

# Independent

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

Unveils Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital and Desalination Plant in Gwadar

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

The prime minister, addressing the inauguration ceremony of Pak-China Friendship Hospital and Gwadar Seawater Desalination Plant here, said the journey of CPEC would surely move forward, not the backward, so joining the development course would be a prudent decision.

“Those who think to change the course (of CPEC) by force, violence or any other means are committing historic blunder

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

The prime minister said the development of reduced travel durations across the province was just due to CPEC intervention.

He told the gathering that trade worth \$36 trillion was expected to take place in and around China in the near future, therefore

it was a must to join the journey through skill development and claim the share, instead of showing hostility.

He said the clean drinking water had been an issue faced by the Gwadar people and the desalination plant project would address it to a great extent. Besides, the construction of a 150-bed hospital would provide quality healthcare to the people, he added.

The prime minister also thanked the Chinese

ambassador for announcing the solar power project and emergency services for Quetta.

Prime Minister Kakar assured the all-out support of the federal and provincial governments on the matter of security, reiterated that the Pakistan Army, police and law enforcement agencies would safeguard the Chinese workers even at the cost of their lives.

He expressed the hope that Gwadar would complete its course of development soon to become a trade hub with the Pak-China cooperation for the benefit of future generations.

He directed the authorities concerned to connect Northern Zone with main grid to address the electricity issue.

Earlier, the prime minister, along with the Chinese ambassador and Balochistan chief minister unveiled the plaques to inaugurate the projects which followed the presentation of the souvenirs to the prime minister as well as the envoy.

PM Kakar, later talking to reporters on the occasion, said the direction of the progress of Balochistan was set forth and expressed confidence that the province would witness a new era of development.

He thanked the provincial government on completion of the development projects, which he said, would facilitate the locals of Gwadar.

The prime minister hoped that the financial crunch would be over with the steps taken by the interim government.

deployed at polling stations and they are also on patrol.

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

In its bid to prepare for the elections, the ECP had sought a report from all inspector generals of police to determine the availability of police personnel for the polls. Responding to the ECP's request, IGP from all the provinces and the capital said that they did not have enough personnel.

During the elections, the security situation is a grave concern for the authorities concerned and to ensure that nothing goes south, law enforcers are



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

## Army's help sought for general elections amid police shortage

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

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

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

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

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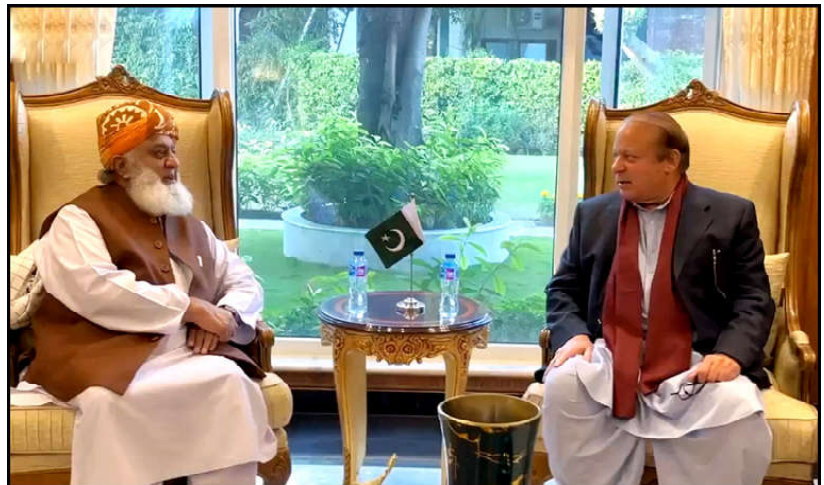
Balochistan — totalling 277,588.

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“The letter mentioned that the armed forces need to be deployed at polling stations to ensure “smooth elections” in light of the country's “fragile security cum law and order situation”. The ECP secretary told his interior ministry counterpart that his office should inform the election commission about the availability of the army and CAFs before December 7, seeking the ministry's support in “the national cause”.



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

## Nawaz, Fazal discuss possibilities of seat adjustment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

thankful to those PTI leaders jumping the ship.

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

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

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

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

Monitoring Desk

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

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

A special court estab-

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

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

Khan said he was

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

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

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

The press attaché emphasized the people's de-

## Pak gets \$100m support for polio eradication

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

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

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

## Justice Mazahar Akbar Naqi submitted reply to Registrar's notice

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court Justice Mazahar Akbar Naqi has submitted a reply to the notice of Registrar Supreme Court on the matter of complaint in the Supreme Judicial Council.

Justice Mazahar Naqi also sent the copy of the reply to the 3-member committee of the Supreme Court, in which it has been said that the registrar should not have the authority to follow the case or not. Registrar's notice has no constitutional or legal status.

He said that I had filed two constitutional petitions in the Supreme Court on November 20 and 30 but my petitions have not been numbered so far.

Justice Mazahar Naqi said that a miscellaneous application was also filed to set the constitutional petitions early but the case was not filed. Not setting the constitutional petitions is a violation of the Practice and Procedure Law. These constitutional petitions should be placed before a 3-member committee and both my constitutional petitions should be fixed for hearing.



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

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

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

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

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

“Whatever budgeted amount is needed by the ECP, will be released as per its needs accordingly,” Solangi added.

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

## WIPO high level delegation to visit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) Pakistan will organize a series of events from tomorrow on Tuesday in connection with the closing ceremony of WIPO's project on “Intellectual Property and Women Entrepreneurs in Embroidery” and related crafts business.

The closing ceremony of the events will be held on December 7, in which Caretaker Minister for Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz will be the chief guest, said a press release issued here on Monday. A three-member WIPO delegation is visiting Pakistan to attend the events. The delegation comprises of Hasan Kleib Deputy Director General WIPO, Ms. Yaning Zhang and Dr. David Simmons Counsellors Division for Asia and the Pacific Regional and National Development Sector WIPO.

## New measures introduced to boost tax revenue on IMF ‘pressure’

ISLAMABAD (INP): The caretaker government Monday announced a comprehensive plan, targeting an expansion of the tax net and increased filings as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) applies pressure for economic reforms.

How many registered taxpayers are in Pakistan? Only 10.18 million individuals out of a population exceeding 240 million are registered taxpayers, with a mere 3.3 actively filing returns.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has devised measures to encourage tax compliance to address this disparity.

Under the new plan, individuals with an annual income of Rs0.6 million or more, ownership of multiple properties, vehicles of 1000 cc or more, and frequent international travel are obligated to file income tax returns.

Disconnection of electricity and gas connections Failure to comply will result in severe consequences, including the disconnection of electricity and gas connections, as well as the blocking of mobile phone SIM cards.

As per documents, only 3.3 million people submitted their tax returns in 2023.

The government emphasizes that tax evasion is pervasive across all sectors of the economy and insists that non-filers must transition to become filers to avoid punitive measures.

Dr. Abid Qayyum Silhari, Executive Director of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), identifies the undocumented economy as a major contributor to tax evasion. He stresses the need for transitioning to a documented economy, discouraging large cash transactions until that goal is achieved.

LAHORE: Chairman NAB Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed presenting keys of the stolen goods to the Chief Secretary Punjab.

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

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

He said that the anti-graft watchdog is trying that no injustice would be done to people. We will tighten our noose around the opportunists, he added.

He said that the purpose of starting an organized awareness campaign among the people is that the youth

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi being briefed after inaugurating a Business Facilitation Center in Lahore for convenience of investors.



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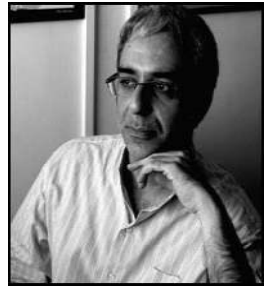
## One crucial year of extraordinary achievements

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

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

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

## Hell's architects



Zarrar Khuhro

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

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

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

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

what the actual architects of that move had in mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Labour inspection



Parvez Rahim

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Commerce News

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The services' imports into the country also

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



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

### Sanjrani recognizes role of business community in driving economic progress

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

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

the chamber's endeavors in promoting economic growth and displayed keen interest in understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the business community in Gwadar.

The discussions focused on fostering collaboration and addressing key economic issues, providing a platform for GCC officials to share insights on regional economic development and trade dynamics, said a press release.

The economic policies, infrastructure

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

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

The Gwadar Chamber of Commerce and

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

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

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

### KPTMA delegation calls on KP CM

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### Minister, CCIs presidents visit Business Facilitation Center

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

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

On this occasion, Provincial Minister SM Tanveer highlighted the

Business Facilitation Center as a revolutionary initiative by the caretaker provincial government to bolster investment.

Completed within a month under the efficient leadership of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the center is poised to significantly benefit the business community and accelerate the pace of industrialization, he added.

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

### Energy minister participates GRA session at COP 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

Qatar diaspora to establish a foothold in the Qatari market.

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

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

countries, showcasing their expertise and strengths.

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

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



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

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday emphasized that attitudinal change in any sector of the economy could lead to its growth and development including the production and export of world-famed Pakistani indigenous Basmati rice.

The president, elaborating his viewpoint, said that technological and scientific research and inputs would pave way for the latest innovations in the agriculture sector and the rice exporters should utilize all available tools to enhance their yield by supplementing the country's exports.

He was addressing the Biryani Festival and presenting of REAP journal organized by the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The event was attended by the REAP office bearers, members of the diplomatic corps, exporters, traders and mediapersons.

The president underscored the need for inclusion and encouragement of women in the agriculture sector as the country was looking towards such initiatives, leading towards further women empowerment. "With such changes in attitude, they can stimulate

changes in the country's economy," he added.

The president said that with proper scientific tools and knowledge, Pakistan could attain food autarky and cited Netherlands that was 19 percent smaller than Pakistan in size but had become the second largest food exporter in the world owing to usage of latest technology and research.

Appreciating the role of REAP in boosting the national economy, the president said that with organizing of festivals and road shows in different countries, they were providing huge business opportunities to the local Basmati rice growers and exporters.

He also suggested for exploring the organic cultivation of rice crop as the world including Pakistan were facing water scarcity. He opined that if the world resources were properly utilized, about 7 billion world's population could be fed properly and regretted that along with the global trade, the exploitation of population and accumulation of wealth also continued.

He said that hoarding of food stuff was also a rea-

son which led to food crises and it could be ended if priorities across the globe were set, adding that only \$1 trillion could be suffice to address the food scarcity in the world.

Contrary to it, the Islamic teachings had made the wealth a source for channeling the uplift of entire community, leading to well-being of the human beings, he added.

The president also stressed upon measures to water conservation in the agri-sector, particularly during the rice cultivation as it was a water intensive crop. Besides, value addition products based upon rice crop, the exporters could increase Basmati outreach to different parts of the world, he said, and lauded REAP for projecting the soft image of Pakistan and promoting their culture, industry and livelihood. He said that certain things in the agriculture sector were possible and doable and expressed the optimism that the country would soon rise economically.

Earlier, Chairman REAP, Chela Ram Kelwani, in his address, highlighted the contribution of the association in the country's exports.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Jamal Shah inaugurating National Music Academy at PNCA.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is Pakistan's largest trading partner in the Middle East North Africa region with an average annual trade of \$9 billion and urged the UAE investors to explore Pakistani market for new avenues.

In an interview with Gulf Today, he said Pakistan is planning a comprehensive investment promotion strategy in major countries including the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

PM Kakar said Pakistan's exports to the UAE include agriculture products, textiles and manpower, while the UAE exports petroleum, petrochemical products and hi-tech equipment to Pakistan.

The two countries also exchange services with each other. Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence and Financial technology are new areas of collaboration with much greater potential.

Pakistan-UAE bilateral trade during 2022-23 amounted to \$9 billion, he said.

He expressed satisfaction that Pakistan's exports to UAE surged to \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2022-23, highest in the last five years.

On prospects of UAE's investment in Pakistan, he said attracting foreign investment in all sectors of Pakistan's economy was the government's top priority.

"Pakistan's Investment Policy has been designed to provide a compre-

hensive framework for creating a conducive business environment for attraction of Foreign Direct Investment from all parts of the world including the UAE," he said.

Currently, he said, there are over 1,000 multinational companies profitably operating in Pakistan, and for many, Pakistan is the most profitable part of their franchise.

Foreign companies, individuals, multinational corporations can own 100 per cent shares in locally incorporated or unincorporated firms, he added.

Stressing enhanced investment cooperation, the prime minister said the two countries could explore the areas such as agriculture, energy, mining, information technology, logistics and defence.

### NAB distributes cheques worth Rs 600mln among Arian city victims

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Deputy Chairman, Sohail Nasir Monday handed over cheques worth Rs 600 million to 450 affected of Arian City scandal.

Commencing with the recovered sum obtained through a plea bargain with the management of Arian City, Fateh Jang, Rawalpindi, the funds were distributed among the victims in a simple ceremony held at NAB, Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir addressing during ceremony of cheque distribution among affectedes of Arian City at NAB Headquarters.

This returned amount, a product of meticulous scrutiny, is being distributed among the victims.

Addressing the cheque distribution ceremony here, the deputy chairman stressed the importance of ensuring social justice and self-accountability in resolving the issues faced by the society.

NAB is actively conducting an awareness campaign through the media to educate the public about precautionary measures before investing in a housing society.

It was emphasized that people should invest only in societies that are legal and registered.

He committed to returning every penny to the victims of fraudulent housing societies, seeking the public's support in honoring this commitment.

This aligns with the bureau's responsibility to protect the rights of investors and others.

He urged individuals to carefully assess the legality of a society before investing in it.

Additionally, he recommended consulting the relevant regulator to verify the authenticity of any housing society before making an investment.

"We must prioritize respecting the rights of others and honoring our commitments," he added.

He highlighted the presence of mafias in the housing sector, advising people not to purchase files without verifying their legality and authenticity.

### Senate committee approves student union bill

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senate Committee for Education on Monday approved the bill for the restoration of student organizations in the federal educational institutions. Ifran Siddiqui presided over the Senate Committee for Education and approved the bill for the restoration of student organizations at the federal universities and colleges. The meeting members considered a bill for the legislation on the student union in the education institutions in the federal.

### CTD conduct mock exercise near Diplomatic Enclave

ISLAMABAD: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) conducted a mock exercise at an under construction building near the diplomatic enclave with a purpose to deal with any possible emergency situation and to ensure the safety of life and property of the citizens, a police public relation officer said.

According to detail, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the mock exercises by the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) are being conducted in different areas of the city in order to prepare the force to deal with any untoward situation.

### Masood calls Pak, American physicians 'valuable asset'

WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Masood Khan, has lauded the immense contributions made by the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) towards strengthening Pakistan's healthcare system as well as in dealing with other challenges, including floods.

"Our doctors have succeeded in the United States beyond imagination—it is a matter of pride for Pakistan and the diaspora community," he said at the 10th annual banquet of APPNA's Delaware Valley Chapter, which represents Pakistani doctors of Eastern Pennsylvania, Upper Delaware and South New Jersey.

The ambassador said Pakistani-American physicians were a valuable asset

of Pakistan and the United States.

Pakistan, he said, has problems, but they will be just a blip in the country's long history. "We will negotiate a transition. We have the wherewithal to do that."

While Pakistan had lagged behind in some areas, it had also progressed in many walks of life, Masood Khan pointed out.

"Our human capital is increasing," he said, adding this was not the time for the Pakistani community to be polarized. This, he added, was a moment to consolidate gains and to be part of the United States' mainstream.

"You should not be on the fringes. You should be in the mainstream because you have the requisite competencies to do that," he told the gathering.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Austria, Mrs. Andrea Wicke calling on Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue.

### USAID launches strategic planning at Pak universities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through the Higher Education System Strengthening Activity, organized a five-day workshop to launch strategic planning at Pakistani public sector universities. University administrators and faculty learned how to develop and implement strategic plans to improve their universities' management, market-relevance, and student support services.

These strategic plans will support universities to increase students' employability after graduation.

USAID Mission Director Kate Somvongsiri addressed the university leaders, saying, "Higher education institutions are central to Pakistan's development. Your universities shape future leaders, said a press release issued here on Monday. Your degree programs give youth the skills to benefit from and drive Pakistan's economic growth."

### ICP launch special drive against menace of narcotics; educate youth on drug prevention

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have initiated a special awareness campaign to eradicate use of narcotics from the federal capital and ensure the safety of the youth from the curse of drugs. Police teams have conducted special lectures in various educational institutions to educate students about the harms of drugs and preventive measures, emphasizing that drug abuse is detrimental to the health and future of students.

Students are urged to protect themselves and contribute to saving their surroundings from the curse of drugs.

Parents and teachers are encouraged to collaborate in preventing youth from falling victim to drugs.

During this campaign,

police teams have delivered lectures in various educational institutes in the Sihala, Humak, Lohi Bher, Korai, Khanna, Kirpa, Shahzad Town, Bani Gala, Nilore, Bhara Kahu, Phulgran, Industrial Area, Sabzi Mandi, Noon, Shams Colony, Shalimar and Ramna police stations ju-

ridiction about the harms of drugs and preventive measures, emphasizing that drug abuse is detrimental to the health and future of students.

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Parents and teachers are encouraged to collaborate in preventing youth from falling victim to drugs.



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

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

Independent Report

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalil George said that in every report published on the situation of human rights, Pakistan is far better than our neighbour country. He said that violence against women, violation of minorities' rights and child abuse in India are worse than any other country.

Khalil said like Pakistan no country exists in the world where women's rights have been ensured and also provided equal opportunities in every field.

The minister said we should learn from these reports and work jointly to move the country forward. He said that further efforts should be taken to provide an environment like home in Dar ul Amans. He said that women's right is equal across the globe and Islam is also talking about animal

rights. He said the Ministry of Human Rights would initiate training programs for staff deputed in Dar ul Amans to protect the rights of residents. Minister Khalil George said that women's shelters are an essential component of a comprehensive response to violence against women.

"The NCHR report on Dar ul Amans has revealed some very urgent issues. The availability and accessibility of women's shelters is an urgent matter," he added while stressing collaborative efforts to address these issues.

The National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) and UN Women, launched "More than Shelters, Needs Assessment of Dar ul Amans and Shelters in Pakistan" - a comprehensive report on the state of women's shelters, in Dar ul Amans, in Pakistan.

### MQM delegation meeting with CEC

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

### CDA introduces state-of-the-art fast-track services

ISLAMABAD (APP): Building Control Directorate of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has introduced state-of-the-art fast-track service by modernizing the system of providing amenities to the citizens. In this context, on Monday, CDA started to ensure the approval of the building plan in the facilitation centre on the fast track.

Under this modern and fastest system, residential buildings of 356 yards will now be approved with an additional fee of Rs 20,000 thousand with required documents within two days, while residential buildings larger than 356 yards will be approved with a fee of Rs 30,000 thousand. Additionally, commercial buildings up to 10000 square yards will also be approved within three days.

### Noor Zaman clinches CAS Serena Hotels Int'l Squash C'ship title

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan's Noor Zaman defeated compatriot Muhammad Asim Khan in the final to clinch the men's title of Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) -Serena Hotels International Squash Championship at Mushaf Squash Complex, Islamabad on Monday.

During championship, Noor outwitted Asim Khan by a scoreline of 11-8, 8-2, and retired hurt in 18 minutes. In the women's event's final, Amina el Ribhany of Egypt beat her compatriot Nadien Elhamamy in a well-fought contest 13-15, 11-3, 11-7, 11-7 in 48 minutes to lift the title.

A group of 23 world-ranking men and women players from Malaysia, Hong Kong, Egypt and Spain participated in the championship.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of winners holding prizes along with the organizers during CAS-Serena Hotels International Squash Championship for Men & Women-2023 organized by Pakistan Squash Federation in collaboration with PAF & Serena Hotels at Mushaf Squash Complex.

### To prevent theft of mobile phones New mobile app "Find My Cell FMC" launched

By M. Ilyas PESHAWAR: For the first time in the history of the provincial capital Peshawar, the Capital City Police Peshawar has cooperated with the KP IT Board to ensure the prevention of the purchase and sale of mobile phones stolen and taken away from citizens and to further tighten the perimeter against criminal elements.

A new mobile app called "FMC" has been introduced. While a special form has also been issued for the registration of mobile dealers after the confirmation of the presidents of the mobile dealer association and the SHO's of the respective police stations, will be registered, for which the procedure has also been devised. Initially, this app has been launched at the level of Peshawar, after which its scope will be extended to the entire province.

Capital City Police Officer Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar, DIG IT Irfan Khan and SSP Operations Kashif Aftab at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Line Peshawar have called the

introduction of this app as a good move by the citizens as well as phone dealers.

A special app "FMC" was launched regularly by Capital City Police Peshawar with the support of KP IT Board to ensure the prevention of the purchase and sale of mobile phones, and a good initiative has been taken, a new mobile app has been launched for the convenience of the citizens of Peshawar and for the businessmen dealing with mobile phones. All police stations and registered shopkeepers will have this facility, in which the IMEI of the mobile phone along with name, parentage, mobile number, identity card and photo of the seller is stored during purchase and sale, according to which the registered shopkeepers who buy and sell mobile phones will get instant data of snatched and stolen mobile phones during snatching. An alert will also be issued on the app, which will enable the elements involved in mobile theft to be dealt with.



The special mobile app will be used in police stations across the district as well as during duty snap checking and blockades, details. According to the Capital City Police, Peshawar, for the first time in the history of the provincial capital Peshawar, to tighten the perimeter against criminal elements, for transparency in the purchase and sale of mobile phones and prevention of stolen mobile

phones, as well as for the convenience of citizens. A new mobile app has been introduced, CCPO Peshawar Syed Ashfaq Anwar, DIG IT Irfan Khan and SSP Operations Kashif Aftab Abbasi launched this special app at Malik Saad Shaheed Police Line. He gave a detailed briefing regarding the effectiveness and use of the app, while giving a briefing, he said that the work of the Peshawar

Police is to protect the lives and property of the people, for which all the reforms and available resources should be implemented. A special mobile app "FMC" Find My Cellphone has been launched to find an easy solution for buying and selling mobile phones used in other crimes, with the aim of further improving police reforms and providing easy facilities to traders, to be provided.