his 70 companions on Wednesday surrendered to the State and joined the national mainstream.

ences and Technology.

They made the announcement during a press conference here at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium, Civil Secretariat. Caretaker Provincial

Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Captain ® Zubair Ahmed Jamali, and Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai were also present on the occasion.

'We have decided to leave the path of violence and join the national mainstream to play a constructive role in the development of the province and the country," Bangulzai said.

'I was working in the Food Department in Balochistan, had a house and a car, and was living a comfortable life, but detracted by anti-peace elements in 2009," he added.

Murtaza Solangi says

CPEC transformed Pakistan's

socio-economic landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for

Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs

Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the China-Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC), formally launched in 2013

had substantially transformed the socio-economic sce-

nario of Pakistan by addressing the dire energy crisis and

in Pakistani people", Solangi said while delivering a key-

note address at the 8th China-Pakistan Economic Corri-

dor Media Forum. Prior to the CPEC, Pakistan had been

facing daunting challenges in 2013, that included 10-

hour blackouts, a 2500 MW electricity deficit, and a

3250 billion economic loss, he said, and added later the

CPEC projects had profound positive effects on the lives

of local people with provision employment opportuni-

economic development process and so far multiple

projects had been completed in the energy sector alone.

World Bank approves

loan of 350 million

dollars for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): implement the policy of

reforms for stability in the

economy, implementation

of financial management is

necessary for stable growth.

The money provided by the

World Bank will be used for

institutional reforms be-

sides achieving sustainable

growth and targets

He said the CPEC eventually expedited Pakistan's

The CPEC has infused hope, trust and confidence

crumbling infrastructure.

World Bank has approved a loan of 350 million dol-

dollars has been approved by the World Bank under

that Pakistan will have to

A loan of 350 million

The World Bank says

lars for Pakistan.

the Rise to Program.

Bangulzai admitted that he had committed heinous crimes "in the name of nationalism". However, he realized that the so-called insurgent leaders were antipeace and enemies of the country as they themselves were enjoying luxurious

lives abroad. It may be mentioned that Sarfaraz Bangulzai took over the reins of BNA after its Commander Gulzar Shambay was arrested, who later joined the national mainstream due to the positive response from

the state institutions. SC seeks candidates stance in lifetime

ISLAMABAD (INP)

The apex court ad was aimed to resolve the discrepancy between the judicial decision on lifetime disqualification under Article 62 (1) (f) and the amendments made to the Elections Act, 2017

to contest general elections in the matter of lifetime invited for inputs through

"Interested candidates can submit detailed written replies to SC if they want," the ad read.

Govt all set to drop another electric bombshell

ISLAMABAD (Online): Preparations have been made to drop another electricity bombshell on people. Electricity tariff is likely to increase by RS 4.66 per unit. Central Power Purchasing Agency has submitted the application to NEPRA.

According to NEPRA,

Application will be heard on December 27 in NEPRA.

disqualification issue of lawmakers

The Supreme Court (SC) through and advertisement on Wednesday has sought the candidates' stance in issue of lifetime disqualification of lawmakers.

The candidates willing disqualification have been advertisement released in the different newspapers.

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pa-

this increase has been sought in November Fuel price adiustment.

presiding over 8th meeting of B-TEVTA Board CM forms special committee for making B-TEVTA functional

QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Mir Ali Mardan Domki emphasizes on need to encourage technical and vocational training institutions and produce skilled human resource by making them functional

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief

Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has constituted a special committee for making the Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA) fully functional.

He has directed to the concerned high ups to take emergent measures for operationalization of the B-TEVTA. In this regard, the special committee should ensure implemen- concerned high ups. tation on the initiatives after proposing it.

Minister was presiding over the 8th meeting of the and vocational training all over the world instead of board of B-TEVTA here on Wednesday. traditional education in the Those who were present modern era. present in the meeting being imparted technical

The caretaker Chief

were included the caretaker Provincial Minister for Finance and Revenue, Amjad Rasheed, caretaker Minister for Education, Dr. Qadir Bakhsh Baloch, Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Khan Kakar besides other

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister said

PTI founder to contest elections from three constituencies: Gohar

kistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's founder will contest election from three constituencies, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali and Barrister Ali Zafar announced in a news conference. PTI founder will con-

test elections from the National Assembly constituencies of Mianwali, Lahore and Islamabad, party chair-man Gohar Ali Khan said.

papers is against the spirit

Barrister Ali Zafar said that the PTI wants general election on February 08, at any cost. "Restraining from submitting nomination

of democratic process," he

'We won't boycott the election, the opponents will try to create the situation," Barrister Gohar said. He said, he will contest the election from Buner. 'The election commis-

sion should ensure that the PTI gets its rights as a political party," Gohar Khan said. They are nervous to the extent that denying election field to the party candidates, PTI chairman said We don't want to exacerbate the situation, opponents will try to worsen it,

Daily Aoice of Masse Independent

A hurdle crossed

One by one, largely due to the intervention of the higher judiciary, the major obstacles standing in the way of the Feb 8 elections are being removed. Last Friday, in a dramatic evening sitting, the Supreme Court suspended a Lahore High Court order that had effectively put the brakes on the election process after the ECP stopped training polling staff to comply with the LHC decision.

On Monday, the apex court set aside a Balochistan High Court order and observed that objections to delimitations cannot be entertained after the election schedule has been announced. Echoing what many Pakistanis desire, acting chief justice Sardar Tariq Masood observed: "Let the polls

While gerrymandering is a genuine concern, the fear of unfairly drawn-up constituencies cannot be misused to indefinitely delay the poll process. As Justice Mansoor Ali Shah noted during Monday's hearing, "We have to draw a line and set a limit in this regard".

With the SC's second reassurance within a week that elections would not be delayed, and the process of filing of nomination papers beginning today, the nation should in earnest start preparing for the polls. However, though the threat of delayed polls has been shot down by the apex court, there still remains the question of fairness.

For the democratic process to be credible, all parties must be given an open field to campaign. This includes the PTI, which has been facing hurdles in its operations since the May 9 episode. Many PTI leaders remain behind bars, with some not formally charged. Those not formally charged or convicted must be freed and allowed to contest the

Political parties also need to switch to top gear, and inform the people of their programmes to address Pakistan's myriad problems. Some signs of the coming elections had already been visible, such as the wheeling and dealing associated with constituency politics, as well as the migration of 'electables' towards parties believed to have the blessings of the powers that be.

But with the exception of the PPP, whose top leadership has been on the campaign trail for a while, most other mainstream parties have displayed lacklustre poll fever. This should now change.

The country is confronted with numerous crises, with political polarisation, disillusionment with the system, economic stagnation and resurgent terrorism topping the list. It is the job of political parties to convince the electorate that the democratic process has within it the answers to these problems. Parties need to start unveiling manifestos and explain their policy positions. Older and more traditional voters can be approached through rallies and corner meetings, while the younger generation needs to be engaged through social media. Only a free and transparent election can dispel hopelessness, and bring about a new democratic dawn.

Weasel words



Mahir Ali

It took 28 years of UNsponsored climate conferences for one of them to even acknowledge the primary source of the planet's woes. That was enough for the circus that concluded in Dubai a week ago to be hailed as a landmark.

It has been patently obvious for decades that fossil fuels are the chief culprits in global warming. Reports prepared for some of the biggest offenders pointed this out as far back as the 1950s. They were covered up, obviously. varieties greenwashing have been woke up to the challenge 30 years later

Much attention has been focused lately on the Swiss cheese of loopholes that accompany the bland wish to 'transition away' from coal, oil and gas as the sources of most of the globe's energy. This kind of wishful thinking might have meant something if the turning point had been recognised three decades ago, and efforts laun-ched to curb greenhouse gas

Meaningful investments in solar and wind energy, if launched as recently as the 1980s-90s, difference to Earth's fate. It was not to be. The COPs since then have been reluctant to spell out the source of the world's any initiative required consensus.

COP28 was deemed a step forward in calling out if by some miracle a confossil fuels, but precious sensus were to be dashed — shortly afterlittle was specified in terms of transcending them as fossil fuels, it would mean the primary source of energy. The requisite sound forcement mechanism —

the 'UAE consensus', which effectively signifies nothing. The worst pollut-

ers can step up their activities without violating the meaningless Dubai injunction. That was apparently

of the Emirati petrostate as

the next conference host at the conclusion of COP27 in Egypt occasioned plenty of dark humour even before the UAE picked Sultan al-Jaber, the head of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company as its president. The UAE hired leading PR agencies to transform the narrative.

It was only partially

successful, particularly

once it was alleged that al-Jaber was keen on using COP28 as a platform for negotiating lucrative oil deals. And that he doubted the science behind decreeing fossil fuels as the chief hurdle to achieving net the norm since the world zero emissions. He pushed back against those media reports, acknowledging that the phase-out of fossil fuels was essential to cooling the Earth. But after the conference concluded, he returned to his job at the helm of the oil company, which reportedly intends to fire up its production levels in the

vears to come. Another petrostate will host the next COP, and doubts about whether these conferences serve any useful purpose have steadily been mounting. More than 2,400 fossil fuel lobbyists were accredited to the farce in Dubai, an could have made a huge exponentially higher figure than their numbers in Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh. The numbers in Baku may be even higher. They needn't worry too woes, partly courtesy of much, though - the bigthe Saudi injunction that gest polluters will make sure that next to nothing is agreed that just might salvage the planet. And even

achieved on phasing out

very little without an en-

and fury were absent from which doesn't exist. Sure. Saudi output, for instance, would be set back if all other nations stopped buying its oil. But, seriously, what are the chances?

After all, as George Monbiot points out, "more carbon dioxide from fossil the intention. The choice fuels has been released worldwide" since 1992, when climate negotiations began, than in all of human history. He compares the oil and gas lobbyists' presence in Dubai to "allowing weapons manufacturers to dominate a peace conference". Mind you, one hardly hears of a peace conference these days, whereas they were ubiquitous between the end of World War II and the

They didn't achieve much, but nor have the climate conferences. Arguably, even the two exceptions of some consequence. Kvoto and Paris. have simply been ignored by those who didn't particularly care for their injunctions. There is absolutely no reason to expect that the UN climate conference process will ever yield anything resembling a practical road map for edging away from the impending apocalypse. We live in a capital-

ist world where profits will always matter far more than common sense, even if they pave the path to the end of the world — which appears to be precisely what is in store. What will today's politicians and economists say to future generations? Sorry that in the hottest year on record we partied in Dubai, and did almost nothing to shift our planet's orbit away from the path to Armageddon?

Part of the reason why the UN climate conferences are such a cruel farce is that they raise hopes that are then brutally wards, if not there and then. That climate is unlikely to change. -- Cour-

South Asia's smog



Jamil Ahmad

Air pollution is a major environmental threat of our time, affecting our well-being and posing health hazards to the most vulnerable members of our communities. South Asia, home to a quarter of the global population, has the worst urban air pollution in the world. Most South Asians live in areas where air pollution levels significantly exceed the WHO guidelines, exposing people to unhealthy air year-round and shortening life expectancy.

At the start of winter, air pollution increases to extremely dangerous levels. The toxic mix of smoke and dust is trapped by cold and heavy air, converting it into thick layers of smog over long periods of dry weather. In addition to health hazards, reduced visibility endangers lives on roads and motorways. Only occasional spells of rain provide temporary relief from the smog, even as highly dangerous levels of pollution remain in

The air quality in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Nepal is counted as worst. Lahore, Peshawar, Gujranwala, New Delhi, and Kolkata rank among the world's most polluted urban cen-

A recent news report labelled South Asia as the 'epicentre' of air pollution. This year, the situation is alarming. The impact of living under such hazardous conditions is particularly calamitous for children, the elderly and those with respiratory and cardiac health conditions.

In Pakistan, due to air pollution, life expectancy has been reduced by four

bal average reduction of 2.3 years. In the worst-affected urban areas, such as Peshawar and Lahore, residents are expected to lose as many as five years of their lives as a result of unhealthy air.

The drivers of air pollution are well known, as are the solutions to control it. Toxic emissions from industry, transport, waste burning and seasonal crop residue burning are major sources of air pollution in Pakistan.

In some parts of Pakistan, health advisories have been issued and educational institutes and offices closed for short periods, with the expectation that less human activity would reduce the smog and protect the vul-nerable. This is no lasting solution.

A ban on crop residue burning will also not be effective until farmers are provided with an alternative system to clean their land of crop residue in an environmentally friendly way. Meanwhile, court cases against polluters often fall by the wayside, either due to the inability of prosecuting agencies to produce timely evidence, or law enforcement agencies' lack of capacity.

Land use management regulations are another area warranting immediate attention. Pakistan's urbanisation rate is the highest in the region. Half of the country's population will be living in cities by 2025. In the process, unsustainable and often unregulated urban sprawl is taking place, mostly at the expense of green cover, depriving the cities of natu-

ral air filters. This exacerbates air pollution significantly. Conversion of agricultural land or forested areas into housing schemes must be regulated to ensure the provision of sufficient green spaces around cities. This is also important to safeguard natural habi-

years compared to the glo- tats, for wildlife and biodiversity, and thus essential for a balanced ecosystem.

The United Nations **Environment Programme** has identified implementation and policy gaps and compiled actions that governments can take to address air pollution. The costs of inaction are high. The burden of disease and economic costs keep rising. Urgent and bold measures are needed to tackle the problem on a permanent Strengthening the implementation arm of law en-

penalise polluters. Other steps to help reduce pollution include expanding the network of electric transport and restricting vehi-cular movement in urban centres by levying a congestion toll on smoke-emitting transport. Introducing pedestrian zones is useful to pro-

tect citizens from air and

forcement agencies will

enable the courts to

noise pollution. Temporary closure of traffic in recent roadworks in Peshawar cantonment provided a pleasant peek into how pedestrians could enjoy smoke-free air in an otherwise polluted and noisy part of the city. The provision of pedestrian zones should be a compulsory requirement of urban designing and restructuring. Through a cross-sectoral approach, Pakistan's National Clean Air Policy should be implemented in synergy with climate change policies through a bottom-up approach.

Engaging communities and local bodies will be helpful to monitor air quality in a systemic manner and propel swift and sustained action at ground level through stringent regulatory frameworks. Citizens all over are increasingly raising concerns about the impact of air pollution on their lives. Their calls for clean air must be heard and answered. --Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Commerce Minister to increase country's exports to China upto \$25 billion

ISLAMABAD (APP): are a part of the intensified the remarkable progress Federal Minister for interaction between the China has achieved on the Commerce and Industries, two countries in the field Dr. Ejaz Gohar on of trade. Wednesday unveiled his Mr. vision to increase extended Pakistan's exports to China up to US \$25 billion to engage in trade between the China, emphasizing the two neighbours.

The newly appointed Economic Counsellor of China to Pakistan, Mr. two nations.

Ceonomic Counsellor of cooperation between the China to Pakistan, Mr. Guan Yang Guangyuan paid a courtesy call to the Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the Chinese officials during said a press release issued his visit to China.

congratulations to Dr. Ejaz for his successful visit to

Minister conveved the warmth and

Dr. Ejaz highlighted The meeting followed that the primary purpose two successful visits to of his recent visit to China China by Dr. Ejaz which was to witness first-hand

one hand and to seek new market segments for Guangyuan Pakistani exports on the warm other hand.

He unveiled an ambitious 5-year vision to boost trade between positive initiatives taken to foster economic Pakistan and China, setting a target of \$ 25 billion for economic a target of \$ 25 billion for

Guangyuan Ejaz welcomed the Minister's sentiments for increasing Commerce and Industries hospitality extended by bilateral trade and economic cooperation and expressed commitment to stand with Pakistan, emphasizing the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries

China boasts

over 3.28 mln

5G base stations

ISLAMABAD (APP)

THE STATE OF COMMERCE IN PAKISTAN: ISLAMABAD: PIDE Vice-Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque giving his remarks on the eve of launching of its latest research report titled "The State of Commerce in Pakistan-International and Domestic," highlighting challenges and opportunities.

PIDE report highlights challenges, opportunities in commerce sector

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of (PIDE) here on Wednesday launched its latest research

China has constantly advanced construction of its 5G network with the number of 5G base stations in the country exceeding 3.28 million by the end of November, according to official data released Wednesday.

The volume accounted for 28.5 percent of the country's total mobile base stations, the China's Ministry of Industry Information Technology said.

In the meantime, more mobile phone users in China have embraced services, Ecns reported.

As of the end of November, the number of mobile phone users of the country's three telecom giants-China Telecom, China Mobile, and China Unicom—had reached about 1.73 billion, the data shows.

Among them, 77 million were 5G mobile phone users, a net increase of 210.4 million from the end of last year. accounting for 44.7 percent of total mobile phone users.

information and statistics on the state of commerce The Development Economics said. In his opening report titled "The State of Commerce in Pakistan – International Domestic," highlighting challenges and

commerce sector. "As a premier to gain a profound institution dedicated to understanding of markets, fostering economic growth and international development, PIDE's and domestic trade." report serves as an

opportunities shaping the landscape of the country's

in Pakistan," a news release remarks, PIDE Vice-Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque said his institution had compiled the report for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries so that it could explore all facets of internal and

He emphasized that invaluable source of despite the vibrant sector,

external trade in Pakistan.

"The primary objective is

stemming from the various regulatory problems, and various other problems.

highlighted the growth potential of several entities within sectors such as construction, retail, chain stores, food, franchises, and transport. Dr Haque said PIDE's research showed that the government's footprint on the economy was at over 70 percent of the economy, with its involvement in trade and markets, stifling market development and growth.

Sohrab stresses strengthening of collaboration with ILO for Pak Workforce Dev. ISLAMABAD (APP):

The Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik, held a significant meeting with Director-General of the International Labour Gilbert Houngbo on the sidelines of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) in Riyadh on

Wednesday. According to the news release here received, the discussions centered around aligning Pakistan's workforce development strategies with ILO's global standards and initiatives.

The meeting was a significant step towards fostering international the skills and employ ability of the Pakistani Labour Organization.

ILO's best practices. Both parties acknowledged the importance of aligning Pakistanis and Human national policies with global standards to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the workforce. Director-General of

ILO, Gilbert Houngbo Organization (ILO), implored the global community to support and opportunities for Pakistani youth. Recognizing the demographic dividend that Pakistan possesses, he emphasized the need for concerted efforts to harness the potential of the youth population and provide them with quality employment

SAPM, Jawad Sohrab reaffirmed that the Government of Pakistan is collaboration to enhance committed to working closely with the International



at a roadside stall ahead of Christmas.

Speakers for removing bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country

bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country Speakers at 3rd International Hydropower Conference while terming the hydropower and renewable energy (RE) crucial for sustainable future of the country on Wednesday stressed the need to remove bottleneck

in harnessing the hydropower and RE affordable electricity to the people and industry. The International Hydropower conference

Speakers for removing Renewable Energy Source for a Sustainable Future" was organized by the Energy Update in collaboration with Private Infrastructure Power (PPIB) and Board International Hydropower Association (IHA).

people.

A Minister for Power Muhammad Ali lauded the Energy Update for organizing the conference and said that it would help us to improve the policy framework in the energy

and hydropower share in government top priority as it was the only way to reduce the power tariff besides provision of affordable energy to the people. Currently, the share of hydel and RE in total energy mix stood at Speaking on the 31 per cent adding that the asion, Caretaker government has embarked 31 per cent adding that the

by 2030, he said. He said Pakistan has

tremendous potential of wind, solar, and hydropower. We could alone generate around 64,000 megawatts (MW) from hydel and only tapped 11,000 MW so far. Hydropower considered cheapest source of said. He said hydropower opportunities.

He said work on 4200

on ambitious plan to and 4500 MW Diamer enhance it to 61 per cent Basha dam was being carried out. However, financing was a big issue for such mega projects, he added.

> Pakistan has 175 billion tons of Thar coal reserves which could generate electricity for decades. On

The minister said

electricity in the world, he minister said that some 3000-4000 MW could be country. A sum of \$ 1 billion could be saved

conservation side, the MW Dasu hydropower, 800 MW Mohmand dam conservation, he said.



economic issues: Nasir ISLAMABAD (Online): Commerce and Industry PML-N leader Nasir Butt during his visit to ICCI. said that his party has experienced persons to the business community is manage the economy and if voted to power, PML-N

He said that the PML-N government had during its previous tenures. If voted to power, it

has plans to address the

key economic issues of the

and provide relief to the common man, he added.

would again bring Pakistan

out of economic trouble

Nasir Butt said that

the backbone of the economy and PML-N would finalize economic policies by taking them on board to achieve win-win outcomes. He said that Pakistan

achieved many economic has great potential to milestones for Pakistan emerge as a strong economy and it only needs visionary leadership and good governments to achieve this goal.

He said that PML-N's leadership has the He said this while ability and experience to talking to Ahsan Zafar resolve issues and deliver Bakhtawari, President of up to the expectations of Islamabad Chamber of the people.

ISLAMABAD (APP): "Hydropower:

They were of the view that RE and Hydropower were the future of the country but there was a dire need for potential for provision of consistency of government policies to exploit these areas for the benefit of the

themed occasion,

He said enhancing RE energy mix was the

projects could also saved only through energy generate employment efficient fans across the

Govt trying its best to improve Children's Hospital: Minister

Independent Report LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram has Syndicate meeting. During the Syndicate meeting, 100 per cent implementation said that the government is trying its best to improve Children's Hospital

Lahore.
He was chairing the 9th syndicate meeting of the University of Child Health Sciences (UCHS) here on Wednesday. He said that basic steps are being taken to make the UCHS a paperless university.

approved all the minutes of the 8th Syndicate meeting. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Masood Sadiq also presented a report on the implementation of the

decisions of the 7th Syndicate meeting. During the Syndicate meeting, 100 on the Lahore High Court's orders about quality and performance SOPs was emphasized.

It was decided to approve the statues of the UCHS and send them to the chancellor for final approval through the department. All the decisions of the finance and planning committee of Earlier the minister the 8th syndicate meeting were approved.

During the meeting, the ongoing progress on the complex under construction of the UCHS was also reviewed in detail



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan being briefed by Minister Social Welfare Dilshad Bano and Secretary Social Welfare, Fida Hussain about the department at CM Secretariat.

Minister inaugurates newly constructed 'Business Centre'

PESHAWAR: Khyber comprised of display halls Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker and showrooms for the Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Merged Districts' Affairs, Dr. Aamer Abdullah inaugurated the newly constructed Business Centre at Small Industries Estate here on Wednesday. The construction of the centre has cost about Rs.45 million. The commercial operation of the facility could earn millions of rupees for the Small Industries Development Board (SIDB)

constructed Business Centre at Kohat Road, Small for its financial stability.

Independent Report Industrial Estate is exhibition of the products manufactured by the manufacturers of the estate. Besides, the Managing Director (MD) SIDB, Ghazanfar Ali, Deputy Managing Directors Managing Directors Sahibzada Zulfiqar and Noman Fayyaz and other officers, officials and employees were also present on the occasion.

> Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker minister termed the project as of high importance and newly directed amendments the business model of the board

PESHAWER: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar in a group photo with senior member doctors of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) at the 46th Winter Khyber Medical College Convention organized in collaboration with APPNA on 20 Dec 2023.

Naqvi orders land allocation for smart police stations

Independent Report LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has issued directives for the allocation of land dedicated to Smart Police Stations.

During a specially convened meeting presided over by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi here on Wednesday, it was disclosed that the construction of 40 smart police stations is slated to be completed within the stipulated time frame. The initial phase will witness the establishment of 23

convicts

sentenced to

different terms

ATTOCK (Online): Two

drugs peddlers were

sentenced to different

terms by two different

courts in Attock on

Wednesday.In the first

case, a special court for the

Control of Narcotic

Substances (CNS) in

Attock on sentenced a

convict identified as

Najeeb Ullah- a native of

Waziristan to 9 years

imprisonment besides

imposing fine over him for smuggling two kilogram of PTI Imran Khan by T V

hashish from KP to Punjab. | channels despite court's orders TV channels.

Ban on airing Imran speeches: Two drugs

Minister into these stations took Chief Mohsin Naqvi, in setting a stringent deadline for the Smart Police Station Mohsin Naqvi directed the project, emphasized the expeditious allocation of phased conversion of conventional police police station across the stations into smart ones

LHC seeks affidavit

from chairman PEMRA

LAHORE (Online): Lahore came up for hearing before High Court (LHC) has single bench of LHC led by

and interview. The court sought affidavit from remarked chairman PEMRA chairman PEMRA. The

throughout the province. The meeting scrutinized the construction, repair, rehabilitation initiatives encompassing a involving the construction total of 737 police stations. of 313 houses for police A comprehensive officers and employees.

sought affidavit from chairman PEMRA to the

effect that he has not

imposed restriction on TV

channels from airing former

chairman PTI statements

should file this reply too

against ban on airing the

The petitions filed

that who has imposed ban.

17 will be strategically

located in other districts.

land to every landless province, stressing the swift completion of the land transfer process. The meeting also

addressed the project

Justice Shams Mehmood

Pansota appeared in the

court on behalf of former chairman PTI. The court

court remarked chairman

PEMRA should file

affidavit that he had not

imposed ban on airing

statements and interviews

of former chairman PTI by

Mirza Wednesday.

Lawver

smart police stations in Lahore, while an additional the Smart Police Station In attendance were Inspector General Police, project and an evaluation Senior Member Board of Revenue, Additional IG, of the facilities integrated Secretary Home, Secretary Communication and Works, CCPO, CTO, SSP Admin, and other key officials. police Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired a special meeting to assess progress on proposed enhancements for Data Darbar Hospital. During the meeting, deliberations took place regarding the proposition to establish.

LHC seeks report on cases against Omar

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday sought a report from Punjab police and other departments on a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan seeking details of cases registered against him. The single bench comparing Justice Ali Baqar Najafi heard the petition filed by the PTI secretary general for provision of details of cases. The petitioner's counsel argued before the court that his client wanted to participate in upcoming

All parties have expressed confidence in ECP: PML-N

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan should be conducted in General Secretary Attaullah Tarar has said all

the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), as there is no doubt about its credibility transparency.

Talking to the media, along with PML-N leader Malik Ahmad Khan at Town on Model Wednesday, he said some elements had pointed fingers at the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ECP just for nothing, adding that country and not meant for free and fair elections sale or gaining profit.

Muslim League-Nawaz the country on the given Deputy time and his party wanted to take forward the matter smoothly toward the political parties have elections. Attaullah Tarar expressed confidence in said the individual imprisoned in Adiala Jail is enjoying every facility and comfort in the jail, adding that walk, exercise and all recreational activities are going on in Adiala Jial. He said that everyone gets Toshakhana gifts, but no one had sold out those

> to gain 'black profit'. He said that those gifts were the pride of the

gifts in the black market



KARACHI: Members of Christian Community are performing tableau on stage during celebration ceremony in connection of Christmas Day Celebrations coming ahead, at St. Anthony's Church in Karachi.

Environmental shifts Seminar to tackle health challenges in KP held

PESHAWAR (APP): Addressing the growing impact of climate change on public health, Evidence for Health in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a comprehensive one-day seminar for health managers here on Wednesday.

This event brought together key stakeholders, including Director General of Health Services, Dr. Shaukat Ali, and Director of Public Health, Dr. Arshad Roghani, along with participation from district nealth offices and regulatory bodies across the province.

Dr. Shaukat Ali underscored

vulnerability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to climatic variations, emphasizing the adverse effects on public health. The seminar shed light on the surge in influenza-like diseases, waterborne infections, and pneumonia, all attributed to the changing climate.

Dr. Shaukat Ali commended the successful control of dengue this year, highlighting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as the pioneer in developing a robust health security action plan, marking a significant stride toward building a climate-resilient

International News

Putin claims Russia's military has | the momentum in Ukraine and is poised to meet Moscow's goals

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin declared Tuesday that his country's military has seized the initiative in Ukraine after repelling a monthslong counteroffensive and is well positioned to achieve Moscow's goals.

Putin spoke at a meeting with top military brass a day after he presented documents to Russia's Central Election Commission to seek reelection in the March presidential vote that he's all but certain to win.

"Our troops are holding the initiative," the Russian leader said. "We are effectively doing what we think is needed, doing what we want. Where our commanders consider it neces-

sary to stick to active defenses they are doing so, and we are improving our positions where it's needed.

praised Russia's troops for beating back Ukrainian attacks during the counteroffensive that started in June."The enemy has suffered heavy casualties and to a large extent wasted its reserves while trying to show at least some results of its so-called counteroffensive to its masters," Putin said, adding that "the myth about invulnerability of Western weapons also has collapsed."

'All attempts by the West to deliver us a military defeat, a strategic defeat, were shattered by the courage and fortitude of our

of our armed forces and the potential of our military industries," Putin said.

During the counteroffensive that began in early June. The Russian leader Ukrainian forces have failed to make any significant gains as they faced multiecheloned Russian defensive lines, including sprawling minefields. Speaking at the same meeting, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that the Russian minefields spread for 7,000 kilometers (more than 4,300 miles).

Shoigu said that 650,000 Russian soldiers have received combat experience in Ukraine, turning the Russian army into "the best prepared and capable army in the world, armed with advanced weapons that have been tested in combat." soldiers, the growing might

EU agrees new rules on hosting migrants, seeks to cut numbers

Monitoring Desk BRUSSELS: The European Union reached agreement early on Wednesday on new rules designed to share out the cost and work of hosting migrants more evenly and to limit the numbers of people coming in.

Representatives of the European Parliament and of EU governments reached an accord after all-night talks on EU laws collectively called the New Pact on Migration and Asylum that should take effect next year.

The laws cover screening irregular migrants when they arrive in the European Union, procedures for handling asylum applications, rules on determining which EU country is responsible for handling applications and ways to handle crises. Migrant arrivals in the European Union are way down from the 2015 peak of more than 1 million, but have steadily crept up from a 2020 low to 255,000 in the year to November.



U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin speaks with service members stationed at Al Udeid Air Base, Doha, Qatar.

West accuses Iran of illegally testing missiles, transferring drones to Russia, enriching uranium

Monitoring Desk UNITED NATIONS; The Western powers in the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran accused Tehran on Monday of developing and testing ballistic missiles, transferring hundreds of drones to Russia, and enriching ura-

nium to an unprecedented 60% level for a country without a nuclear weapons program — all in violation of a U.N. resolution endorsing the deal. Iran and its ally, Russia, dismissed the charges by Britain, France and Ger-

many, strongly supported

by the United States, which

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

The six-party agreement was aimed at ensuring that Iran could not develop atomic weapons. Under the accord, Tehran agreed to limit enrichment of uranium to levels necessary for the peaceful use of nuclear power in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

The sharp exchanges came at the Security Council's semi-annual meeting on the implementation of its resolution endorsing the 2015 nuclear pulled out of the agreement deal.

India's Modi willing to 'look into' US assassination plot claim

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he will investigate any evidence provided regarding an alleged plot to kill a Sikh separatist in the United States, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday.

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

"If someone gives us any information, we would definitely look into it," Modi said in his first comments on the issue. 'If a citizen of ours

has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law," he added. India's foreign ministry had earlier said it set up a "high-level" inquiry committee "to look into all the relevant aspects of the

Hamas leader

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: The leader of Hamas made his first visit to Egypt for more than a month on Wednesday, a rare personal intervention in diplomacy amid what a source described as intensive talks on a new ceasefire to let aid reach Gaza and get hostages freed.

visits Egypt

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who normally resides in Qatar, typically intervenes in diplomacy publicly only when progress seems likely. He last travelled to Egypt in early November before the announcement of the only agreement on a ceasefire in the war so far, a week-long pause during which more than 100 hostages were re-

Biden looks to secure Black support in visit to Wisconsin

Monitoring Desk

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

US may yet back 'mild ceasefire' for Gaza

Monitoring Desk eme-r-gency UN Security Cou-ncil meeting on the Gaza situation was adjourned on Tuesday, with discussions entering into

informal consultations as hopes rise of a slight flexibility in Washington's otherwise staunch support for Israel. The council's meeting, which started on Monday for a vote on UAE's resolution calling for a sustainable cessation of hostilities in Gaza, was postponed due to US concerns over

the draft's phrasing. While the US administration was still hesitant to endorse a "cessation of hostilities," it has shown openness to a milder "suspension of hostilities.'

reflects deepening divisions within the US government, with growing discontent, particularly from the global South. In a departure from its previous stance, the White House's willingness to consider alternative wording suggests frustration with Israel's approach.

Despite diplomatic efforts, Israel's approach has faced criticism, and pressure has been mounting on the US following a UN General Assembly vote on December 12, where 153 countries called for an urgent cessation of hostilities.

UAE Ambassador Mohamed Issa Abushahab underscored the urgency of the situation, declaring 2023 as the deadliest year in the history of Occupied Palestinian Territory



Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) agent displays the list of voters at the Mavuno polling centre on the day of the presidential election in Goma, North Kivu province of the Democratic Re-

Philippines rebukes China over South China Sea claims

Monitoring Desk MANILA: The Philippine defense minister rebuked

China on Wednesday for accusing his country of provoking tension and stirring trouble in the South China Sea, saying only Beijing believed what it was saying. Truth and in fact, no country in the world, none, supports unequivocally their claim to the whole of South China Sea," Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said as both nations have exchanged accusations over recent collisions in the waterway. China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of commercial shipping annually, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

The Permanent Court of Arbitration in 2016 said China's claims had no legal basis, a ruling the United States supports but Beijing rejects. There was no immediate comment from the Chinese Embassy in Manila. More than a week ago, Manila and Beijing traded accusations over a collision of their vessels in the South China Sea.

Rescuers work amid the rubble at Shiyuan village following the earthquake in Jishishan county,

France's Macron faces cracks in his government over migration law **Monitoring Desk** by being tougher on immi-PARIS: French President

Emmanuel Macron faced cracks within his ruling alliance on Wednesday after parliament passed a toughened immigration bill, leaving him needing to find ways to appease left-leaning members. The bill, a compromise between the centrist president's party and the

conservative opposition,

illustrates a rightward shift

in politics in much of Eu-

rope as governments try to

curb the rise of the far-right

Gansu province, China.

It also showed the difficulties for Macron of governing without a parliamentary majority, which he lost in the June 2022 election after winning a second presidential mandate.

Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau told Le Monde daily he would resign in protest against the new law. "It's not possible for me to defend this text, Le Monde quoted Rousseau, a former communist, as saying

PM announces upgradation of | Jordan's King Abdullah-II KMC, AMC to medical universities

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here upgradation of Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar and Ayub Medical College (AMC), Abbottabad as public sector medical universities.

The prime minister made the important announcement while addressing the 46th annual meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistan Descent of North America (APPNA) organized by the alumni of Khyber Medical College Peshawar at Governor House. On the request of members of APPNA and its President Dr Arshad Rehman, Prime Minister Kakar said that practical work on upgradation of KMC and AMC as public sector medical universities should be initiated within 35 hours by the respective authorities. Commending APPNA's rich services for ailing humanity and continued long connection with people of their home country, the prime minister di-

Chief Minister Khyber Pakthunkhwa to give practical shape to upgradation of KMC and AMC to a full fledge medical universities keeping in view of people and APPNA demands.

While lauding services of students of both these medical colleges in healthcare services in the country as well as abroad, the prime minister said that Pakistani doctors serving in United States and others foreign countries were like an ambassador of Pakistan and their medical and surgical services besides philanthropy contribution during earthquake, floods and other natural calamities in Pakistan was highly praised

Prime Minister Kakar said that he was very pleased that Pakistani doctors, settled in America have established strong roots and bonds with their countrymen and helped Pakistan in every difficult He said that Pakistani

doctors have proved their

Pakistani communities and dedication towards duties and treating patients with friendly attitude and warmth was their hallmark

"Pakistani doctors are the best in the world and graduates of KMC doctors were known internationally for their hard work, profes sionalism and devotion in healthcare services," he said

On the request of APPNA President, the prime minister announced to recommend name of Dr Umar Taimur Atique, for Nishan-e-Imtiaz, the first non-American President of the College of Physician of America for his great serrices for Pakistan. Dr Umai Atique was the graduate of KMC Peshawar. The prime minister recalled his memories of spending time with friends at CEENA Hall hos tel of KMC at Peshawar saying that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's unique cul-



Judicial Assistants of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a group photo with Mr. Justice Athar Minallah at the Federal Judicial Academy Islamabad.

Submission of nomination papers for 2024 elections kicks off

ISLAMABAD (INP): Submission of nomination papers for participation in general elections kicked off

on Wednesday. According to schedule issued by Election Commit a maximum of five mission of Pakistan (ECP), nomination papers with difthe desiring candidates could get and submit the nomination papers till 4:30

On December 23, preliminary list of the candidates will be released while scrutiny of nomination papers will be held from 24th

to 30th December. electoral symbols will be allotted to the candidates on January 13 and polling for the general elections will be

held on February 8. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Tuesday issued guidelines for candidates to submit

submitted from December

The fee for obtaining the nomination papers is fixed at Rs.100. A candidate can submit a maximum of five

ferent endorsers. The fee for the candidate of the National Assemeat is Rs30 000 (nonrefundable) while the fee for the candidate of the Provincial Assembly seat is Rs20.000 (non-refund-

able). The candidate shall As per the schedule, attach the income tax return documents of the last three years with the nomination

> The basic qualification for the candidate is to be a citizen of Pakistan and not less than 25 years of

As per ECP, contesnomination papers. tants for National Assembly seats must be voters of



KARACHI: Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezai talking with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

DC Ziarat chairs meeting to improve health facilities for patients

ZIARAT (APP)-Deputy of Dr. Paramedical staff on Commissioner (DC) Ziarat Hamad-ur Rehman on Wednesday chaired a meeting of District Health Committee meeting to improve quality of health facilities for patients of the area.

District Health Officer (DHOs) Dr. Badar Nadeem Ansari, DSMP PHI Faridullah Panizai, MS Dr. Irfanuddin participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, important decisions were taken regarding the appointment hospitals in the area.

duty and the provision of facilities in hospitals.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Hamad-ur Rahman said that Doctors are the messiah of the nation, they should treat the people bet-ter and fulfill their duties honestly.

He said that strict action would be taken against those absentee doctors and paramedical staff in order to improve functional of

Pakistan, Brunei hold inaugural round of bilateral consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inaugural round of Pakistan-Brunei Bilateral Consultation and Cooperation (BCC) was held virtually on Wednesday wherein the two sides engaged in extensive discussion on bilateral relations, regional

manent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei, Pengiran Norhashimah Binti Pg Mohd Hassan, a developments and multilat- Foreign Office press release

ism all over the world including USA and played a Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, who is on role of a bridge between American citizens while an official visit to Jordan,

confers Order of Star of

Jordan upon CJCSC

RAWALPINDI (APP): including bilateral politico-

called on King Abdullah II,

Jordanian King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussain

conferred the medal 'Order

of the Star of Jordan' on

CJCSC General Sahir

Shamshad Mirza in recog-

nition of his meritorious

During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed

Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JÚÍ)

on Wednesday has de-

manded the Election Com-

mission of Pakistan (ECP)

to amend the election

schedule, requesting an ex-

tension to the deadline for

receiving nomination pa-

pers. Senator Kamran

Murtaza, a JUI represen-

tative, wrote a letter to

Chief Election Commis-

sioner Sikandar Sultan Raja,

expressing concerns about the limited time allotted for

submitting nomination pa-

pers. The current schedule

allows only three days for

political parties need more

time to distribute tickets to

candidates at both the na-

Murtaza argued that

this crucial step.

Ibn Al Hussain.

diplomatic and military co-

operation and the prevail-

ing regional security situa-

tion, according to an Inter Services Public Relations

(ISPR) news release issued

separate meetings with

Major General Yousef

Ahmed Al-Hnaity, Chair-

man of the Joint Chiefs of

Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and Brigadier

Hyasat, Commander of the

He proposed adding three

days to the nomination pa-

per receipt period to facili-

extended nomination win-

dow, Murtaza suggested

reducing the time for scru-

tiny of nomination papers

from seven days to four

days. He believes this ad-

justment would still allow

elections to be held on the

scheduled date of February

Muttahida Qaumi Move-

ment-Pakistan (MQM-P)

has demanded the Chief

Election Commissioner

(CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan

to extend the deadline for

filing of nomination papers

for the general elections.

Meanwhile the

To compensate for the

tate this process.

Muhammad

The CJCSC also held

here Wednesday

General

various areas of interest, Royal Jordan Air Force.

JUI, MQM-P demand

extension in deadline for

nomination papers filing

19th convocation of BUITEMS due to be held

Independent Report

and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) is scheduled to be held today (Thursday) here in it's Takatu campus.

programme, the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar would be the chief guest at the convocation.

grees to the graduates and postgraduate students of the university.

351 more power connections disconnected; 64 tempered meters removed

Independent Report QUETTA: In all 351 more electricity connections of the defaulters of utility bills and arrears were disconnected and 64 tempered and shunt meters were removed during last 24 hours in all operation circles of Quetta Electricity Supply Company (QESCO). According to the spokesman of QESCO, the drive against defaulters and power pilferers is continued all over the province. The QESCO has managed to collect over Rs. 320 million on account of the detection and fine from the power pilferers in the province.

Former chairman **DRAP** arrested in corruption fake degree case

ISLAMABAD (Online) Former chairman Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Sheikh Akhtar has been arrested by FIA in fake degree and cor ruption case. FIA has arrested Sheikh Akhtar former chairman DRAP following the cancellation of his bail. Judge Shahrukh Arjmand of FIA Court central has cancelled the bail before arrest. According to FIA, former chairman DRAP Sheikh Akhtar was facing Rs 2.5 billion corruption charges.

today ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior Aftab Durrani in a meeting with the Saudi Ambassador QUETTA: The 19th annual convocation of Balochistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki. **ADOWA** demands posting of officers of attachment

officers.

It was stated by

Attached Departments Of-

ficers Welfare Association

in a statement issued here

Balochistan Secretariat Ser-

Balochistan Civil Ser-

(BCS) and

on Wednesday.

vices

University of Information Technology, Engineering According to the

He would award de

Independent Report
QUETTA: Federation of the Attached Departments

posts of attached departments, said he, adding that posting of BCS and BSS Officers Welfare Associacadre officers were not action, has demanded of the ceptable to Federation of authorities to post officers the Attached Departments of attached departments Officers Welfare Associaagainst the key positions of He said that a delegaline departments instead of posting of BCS and BSS tion of the Federation of the

deptt. against key positions

Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association Abdullah Khan Durrani. would call on Chief Secretary Balochistan for re-President, Federation of the dressing the grievances of field officers, adding that if demands of Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association were not addressed. protest movement would be started besides adopting



QUETTA: Former Caretaker Provincial Minister Agha Umar Bangulzai meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

Hashmi underscores media's role in highlighting successes of China-Pakistan ties

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan of the first decade of China-Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi on Wednesday underscored that media collaboration has a vital role in highlighting successes and solidify the mutual trust which is the bedrock of China-Pakistan re-

lationship. He made these remarks while speaking via online at the 8th CPEC Media Forum "Next Decade of CPEC: Opportunities and Learning from Past Decade" held in Islamabad to celebrate the completion

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Ambassador Hashmi highlighted that the 2nd phase of CPEC is poised to focus on the socio-economic development of our

projects promise to improve the lives and livelihood opportunities, including for those in the remote areas. He said enhancing bilateral industrial cooperation between Pakistan and

The key CPEC smugglers. arrested and further legal

action has been started against them.



JORDAN: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad Mirza called by King of Jordan King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussain at

IT ministry develops mobile app to digitize Hajj operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hajj operations for pilgrims have been digitalized as Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications has developed a mobile app in record time to facilitate Hajj Pilgrims.

Caretaker Minister for IT Dr Umar Saif and Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed jointly launched the application developed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB) on Wednesday, said a state-ment issued here.

Bhatti briefed the participants about the application in the welcome address.

Illegal

structures

demolished

in Quetta

croachments.

Speaking on the occa-

Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif said that the process of digitalization has been accelerated in the country under the directions of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The launch of Hajj application was a milestone in this connection, he said.

Chief Executive Officer NITB Babar Majeed

sion, the Minister for Insonal information, including formation Technology and updates, he said.

Highlighting the key features of the application Dr. Umar Saif said that the Application will enable pilgrims to register using the OTP received via SMS. Users will be provided with a unique ID, that is their CNIC and application number, he said

contact details and identification information. The application will enable Pilgrims to view their Hajj application status i.e (submitted, successful, unsuccessful, refunded) real time He said the applica-

tion will provide informa-tion that is collected from application form i.e personal information, group information, Mehram information, helper information, additional facilities, Haji dues, nominee information, and applicant's bank account details. Dr. Umar Saif further said that Pilgrims can access information about He said pilgrims can their Hajj group, including group members' details.

Performance of DHOs & MSs of hospitals to be

Independent Report QUETTTA: Illegal struc-tures in different parts of Health the provincial capital were demolished on Wednesday by the staff of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation in a drive launched against en-

Following the directions of Abdul Jabbar the province. Baloch, Administrator, Quetta Metropolitan Corporation, staff of QMC launched anti encroachment drive under the supervision of Ali Raza Durrani, Incharge, Anti, Encroachments in different areas of

During the drive, several illegal structures were demolished in different areas of Quetta, including Sattar Road and Archer

strictly monitored: Secretary **Independent Report**

QUETTA: The Secretary Department, Abdullah Khan has stated that the performance of District Health Officers of all districts and Medical Superintendents of the public sector hospitals would be strictly monitored all over

The Secretary Health also vowed to make the primary healthcare structure more organised and effective and there would be no compromise in this regard.

He was presiding over the zoom meeting of divisional directors, DHOs

and Medical Superintendents here on Wednesday. Also present in the meeting were Special SecAdditional Secretary Health, Arif Khan, Additional Secretary Health, Hameed Zehri, Section Officer, Tahoor Khan, Director Safe Blood Transfusion, Professor Dr Hanif Mengal, Director Emergency and Monitoring Dr Fahim Khan, Additional Director MSD Dr Shoaib Akram and other concerned

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health said that majority of the people depend on the government hospitals for treatment in the rural areas. He asserted that no excuse would be tolerated in provision of the medical treatment and medicines in the hospitals.

The Secretary said Liaquat Bazar, Mecongy Rehman Qambrani, Directury Salu that improvement is being brought in availability of the tor General Health Ser- medicines and other healthcare facilities.



QUETTA: Members of Technical Team of Sindh Food Authority photographed with BFA Lab and Field Officers during their visit to Balochistan Food Authority.

Customs foils major bid of smuggling of foreign currency & gold

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Customs foiled major bid of smuggling of foreign currency and gold from alleged smugglers at Pak-Afghan border on Wednes-

According to the spokesman of Customs, the Customs carried out operation against the smugglers in collaboration with the Frontier Corps (FC) at the Pak-Afghan

During the seizure, a total of 826 grams of gold and around 200,000 foreign currency (Saudi Riyal) were recovered from five alleged The smugglers were

According to the Cus-

toms spokesman, the worth of smuggled currency and gold is over Rs. 3 crore.

SFA technical team visits BFA labs provided valuable insights **Independent Report**

QUETTA: A technical team from the Sindh Food Authority (SFA), led by Director Technical Dr. Ahmed Ali Shaikh and Technical Advisor Dr. Seema Ashraf, recently visited the newly established laboratories of the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA). This visit took place at the invitation of the BFA and under the

The primary objective of the visit was to provide guidance, assistance, and testing facilities to the BFA laboratories. The SFA team aimed to enhance the capabilities of the BFA in chemical analysis and microbial analysis.

direction of DG SFA Agha

Fakhar Hussain.

During the visit, the SFA technical team offered consultations and guidance to the staff of the microbiology lab at BFA. They products.

tionery item analysis. This collaborative effort between the SFA and BFA aims to strengthen the food safety infrastructure in Balochistan and ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the production and distribution of food

on the analysis of loose or

unpacked oil/ghee samples.

harmonizing the procedure,

and implementing uniform

strategic Standard Operat-

ing Procedures (SOPs) followed by the Sindh Food

Authority. Furthermore, the SFA

technical team extended

their consultation and sup-

port to the BFA in chemi-

cal analysis. They provided

expertise in food grade and

non-food grade color analy-

sis, powdered and infant

formula milk analysis, as

well as bakery and confec-

Imran, Bushra summoned in NAB Toshakhana reference

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been summoned on December 23, in connection with NAB Toshakhana refer-

The NAB filed Toshakhana reference against the former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Accountability Court

which was accepted for hearing The accused had ob-

tained 108 items from the Toshakhana and kept 58 with them, the reference stated. The National Ac-

countability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday filed a reference with the Accountability Court against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi pertaining to Toshakhana case

est. The inaugural round was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Per-

QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat presiding over meeting of local bus owners and rickshaw union.