

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Islamabad

Vol. XIII No. 345 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Friday Decemeber 15, 2023, Jamadi-us-Sani 01, 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12



MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the special session of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

COAS meets US Defence Secretary

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Asim Munir met with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin in Washington to discuss the regional security situation and defence cooperation between the two countries.

Pentagon spokesperson Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said on Wednesday that Austin received Munir, who arrived in Washington on Sunday for a weeklong visit.

"The two officials discussed recent regional security developments and potential areas for bilateral defence cooperation," said Ryder.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's support to Kashmiris; rejects Indian SC verdict as politically motivated

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday reaffirmed Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Kashmir, and rejected the recent verdict of the Indian Supreme Court calling it a politically motivated and a tool to consolidate Indian illegal occupation.

The prime minister, in his address at the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (AJK LA), called for India to desist from consolidating its occupation, revoke the illegal unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 and not change the demography of the disputed territory.

Chaired by AJK LA

Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, the session was attended by AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq and Assembly members. PM Kakar also stressed upon India to halt the human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK), repeal emergency laws, withdraw heavy military presence and provide unhindered access to the United Nations bodies and the international media.

The prime minister, who was the first-ever caretaker PM to address the AJK Legislative Assembly, paid tribute to the martyrs of the Kashmir movement and those living along the Line of Control and suffered losses due to the Indian ceasefire violations.

He said Pakistan would continue to stand alongside the people of Kashmir in their struggle and wished them to enjoy their due rights. "Kashmir is Pakistan's jugular vein. The word 'Pakistan' is incomplete without Kashmir. The people of Pakistan and Kashmir are bound by unique affinity. We share joys and sorrow. Pakistan cannot remain indifferent to the situation in Kashmir... Kashmir runs in our blood. Jammu and Kashmir remains an important facet of Pakistan's foreign policy," he remarked.

He said across the political divide, the entire Pakistani leadership stood united to support the Kashmiris for their right to self-determination.

LHC suspends EC notification for holding general election through bureaucracy

ECP stops training of poll officials following order; PML-N accuses PTI of conspiring to delay elections; In 2018, bureaucracy had carried out the responsibility of DROs, says Shehbaz

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has suspended Election Commission (EC) notification to conduct general election through bureaucracy.

The notifications issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan appointing district returning officers, returning officers and assistant returning officers from executive in the upcoming general elections has been suspended by the court. A single bench of LHC led by justice Ali Baqar Najafi has announced reserved judgment on PTI petition.

Justice Ali Baqar Najafi while recommending to constitute larger bench to hear the petitions against conducting the general election through bureaucracy in Punjab sent the file to Chief Justice (CJ) LHC.

It has been said in the

decision that billion of rupees of the nation are spent on holding election. If larger parties don't accept the result of the election then the money of the nation will stand wasted. EC has to conduct free and fair election. Level playing field has to be provided to the candidates and voters to turn transparent election into reality.

INP adds: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday has stopped the ongoing training of District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) following an order issued by the Lahore High Court (LHC).

Meanwhile the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Thursday accused the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of hatching a con-

spiracy to delay the February 8 general elections.

In a statement on Thursday, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif said the PTI was conspiring to defer the general elections scheduled to be held on February 8 next year.

Referring to the PTI petition in the Lahore High Court (LHC) against hiring district returning officers (DROs) from bureaucracy, the PML-N president said the plea amounted to sabotaging people's representation.

"The PTI's petition in the high court is a plot to run away from the elections. PTI is hatching a conspiracy against the February 8 general elections just like cipher. As always, the PTI is applying double-standard and hypocritical policy here," he said.

The former prime minister further said the PTI was filing petitions in the courts to postpone the polls, while publicly demanding to hold elections on time.

"Even in the 2018 elections, the bureaucracy had carried out the responsibility of DROs. Then the PTI did not object to bureaucratic DROs performing their duty," he said adding that if the elections of February 8, 2024 were delayed, the PTI would be responsible.

Shehbaz said the PTI had adopted different stances on the cipher controversy in public and during the investigation. "[...] now the PTI has adopted the same hypocrisy elections." He blamed the PTI for plotting "a similar conspiracy related to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme".

He said the PTI wanted political stability by creating constitutional crisis in the country. The PTI did not want the country to be economically strong and people's economic problems to end, he maintained.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faisal Karim Kundi, without naming anyone, said if a political party claimed to be so large then why it is calling for delaying elections.

He also lashed out at the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) saying it was always used for political engineering. He said the same NAB had been lodging cases against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and now it was acquitting him in cases one after another.

Institutions are not bad, people are bad: CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked country is heading towards democracy, therefore, democracy is coming in Supreme Court (SC).

He further remarked institutions are not bad. People are bad. Destruction comes in the country because institutions are scolded rather than people. Institutions are run by people.

We will not allow any one to allege some one behind one's back.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over five members larger bench of SC during the hearing of former judge Islamabad High Court (IHC) Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui dismissal case here Thursday.

Hamid Khan counsel for Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui

gave assurance to file application to make Justice (Retd) Anwar Kansi and others respondents.

Federal government raised question over maintainability of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui petition.

The CJP remarked now a days people become journalists by holding phone. Those who become journalists by holding mobile should think that decision has come on practice and procedure act. Justice Tariq Masood and Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan had refused to join the bench. I have not removed any judge from bench. It is my Endeavour that we should proceed with consensus or in democratic way in the committee. We are heading towards democracy and democracy is coming in the court as well.

Govt to ensure affordable healthcare for all citizens: Dr Jan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan on Thursday reiterated the government's unwavering commitment to provide accessible and affordable healthcare for all citizens. The minister, in a statement in connection with the Universal Health Coverage Day, said, "The UHC Day serves as a powerful reminder of the collective commitment to build-

ing equitable and accessible healthcare system across the country." It also served as a global reminder of the importance of health as a fundamental human right and the need for collective efforts to achieve health coverage for everyone, leaving no one behind, he added. He said that this year's theme, "Health for All: Time for Action," resonated with "our ongoing efforts to build a healthier and more equitable society".



LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi distributing the Gold Medals to the Honour the workers of Pakistan Movement during the 29th Annual Gold Medal ceremony of Tehreek-e-Pakistan Trust organized by Nazriya-e-Pakistan Trust and Pakistan Worker Trust.

Collective efforts needed to establish welfare state: President

LAHORE (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday urged collective efforts to achieve the objectives of Pakistan and materialize dreams of the founding fathers for establishing a welfare state.

The president was speaking at the 29th annual gold medal distribution ceremony, organized by Tehreek-e-Pakistan Workers Trust at Nazaria-i-Pakistan Trust for those who made significant efforts for creation of Pakistan.

He said that those who had received medals

rendered valuable services and it was of utmost importance to recognize their historical achievements.

"We are very fortunate that we are living in a free and independent state," he said, adding the vision behind the creation of Pakistan was very broad.

He said Sir Syed Ahmad Khan had stressed on acquiring education while Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal talked about forging unity among the Muslim Ummah.

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah al-

ways trusted students and he discouraged sectarianism, he added.

The president said, "Efforts and vision of our forefathers was to get a piece of land from where resurgence of Muslims could take place in light of the Holy Quran and Sunnah.

"Unfortunately today those signs are not visible which can help materialize the dream of our forefathers."

Dr Arif Alvi said that there was a need to trace history to accomplish the vision behind the creation of Pakistan.

FO rejects reports, speculations of talks with TTP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has vehemently rejected reports and speculations of talks with Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Responding to the queries of media persons at her weekly briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Murtaza Zahra Baloch said there is absolutely no dialogue taking place with TTP. The spokesperson said we have noted the statement of the interim Afghan government that it will investigate Tuesday's terror attack that took place in Dera Ismail Khan. She said Afghanistan should take strong action against perpetrators of this heinous attack and hand them over to Pakistan along with the TTP leadership in Afghanistan.

Marwar arrested from Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat has been arrested on Thursday from outside the Lahore High Court (LHC).

Marwat, who is senior vice president of the party, was leaving the high court premises after attending a lawyers' convention when a heavy contingent of police arrested him.



ISLAMABAD: DG FIA Mohsin Hassan Butt inaugurating National Trafficking in Persons Hotline for National Referral Mechanism & Management Information System.

FIA launches TIP Hotline for reporting human trafficking cases

ISLAMABAD (INP): For first time in the country, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Thursday launched a national Trafficking In Persons (TIP) Hotline for national referral mechanism and management information system (MIS) for the general public to ensure the provision of service to victims of human trafficking under one roof, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Director General FIA Mohsin Hassan, along with ADG Immigration, FIA, country representative of UNODC, Australian Deputy High Commissioner, Director ILO, US Political Advisor, other

dignitaries, senior FIA officers from the provinces, also attended the ceremony.

Shireen Malik Sher, Additional Director, FIA, who is the focal person of the project, worked under the supervision of Israr Ahmed Khan, Director Anti-Human Smuggling Directorate of FIA and accomplished the Project in a very short span of time. The project was funded by Australian High Commission through International Labour Organization (ILO).

Shireen Malik Sher, sharing the main features of the project, told APP that this was the first-ever initiative which would have the mechanism to ensure a prompt response.



LAHORE: Chief of Paktoonkha Milli Awami Party Mehmood Khan Achakzai meeting with PML (N) quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

People to vote for progressive, developed Pakistan on Feb 8: Nawaz

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Thursday said that he firmly believed that the people would make a decision in favor of a progressing and prospering Pakistan on 8th February elections.

Expressing gratitude to Allah Almighty and the people of Pakistan for standing by him all throughout, he said that he was happy that the truth had vindicated him, but he would be truly happy the day people of Pakistan would be freed from the

suffering of excruciating inflation and economic strife inflicted upon them in the aftermath of his ouster.

Addressing the nation from the PML-N Secretariat in Model Town here, the PML-N Quaid said, "I had to knock repeatedly at the doors of the courts to be finally vindicated and provided justice, and freed. You (people) are the courts and the judge and you shall liberate and free yourselves from this sentence of misery and suffering imposed on you since my ouster, by voting for a prosperous, progressing and developed

Pakistan."

He raised a plethora of questions to those who hatched a conspiracy against him and the people of Pakistan. He called for an explanation for plunging the country and its hardworking people into unspeakable crisis, economic strife, and suffering. Nawaz said that he was grateful to Allah Almighty for being vindicated in the baseless and false cases. He said that he was thankful to the people for standing by him in these tough times.

He pointed out that the verdicts given against him exposed the lies and deception as all cases against him turned out to be false, and the court acquitted him of all charges.

Pakistan committed to ICPD agenda, gender equity: Sami

ISLAMABAD (Online): The caretaker Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Thursday said Pakistan was committed to the agenda of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Thailand last month.

He made these remarks while addressing the launching ceremony of two reports jointly compiled by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE). "We are committed to the population conference

agenda and our delegation to the regional conference made a bit of contribution in it, said the minister while appreciating the research work carried out by the UNFPA and PIDE researchers, adding that "Pakistan is the first country in the region to delve into this kind of effort which is very useful for policymakers, academicians and researchers."

The reports titled "National Time Transfer of Account (NTTA); and National Transfer of Account (NTA)" have been meticulously developed by PIDE in close collaboration with the UNFPA.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed launches the reports of National Time Transfer of Account & Provincial Transfer Accounts in collaboration with UNFPA and PIDE at local hotel.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Unchanged policy rate

With inflation predicted to start easing, the decision taken at the State Bank's monetary policy committee meeting to hold the key interest rate steady — for the fourth time since June — shows that the SBP is not willing to leave the goal of price stability to chance this time.

Its position might appear hawkish and a case of once bitten, twice shy in view of a more stable currency, positive 12-month forward real interest rates, reduced global oil prices, a successful IMF programme review and the forecast that inflation will taper off in the coming months. Meanwhile, the depressed growth also makes a case for a rate cut.

However, others argue that both headline and core inflation readings remain high, reserves are falling as foreign official and private inflows dry up, and exchange rate stability is still fragile.

A shift to monetary easing at this time, therefore, might potentially result in a spike in imports, resulting from pent-up demand and lead reserves — which are barely enough to cover two months' imports — to drain quickly. This could cause the exchange rate to deteriorate and the current account deficit to widen, thwarting efforts to tame prices.

Besides, real interest rates remain negative given the monthly inflation recordings, while Pakistan's trading partners have positive real interest rates. Thus, a rate cut at this moment is not justified.

The SBP has, in the recent past, got its inflation forecast wrong on quite a few occasions. That it is for once trying to get ahead of the curve to achieve price stability in the medium term, targeting 5-7pc CPI inflation by the end of June 2025, should be appreciated.

There is no doubt that the SBP is taking a cautious approach as the decision to leave the interest rate at the all-time high of 22pc takes into account the impact of the recent gas price hike, which, the MPC says, "may have implications for the inflation outlook, albeit in the presence of some offsetting developments, particularly the recent decrease in international oil prices and improved availability of agriculture produce".

With headline inflation surging to 29.2pc in November, compared to 26.9pc in the previous month, and core inflation at 21.5pc, only slightly lower from its May peak of 22.7pc, the MPC admits that the actual impact of the administered gas prices is "relatively higher than [its] earlier expectation". How can SBP return to monetary easing and ensure price stability when unknown risks to inflation threaten to wipe out the few gains resulting from a tighter stance? Rates must come down — but gradually, when inflation starts easing and foreign exchange reserves begin to rise. Rash decisions could land us in greater trouble. What we need the most at the moment is a little bit of patience.

Baying at the moon



F.S. Aijazuddin

The New Year was invented for those who need a day to bury wasted dreams. Each year, January heralds hope and then every December ends shrouded in a winter of disappointment. The year 2023 is no different.

Today, the international community stands polarised as never before. The schism between the West and the East, the divide between civic freedoms and authoritarian oppression, the chasm between human rights and unethical wrongs have deepened immeasurably.

Communities have been called upon to take sides — for the Stars and Stripes and its 51st star (the Star of David), or against them. For or against genocide. In today's inversion of the Holocaust, this quotation seems cruelly apt: "Our strength lies in our intensive attacks, and our barbarity. After all, who today remembers the genocide of the Armenians?" That voice was Adolf Hitler's.

Against this backdrop of international strife, four crucial elections are scheduled to be held in 2024. In the United States, the presidential elections could bring a vengeful Donald Trump back into the White House. In Russia, Vladimir Putin has announced that he intends to stand for reelection in 2024. When (not if) he wins, he will become the longest Russian ruler since Josef Stalin.

In India, Narendra Modi has every intention of winning a third term as prime minister in 2024. Mani Shankar Aiyar (a Congressite opponent of

Modi's) has admitted that the Democratic Alliance led by Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party has an 80 per cent chance of returning to power.

Aiyar gives his own team — the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance — a 20pc chance. INDIA is a recently formed compression of 28 political parties, led by the Gandhi-led Indian National Congress. Its pointed objective is to topple Modi's government.

In 1977, a similar coalition (the Janata alliance) was cobbled together by disparate parties under Morarji Desai. Its aim was to dislodge the then unpopular prime minister Indira Gandhi. The Janata alliance succeeded; the INDIA alliance will not as it has nothing to offer the Indian electorate other than a fourth generation Nehru/ Gandhi. Modi offers India the hubris of Hindutva and the headiness of hegemony.

Some believe that Modi's re-election could reignite the embers that brightened Indo-Pak relations, following his 'spontaneous' visit to Nawaz Sharif's home in Lahore in December 2015.

Nawaz Sharif declared that, if re-elected, he will persuade Modi to resume a dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi — more productive than the 'back channel' which meets outside the subcontinent, and clucks eggless.

Sharif senior should recognise that Modi is not the man Modi was in 2014-15. Then, Modi was an inexperienced prime minister who needed to demonstrate that he could mature into a statesman. Since 2014, Modi has arrived, and so has his Bharat — economically, strategically, and extra-terrestrially. Lord Krishna wanted the morn as his toy; India has landed on it.

A nuclear Pakistan may still possess the technology to be a plausible

adversary, but can it afford to sustain its hostility? It is not a secret that every day it has to scrounge for money to buy aviation fuel for its national airline. Propelling a rocket to the moon is an expensive hobby. It requires more than petty cash.

Has Nawaz Sharif been assured — and if so, by whom — that his intended overtures to India will not be thwarted, yet again? This time he has no Clinton in the White House to rescue him from another Kargil.

More importantly, will Sharif be able to persuade PM Modi that the UN resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir are the precondition to any Indo-Pak talks?

After legislative approval by India's parliament, the Indian supreme court decision on Dec 11 has given Modi the final benediction he needed. It has endorsed former PM I.K. Gujral's observation that the J&K issue stood resolved even as it began in 1948: "We could not give it, and you cannot take it."

Why has the UN Security Council not found a voice to comment on (if not condemn) such a blatant repudiation of its authority by a country seeking to gain a seat on its Council? Perhaps its staff cannot trace moth-eaten UNSC Resolution 39 in its archives.

Many in Pakistan will cavil at Modi's habitually unilateral policies. Much as they might wish it, India's policies towards Pakistan are not determined by the latter's expectations. It is now 76 years since the divorce — too long a time to still be arguing over alimony. Realism demands that we accept the bird in hand; integrate Azad Jammu & Kashmir and the northern areas we have, as we once did Bahawalpur, Khairpur, Makran, and Swat. Baying at the moon for 76 years is not sound foreign policy.

-- Courtesy Dawn

Wretched of the earth



Abraham Shah

In his seminal work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon paints a dismal picture of the Manichean world of colonial Algeria. In the suburbs, large boulevards run through neighbourhoods, imparting a sense of calm and order. In contrast, the cramped streets home to the natives are chaotic, plagued with anomie, dissolution, and lawlessness.

Recently released pictures from Gaza depicting Palestinian men stripped and paraded in the streets reveal similar juxtapositions. These images, however, highlight a deeper tension that permeates colonised spaces — one that goes beyond the marked differences in infrastructure, public services, law and order. This tension extends beyond the physical, and spills over into the realm of the psychological, where it draws a sharp distinction between the humanity and individual dignity of the native and coloniser.

For Fanon, colonialism was as much psychological warfare as it was physical occupation. Colonising a territory breaking the minds of its inhabitants, instilling fear and a sense of inferiority in relation to the white 'civiliser'.

Central to this were notions of 'primitive' natives who in all aspects — culture, language, lifestyle — remained inferior to the colonisers. At its core, colonialism was an exercise in dehumanisation, denigrating entire populations in racist and offensive terminology. The dehumanisation of Palestinian men reveals continuity in these colonial

thought patterns. The Israeli Defence Forces claimed the men belonged to Hamas and had surrendered to the IDF. In an instant, individual identities were eroded. The men were now part of a nameless horde, their guilt predetermined and hence undeserving of human dignity. Guilt is an interesting emotion in colonial trauma, which Edward Said explored more fully than Frantz Fanon. Author of the seminal text in post-colonial thought, *Orientalism*, the former revealed how brown and black men were often identified as guilty simply on account of their race and religion.

These denominators of identity made them predisposed to violence and disorder in the eyes of the white coloniser, thus requiring surveillance and control.

Notice again the erosion of the black and brown man's humanity and individualism. He is seen as more inclined towards violence, harbouring lust for white women and posing a threat to the social order, traits that make him less human and more primal. These tendencies are seen as ubiquitous in black and brown male population, undermining any delineation at the individual level.

Fanon and Said allow us to don a lens which helps us see the Israel-Palestine conflict in a different light. It is not simply about nation states, the return of refugees or access to holy sites. At its core, the conflict carries substantial reverberations for the psyches of communities, questions of human dignity and how race and power continue to define and shape humanity. This explains why the conflict elicits such divergent responses and sympathy around the world in terms of the violence unleashed on Palestine and the losses suffered by

Israel. Dehumanisation and the systemic control of brown populations is not limited to this conflict. The entire edifice of the modern 'war on terror', in fact, rests on these Orientalist perceptions. Thus, the pictures of Palestinian men being paraded in their underwear evokes the same sense of melancholy and hopelessness that emanated from Abu Ghraib — the infamous sight of torture inflicted on the bodies of brown men seen as less than human.

On the flip side, this dehumanisation is used to justify violent invasions of sovereign countries, as Laura Bush, then first lady of the US, claimed when she said America's war against Afghanistan made Afghan women 'safer' — overtly revealing implicit Orientalist tendencies to view brown, black or Muslim men as dangerous.

These biases underpin the Patriot Act and the mass surveillance of Pakistani and Muslim men in the US. An internalisation of these biases percolates the minds of Pakistani and other brown men, who are forced to exercise immense reticence while expressing opinions in a Western setting, all the while shouldering a collective guilt over the actions of their governments. It is hesitation that stalks black and brown men in public spaces, lest they be viewed as suspicious and accosted by law-enforcement officials. It is everywhere in the American justice system, where African Americans are indicted with far heavier penalties than their white counterparts for similar charges. Control is therefore psychological, while power is multifaceted.

As we mourn the loss of life and hold out hope for a ceasefire, let us remain cognisant of how the very essence of human dignity is at stake. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

CEO of PTCL, Ufone announces 100pc stake acquisition in Telenor Pak



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif in a meeting with Telenor and Etisalat delegation.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of PTCL and Ufone, Hatem Bamatraf, announced on Thursday the acquisition of a 100 percent stake in Telenor Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd (Telenor Pakistan). During a press conference attended by high officials of the PTCL Ufone Group, he said that this strategic alignment would bring significant benefits for consumers and stakeholders alike.

Bamatraf highlighted that the primary beneficiaries of this deal would be the consumers, who can expect improved services as a result of this integration.

He mentioned that the joint entity, with its diverse range of products and services, was committed to delivering the best services across all sectors.

"The collaborative agency aims to provide consumers with an extensive range of products and services," he added. The merger of Telenor will play a crucial role in establishing a modern network infrastructure in Pakistan, contributing to the country's technological advancement. He hoped that the collaboration would bring additional benefits to consumers and stakeholders, contributing to the creation of

a historic telecommunications system that fosters connectivity and supports



the digital transformation journey.

He said that the completion of the acquisition was subject to regula-

tory approvals and customary closing conditions. PTCL is actively working

PARC to establish 574 m2 aeroponics green houses, 21,600 m2 screen houses

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) in collaboration with Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) will construct 574 m2 aeroponics green houses and 21,600 m2 screen houses in order to enhance output of potatoes and to achieve self-sufficiency in certified seed potato production. The facility will be established under the

PSX gains 170 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 170.03 points, a positive change of 0.26 percent, closing at 65,450.19 points against 65,280.16 points the previous trading day. A total of 981,194,616 shares valuing Rs.23,743 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,358,411,606 shares valuing Rs. 37,657 billion the last day. Some 389 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 198 of them recorded gains and 174 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 17 remained unchanged.

PEDO to be made most revenue generating institution of the province: Nisar

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Secretary Energy and Power Nisar Ahmad Khan has said that several ongoing power projects are entered in the final stages of completion, which will be helpful for the stability of province's economy and the development of the industrial sector in the future.

He further added that high-level forums will be contacted soon on priority basis in terms of facing problems with federation in energy sector of KP. Timely completion of energy

Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Thursday gained 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs283.51 against the previous day's closing at Rs283.61. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs284 and Rs286 respectively. The price of the Euro increased by Rs2.64 to close at Rs308.48 against the last day's closing of Rs305.84.

Mohamed Karmoune says: Collective efforts to be made to improve trade volume b/w Morocco, Pak

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Vice Presidents FPCCI, Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman & Mr. Amin Ullah Baig visited the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Islamabad and met H.E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoune, Acting Dean of Diplomatic Corps Islamabad & Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary of Morocco. During the meeting, several areas of multilateral interests, economic and business engagement, investment, promotion of bilateral trade, economic cooperation, investment, and exchange of trade delegations and trade development were discussed in detail.



Both sides also addressed the various prospects and dimensions of strengthening relations in the future.

Mr. Umar Masood ur Rehman, Vice President of FPCCI, said that we should increase trade with brotherly countries for mutual benefit.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) represents significant growth potential for the African economy, as it establishes a structure for fostering regional economic integration, growth, and progress.

The agreement has the potential to offer Pakistan fresh avenues to enhance its trade and investment connections with African nations, thus generating business and reinforcing economic relations.



ATTOCK: Zonal Head of the Punjab Provincial Cooperative Bank Limited Rawalpindi Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqub addressing the farmers.

CEO CBD Punjab, Chairman P&D discuss socioeconomic development of Punjab

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), widely known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), welcomed Chairman P&D Punjab, Iftikhar Ali Sahoo of the Planning & Development Board (P&D) Punjab to the CBD Punjab Complex in Lahore, for a productive visit.

The primary objective of this visit was to engage in discussions regarding CBD Punjab's ongoing and forthcoming projects and their pivotal role in steering the economic development of Punjab.

During the visit, Imran Amin, CEO CBD Punjab, provided comprehensive insights into the current and prospective projects undertaken by the authority. In attendance were notable figures including Executive Director Commercial, Mohammad Omer, Director Business Development Ali Waqar Shah, Director Project Management Asif Iqbal, along with senior officials from CBD Punjab and NESPAK. The commercial and technical teams of CBD Punjab underscored the significance of authority's projects such as Sirius, Regalia, Runway, Node, and Sano, emphasizing their transformative impact on Punjab's development landscape.

Iftikhar Ali Sahoo commended the projects initiated by CBD Punjab and assured unwavering support from the Planning & Development Board, recognizing their potential to drive sustainable growth in the province.

While expressing his views Chairman P&D Board Punjab, Iftikhar Ali Sahoo said, "The projects initiated by CBD Punjab showcase a promising future for Punjab's economic prosperity. We are committed to extending our support and collaboration to ensure their success."

CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, extended his profound gratitude for Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo's visit, while talking on the occasion he said.

Governor advises students to look at the positive side of life and be grateful

Independent Report

LAHORE: A delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Loralai, headed by Farooq Kakar, met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. The delegation comprised children from 31 districts of Balochistan province. Governor Punjab welcomed the students

from Balochistan to Governor House Lahore. Speaking on this occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman while addressing the students asked them to look at the positive side of life and be grateful. He said that this country has given us so much that we cannot pay back to our country and soil.

Governor Punjab said that an educated person evaluates everything rationally. Governor Punjab further said that before 2018, students of Balochistan were not only included in the laptop scheme but record number of laptops were distributed among them.

He said that transparent and public welfare schemes like laptops were discontinued after 2018. Governor Punjab said that between

2013 and 2018, special measures were taken to bring Balochistan into the stream of development.

He said that a special quota has been fixed for the students of Balochistan in the universities and medical colleges of Punjab.

Governor Punjab said that the continuation of public welfare policies is very important for the development of the country.

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-Rehman in a group photo with teachers and students of Balochistan Residential College Loralai.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur-Rehman in a group photo with teachers and students of Balochistan Residential College Loralai.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with under training ASPs and Senior Officers of National Police Academy during their study tour to Governor House.

George highlights services of unsung heroes of Christians for country's development

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Human Rights Khalid George on Thursday highlighted the services of unsung heroes of minority communities, particularly Christians, for the development of country.

He was addressing an event "Unfaded heroes of Christian Community in KP" held at the Governor House, in collaboration with the Pak Mission Society.

The momentous occasion celebrated the remarkable contributions of

68 individuals from the Christian community in the development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan in general.

Minister George said, "Pakistan is our country and we are living here happy and getting equal rights. Pakistan came into being after the sacrifices of our forefathers."

He called for creating an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, could thrive and contribute to shared progress.

The minister stressed the importance of ensuring that development initiatives were inclusive and considerate of the needs of all communities.

KP Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, in his address, reinforced the significance of diversity, unity, and interfaith harmony in the province.

Acknowledging the rich diversity that defines Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he emphasized its role as a strength that contributed to shared prosperity.

'Timely elections need of the hour'; KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali on Wednesday said that timely elections were the need of the hour, however, a conducive environment was imperative to conduct free, fair and transparent polls in the country.

Talking to the media here at Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women's University (SBBWU), he said that holding the general elections was the responsibility of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and the caretaker governments were the facilitators, adding the concerns of the stakeholders should also be addressed by the ECP.

He said that currently Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces were facing two challenges one is the security

situation and the other is extreme weather conditions. He said the ECP should consult all the political parties and stakeholders for the election date as harsh weather conditions coupled with the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan could affect the election.

He said that the economic situation of the country could only be streamlined if an elected government came to power for which a fair and transparent election was imperative.

Referring to the Dera terror attack, he said that he met with the injured as well as the bereaved families and all of them were determined and in high morale.



KARACHI: Newly Graduated students are celebrating their graduation during 13th Convocation at University in Federal Capital.

Federal, provincial govts, LEAs committed to wipe out terrorism: KP CM

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Wednesday said that the federal and provincial governments, law enforcement agencies and the people were on the same page to wipe out terrorism and extremism from the country in all forms and manifestations.

Talking to the delegation of trainee Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASPs) here at his office, he said that the morale of

the law enforcing agencies and security institutions was high and they were ready to cope with any challenge for peace in the country.

"Whoever is against the country is the enemy of all of us and whoever does not follow the country's Constitution will be dealt strictly," the chief minister said. He said that the role of police was important in maintaining law and order in the society and protecting the lives and properties of the

people, adding that KP police always fought against terrorism bravely in the province and had rendered great sacrifices.

The CM said that the welfare and development of the merged districts was a priority of the government and a formal plan had been chalked out for the areas.

He, however said that due to financial problems at national level, the welfare and development of the merged districts was being affected.

various medical institutions and NGOs addressed the significance of self-examination in detecting breast abnormalities.

Begum Alvi urged women to conduct monthly self-examinations and consult a doctor promptly if any lump or cyst is detected. Addressing the societal importance of combating breast cancer.

At the event, held at the Governor's House in collaboration with the World Health Organisation,

As many as 3 dacoits have been killed and two have fled the scene in exchange of fire in the area of Pir Wadhai here.

According to police the incident took place in Fouji colony Pirwadhai where the robbers gang opened fire on police. In exchange of fire 3 dacoits were killed while arms were recovered from them. Police said two dacoits escaped to Nullah Leh while firing. Search operation is underway to trace them.

At the event, held at the Governor's House in collaboration with the World Health Organisation,

At the event, held at the Governor's House in collaboration with the World Health Organisation,

At the event, held at the Governor's House in collaboration with the World Health Organisation,

International News

Putin says there will be no peace in Ukraine until goals are achieved, while offering rare details

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin vowed that there would be no peace in Ukraine until his goals are achieved and said those objectives remain unchanged at a year-end news conference. Offering rare detail on Moscow's operation, Putin dismissed the need for a second wave of mobilization of reservists, saying there are some 617,000 Russian soldiers currently in Ukraine, including around 244,000 troops who were called up to fight alongside professional Russian military forces.

The Russian president, who has held power for nearly 24 years and announced recently he is running for reelection, was greeted

with applause as he arrived in the hall in central Moscow.

Putin did not hold his traditional press conference last year after his military failed to take Kyiv and as the Ukrainian army retook swaths of territory in the east and south of the country. But with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy now returning to Washington to plead for U.S. aid, a stalling counteroffensive and reports of fracturing Western support for Ukraine, the Russian president has decided to face the media once more — though the broadcast remains heavily choreographed and more about spectacle than scrutiny.

This year, ordinary citizens have the chance to phone in questions along

with those asked by journalists, and Russians have been submitting questions for Putin for two weeks. It is the first time Putin, who has heavily limited his interaction with foreign media, will potentially face multiple questions from Western journalists since before the fighting in Ukraine began.

The press conference opened with questions about the conflict in Ukraine and highlighted concerns some Russians have about fears of another wave of mobilization, which has proved unpopular. In September 2022 Putin ordered a partial military call-up as he tried to boost his forces in Ukraine, sparking protests.



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro is received by the St. Vincent and the Grenadines' Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves before a meeting with his Guyanese counterpart Irfaan Ali amid tensions over a border dispute, in Kingstown, St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Japan, UK and Italy formally establish a joint body to develop a new advanced fighter jet

Monitoring Desk

TOKYO: The defense ministers of Japan, Britain and Italy on Thursday signed an agreement to establish a joint organization to develop a new advanced jet fighter, as the countries push to bolster their cooperation in the face of growing threats from China, Russia and North Korea.

The three countries had agreed last year to merge earlier individual plans — for Japan's Mitsubishi F-X to succeed the retiring F-2s developed with the United States and

Britain's Tempest — to produce the new combat aircraft for deployment in 2035. Japan, which is rapidly building up its military, hopes to have greater capability to counter China's rising assertiveness and allow Britain a bigger presence in the Indo-Pacific region.

Defense Minister Minoru Kihara at a joint news conference with his British and Italian counterparts, Grant Shapps and Guido Crosetti, said that co-developing a high performance fighter aircraft.

Washington shows signs of strained patience with ally Israel

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: The administration of President Joe Biden has begun to publicly air its differences with the Israeli government over the conduct of the war in Gaza, expressing its exasperation even as it remains largely steady in its support.

Biden referred this week to "indiscriminate bombing" in Gaza, underscoring his frustration with conservative Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose government Biden agrees is starting to lose global support.

53 injured in Russian missile strikes on Kyiv

Monitoring Desk

KYIV: A volley of Russian missiles wounded several people and damaged a children's hospital on Wednesday, the worst attack on Kyiv in months, Ukrainian officials said, as the country pleads for Western military aid.

Journalists in the capital heard several explosions before dawn, and air raid sirens sounded soon after that. Ukraine's air force said it had downed all 10 missiles targeting the city and the health ministry said 53 people had been wounded, including two children.

Most injuries were caused by "glass shards, household items and the shock wave" as missile debris fell in eastern and southern parts of the city,

the ministry added.

Wednesday's strike, which caused the highest number of wounded in months, was the second in a week. In another attack overnight Sunday to Monday, eight missiles headed for the capital were shot down.

"The enemy used ballistic weapons," the Kyiv City Military Administration said, adding that Russia was "intensifying the missile terror of Kyiv."

There were also strikes in the southern port of Odesa, where officials said nine Iranian-made Shahed drones had been downed. On the edge of the port city of Odesa, a journalist saw a large hangar in which trucks and cars had been destroyed.



A view of destroyed cars next to a damaged residential building following a Russian missile strike.

A newly elected progressive Thai lawmaker is sentenced to 6 years for defaming the monarchy

Monitoring Desk

BANGKOK: A court in Thailand convicted and sentenced a recently elected lawmaker Wednesday to six years in prison for defaming the monarchy under a controversial law that guards the royal institution. Human Rights Watch decried the ruling, saying it "violated her rights to freedom of expression protected under international human rights law."

Rukchanok Srinork arrived for her court hearing in the capital, Bangkok, as her fellow lawmakers were convening in Parliament. "I submitted a request to postpone

(the hearing) because today the new parliament convenes for its first session, but the court refused. So I came to hear the verdict," she told reporters, standing next to her party leader who was there to lend support.

She was charged over two posts she allegedly shared two years ago on X, the social media platform then known as Twitter. One tweet reportedly defamed the monarchy over links to a coronavirus vaccine and an anti-monarchy quote by 18th-century French philosopher Denis Diderot was allegedly retweeted.

Congress passes \$886 billion defense policy bill, Biden to sign into law

Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: More than two-thirds of the US House of Representatives voted in favor of a defense policy bill on Thursday governing a record \$886 billion in annual military spending and authorizing policies such as aid for Ukraine and push back against China in the Indo-Pacific.

The House backed the National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, by 310 to 118, with strong support from Republicans and Democrats. It was more than the two-thirds majority required to pass the measure and send it to the White House for President Joe Biden to sign into law.

Separate from the appropriations bills that set government spending levels, the NDAA authorizes everything from pay raises for troops - this year's will be 5.2 percent - to purchases of ships.

Gazans face public health disaster

Monitoring Desk

GENEVA: The United Nations humanitarian office said on Wednesday that Gaza faced a public health disaster due to the collapse of its health system and the spread of disease amid an offensive by Israel that has hit hospitals and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, meanwhile, warned that the people of Gaza were "running out of time and options".

groups have sounded the alarm about the spread of infectious disease in Gaza, where the internal displacement of 85 per cent of the population has caused overcrowding in shelters and other temporary living facilities.

"We all know that the health care system is or has collapsed," said Lynn Hastings, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator for the Occupied Palestinian Territory. "We've got a textbook formula for epidemics and a public health disaster."

Australian woman jailed for 20 years for death of her four children has conviction quashed

Monitoring Desk

SYDNEY: A woman imprisoned for 20 years over the deaths of her four children, and pardoned in June, saw her convictions quashed by New South Wales state on Thursday, with her lawyer saying she plans to claim "substantial" compensation.

Kathleen Folbigg was convicted in 2003 of murdering three of her children, and of manslaughter in the death of her fourth.

Overwhelming UN vote underlines need for Gaza ceasefire

Monitoring Desk

UNITED NATIONS: The UN General Assembly on Tuesday overwhelmingly voted in favor of a resolution demanding an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza.

The resolution also demands the prompt and unconditional release of all prisoners involved in the ongoing unrest. This marks the second such a resolution was adopted by the General Assembly, unlike the UN Security Council where resolutions calling for

a ceasefire were vetoed.

The resolution, moved in the General Assembly on Tuesday, was cosponsored by more than 100 countries and passed with a large majority of 153 votes. The vote reflects an increase in support for the ceasefire's demand.

A similar measure in late October drew a nod from 121 countries. The United States and Israel were among the 10 countries that voted against it on Tuesday, while 23 abstained.

Robust national maritime sector base of sustainable economic future: CNS

LAHORE (INP): Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf has said that keeping in view that current state of the economy, it is imperative to realize Pakistan's maritime potential, since a robust national maritime sector can be a great enabler for transition to a sustainable economic future. He expressed these views on Thursday while addressing the concluding ceremony of 6th Maritime Security Workshop at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore.

Maritime Security Workshop was Pakistan Navy's annual event which aims to generate understanding on the dynamics of maritime security, creating awareness about blue economy and exploring untapped maritime potential of Pakistan. The workshop participants included parliamentarians, policy makers, bureaucrats, academia, entrepreneurs as well as representatives from media.

Addressing the participants, Admiral Naveed Ashraf emphasized Pakistan Navy's commitments to raise awareness on issues of National Maritime significance and underscored PN initiatives in generating informed debate on security issues, Blue-Economy, strategic developments in the Indian Ocean Region and intense geopolitical rivalry. He also apprised the audience that Pakistan Navy is diverting resources for the socio-economic uplift of the less privileged segments of society, especially along the coastal belt.

Earlier, Rear Admiral Javaid Iqbal, Commandant Pakistan Navy War College during his welcome remarks gave a brief rundown of various activities during the conduct of workshop.



Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif visiting National Science and Technology Park at NUST in Islamabad.

NJAC decides to develop action plan for technological transformation of courts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Judicial Automation Committee (NJAC) has decided to develop a plan of action with a specific time-frame to bring about a technological transformation in courts. Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, judge Supreme Court of Pakistan, and the Chairman of the National Judicial Automation Committee, chaired the first meeting of the NJAC, according to a press release on Thursday. During the discussion, the committee acknowledged that while high courts have made efforts to automate the court system, more robust and technology-oriented court processes and holistic data of cases, lawyers, and judgments are needed to make the system efficient and transparent. Justice Mansoor Ali Shah proposed the concept of technological transformation, which involved forming a National Judicial Data Exchange Policy.

The policy is aimed at providing stakeholders and policymakers in the justice sector with real-time data to monitor and formulate

policies that ensure the efficient delivery of justice. The policy aims to create a National Law Digest that will store all the judgments issued by the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the High Courts.

This will allow the litigants to obtain authentic copies of judgments. Additionally, the repository will be AI-equipped, which will enable legal researchers and the legal community to conduct precise and relevant legal research. Furthermore, the policy aims to implement a national AI-powered scheduler to manage court calendars and assign hearing dates, reducing delays caused by unnecessary adjournments. In addition, the vision includes the implementation of online and digital payment systems for all court-related procedures. It also involves constructing verification infrastructure and facilities to verify the identities and documents of litigants using biometrics and other advanced verification methods. Mr. Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar emphasized the need for data standardization.



Zahir Shah, Member, PMIC is getting site visit briefing on PSDP project titled "Replacement and Upgradation of HVAC Plant Room Equipment and Allied Works at PIMS, Islamabad" at PIMS Hospital Islamabad from the Park PWD, PIMS officers and Contractor.

PMIC extends deadline to complete PIMS HVAC project by Dec 25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Inspection Commission (PMIC) on Thursday gave a five-day extension to the authorities concerned to complete the project of installation of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) plant at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) by December 25. Earlier, the PMIC had given the deadline for project's completion by December 20.

A PMIC team made another visit of the project and reviewed the progress on ongoing work of the HVAC regarding installation of the centrally air conditioning system in the whole buildings of the hospital. The visit took place in wake of the deep concerns expressed by the prime minister over the unwarranted delay in

completion of the PSDP projects including "Replacement and Upgradation of HVAC Plant Room Equipment and Allied Works at PIMS, Islamabad". Following dissatisfaction on the reports from Ministry of Housing and Works and Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, the matter had been referred to the PMIC for effective supervision, said a press release. PMIC Chairman Brigadier (Retired) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha had assigned the task to the inquiry team headed by Zahir Shah for vigorously persuading the project and ensure its completion at the earliest. The inspection team that visited the project, comprised PMIC Member Zahir Shah and Co-opted Member Saifdar Ali.

Shahnawaz gets capital punishment in Sara Inam murder case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The District and Sessions Court of Islamabad has awarded death sentence to Shahnawaz Ameer, the son of renowned journalist Ayaz Ameer, for murdering his wife Sara Inam and imposed a fine of one million rupees.

Session Judge Nasir Javed Rana issued the reserved verdict on Thursday. The verdict acquitted the Shahnawaz Ameer's mother, who was co-accused in the case.

Pak, France agree to further boost economic relations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and France agreed here on Thursday to further enhance economic relations, explore investment opportunities, and increase bilateral trade between the two countries. According to press statement issued by finance ministry, Ambassador of France to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey called on Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr. Shamsad Akhtar, during the meeting, matters of mutual interest, economic relations between the two countries and collaborative efforts in various sectors were discussed.

On the occasion, the finance minister stated that both countries enjoy deep and historical relations, adding Pakistan highly values its bilateral ties with France including trade and economic relations.

The Finance Minister apprised the French Ambassador about the economic reforms of the government that have brought economic and fiscal stability in the country.

CUST awards degrees to over 1075 graduates

ISLAMABAD (Online): As many as 1075 graduates have been awarded degrees during the Convocation 2023 of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) held here the other day. Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad was the chief guest while Syed Ahmed, a renowned IT professional, was the Guest of Honour. Prof. Dr. M. Mansoor Ahmed, Vice Chancellor delivered an inaugural speech and welcomed the graduate students. He highlighted the contribution made by the University in the field of higher education and hoped that the graduates would contribute towards scientific development.

USC reduces Ghee, cooking oil prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Utility Store Corporation (USC) Thursday has reduced the Ghee and cooking oil prices of well-known brands across the country.

The spokesman told that the price of ghee of well-known brands had been reduced by 17 rupees per kg. While the prices of cooking oil have been reduced from Rs.37 per liter to Rs.48 per liter, said a press release issued here. Ghee will be available at Rs 482 per kg instead of Rs 499, while cooking oil will be available at Rs 470 to Rs 422 per liter and other branded cooking oil will be available at Rs 518 per liter instead of Rs 555.



MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation of Hurriyat leaders calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

PM calls for resolving Kashmir dispute as per wishes of Kashmiris

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday called for permanent and final settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute according to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He was talking to a delegation of Hurriyat leaders from Jammu and Kashmir. The leaders thanked the prime minister for condemning the Indian Supreme Court's validation of the illegal and unilateral step of India regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir. They praised the prime minister for his participation in the special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, saying the PM represented the sentiments of Kashmiris during his address to the Assembly.

PM Kakar said he brought the message of State of Pakistan to Azad Jammu and Kashmir that Pakistan would always extend political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiris.

The Foreign Ministry and Pakistani missions abroad would increase their contacts with international think tanks, media and academia to better highlight the case of Kashmir at the international level, he said, adding a strategy would be formulated to effectively present the case of Kashmir in Washington DC, London, Brussels and other important capitals of the world.

A meeting of the Foreign Ministry and Hurriyat leaders would be held soon so that the leaders could give their proposals to strengthen the Kashmir cause, he added.

The prime minister emphasized that the overseas Kashmiris could play a very pivotal role for the Kashmir cause.

Jahangir Tareen to contest polls from Lodhran

LAHORE (INP): The newly-formed Istehkam Pakistan Party (IPP) handed over a list of constituencies to the Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) for seat adjustment. A meeting between the parties was held at the residence of PML-N leader Sardar Ayaz Sadiq here on Thursday which was attended by IPP leaders Ishaq Khakwani, Aon Chaudhry and Nauman Langrial. Former speaker Ayaz, Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Ata Tarar and Malik Ahmed Khan represented the PML-N. According to insiders, they discussed different options for seat adjustment and agreed to continue discussions.



ISLAMABAD: The First Lady, Samina Alvi is taking keen interest in different kinds of flowers on stall during a workshop on the topic of "New Trends and Techniques in Floral Art" by Aisha Zahid at local hotel in Federal Capital.

Key role of education in country's economic dev: Chairman HEC

ISLAMABAD, (INP): Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad has said that education plays a vital role in the economic development of the country.

He was speaking as Chief Guest of the 19th Convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology (CUST) for Graduates of 2023 on Thursday during which degrees were awarded to 1075 graduates.

Renowned IT professional Mr. Syed Ahmed was the Guest of Honour on the occasion.

In his inaugural speech, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. M. Mansoor Ahmed welcomed the graduate students. He highlighted the contribution made by the University in the field of higher education and hoped that the graduates would contribute towards scientific development.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Higher Education Commission Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad is presenting degree to Laiba Hashmi after conferring the Gold medal during 19th Convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology at Jinnah Convention Center in Federal Capital.

'BISP Saving Scheme' to change poverty landscape; make people self-reliant: Dr. Saqib

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Amjad Saqib Thursday said that the newly launched 'BISP Saving Scheme' will change the poverty landscape in the country by focusing on savings which can help make the people self-reliant.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the BISP Saving Scheme held at a local hotel, the chairperson said "Like many other schemes of BISP, the Saving Scheme can change the poverty landscape with our focus on savings which is extremely

important". He said that poverty is like a poison and poverty eradication is the first and prime responsibility of every person on this planet.

The chairperson said that around 150,000 people will be selected under this scheme on a first come first serve basis through Pakistan's selected districts however the scope of this scheme will be further expanded in future.

The beneficiaries have to save a small portion of their income in their 'savings accounts while the government will pay additional forty percent of consumer

savings which will come in handy for consumers to deal with any uncertain situation and emergencies.

The scheme is for both men and women, he said while urging those eligible to be a part of this scheme.

Dr. Saqib said that the objective of the BISP Savings Scheme is to inculcate financial independence and saving habits among consumers.

The savings will be a protective measure to support deserving people during the emergencies when informal economy shrinks and people lose jobs.

Achakzai meets Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE (APP): Pashunkhwa Milli Awami Party leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai on Thursday met Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Supremo Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

During the meeting, held at the PML-N Central Secretariat, both the leaders discussed overall political situation of the country.

Mahmood Khan Achakzai congratulated Nawaz Sharif for acquittal in NAB references.

The PML-N Supremo expressed goodwill gesture for Pashunkhwa Milli Awami Party leader.

PML-N Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz Sharif was also present.

Nadeem visits King Hamad University of Nursing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Thursday visited the under-construction King Hamad University of Nursing reviewed the construction work and expressed his satisfaction. The project manager while giving a detailed briefing about the construction work said that the project was to be completed by the end of 2024.

The minister directed to complete the remaining work of the university within two months, on which the project manager assured to complete it within two months. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that King Hamad University of Nursing is a state-of-the-art university from which 500 nurses will receive their diplomas every year. He said that the university is a gift from Bahrain to the government of Pakistan which has a capacity of 200 nurses to study in the nursing university. He said that nursing was the backbone of the health sector and this sector is of utmost importance in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan is facing a shortage of nurses and the government has formulated an integrated strategy to meet this shortage. He said that large-scale reforms are underway to improve the field of nursing.

271 domestic workers data from 574 houses registered

ISLAMABAD (Online): Federal Police has completed the registration of the data of 271 domestic workers of 574 houses in the limits of the police station secretariat for the registration of employees and tenants.

In the campaign, different teams of Islamabad Police are going to streets and neighborhoods to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers.

According to the details, the Islamabad Police is taking important steps to ensure the safety of citizens.



Islamabad: The outgoing Resident Coordinator of United Nations in Pakistan, Mr. Julien Harnes calls on President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Dr. Umar Saif terms role of technology as crucial for economic development

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif Thursday emphasized the crucial role of technology in achieving economic development. He underscored its ability to drive innovation, boost productivity, and enhance efficiency across diverse industries. The minister made these remarks during the foundation-laying ceremony of the Indigenous Research and Development Agency (IRADA) at the National Science and Technology Park, NUST, here on Thursday.

Highlighting the objective of IRADA, he emphasized its role in fostering collaboration between the defense sector, academia, and industry in Pakistan for technological advancement. He noted that while linkages between these sectors

have existed, IRADA aims to formalize and institutionalize these connections. During the event, Dr. Saif Umar expressed his vision for IRADA, envisioning a collaborative effort involving NUST, universities, industry, and the Defense sector. He emphasized the potential for joint projects and products that can be commercialized to contribute significantly to the country's economic development. Drawing a historical parallel, the minister referred to the launch of Sputnik by Russia in 1957 and the subsequent creation of DARPA by the USA. He highlighted the success of connecting the defense sector, academia, and industry, resulting in the invention and commercialization of transformative technologies such as the Internet, GPS, and cryptography.

CPO Safe City/Traffic addresses AIR University students on drugs awareness

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has launched an awareness campaign in federal capital to eradicate drug abuse and secure the young generation from the curse of narcotics.

As part of this initiative, the Capital Police Officer Safe City/Traffic conducted an enlightening lecture at AIR University, focusing on the damages of

threat to both health and future prospects.

In a bid to safeguard themselves and their communities from this menace, attendees were urged to take proactive measures. Recommendations were made to educational institutions to organize seminars and anti-drug marches.

During the lecture, the CPO Safe City/Traffic addressed queries from attendees and shed light on legal actions against drug-related offenses. It was



substance abuse and measures for prevention.

The lecture witnessed participation from professors, students, and university staff. The Capital Police Officer highlighted the detrimental effects of drug usage, especially among the youth, emphasizing its

emphasized that the police force is committed to bringing perpetrators, particularly those involved in drug trafficking, to justice.

Furthermore, the Islamabad Capital Police seeks the cooperation of citizens in making the city secure.