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Meeting with US think tanks

Pakistan wishes to develop as hub of connectivity: COAS

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

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, said Pakistan was a country of consequence both from a geopolitical and geoeconomic perspective and wished to develop itself as a hub of connectivity and a gateway to Central Asia and beyond.

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

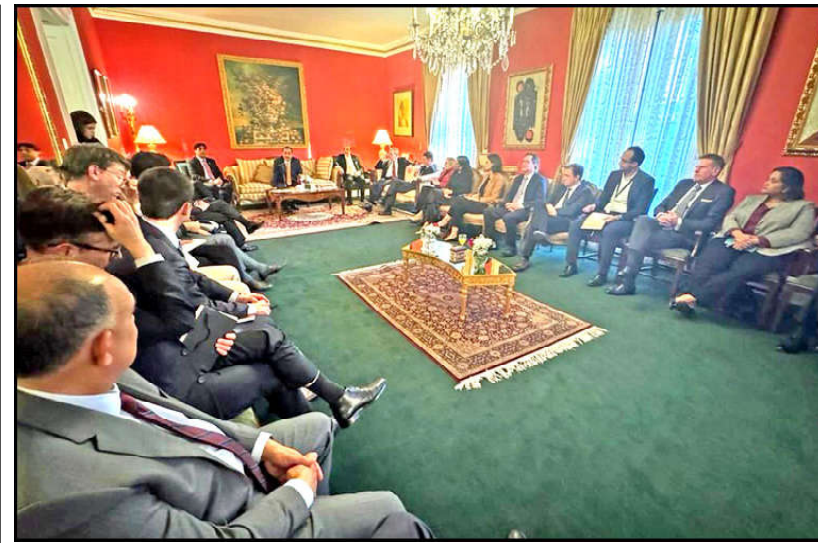
The COAS remarks came after he engaged in a candid discourse with the members of prominent US think tanks and

media, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued here.

The COAS, during the interaction, put across Pakistan's perspective on regional security, transnational terrorism, and the importance of maintaining strategic stability in South Asia.

General Asim Munir highlighted that Pakistan desired to broaden bilateral engagement with the U.S. through a long-term multi-domain partnership.

He highlighted, "His interactions during the visit to the U.S. with political and military leadership have been very positive, and he looks forward to



WASHINGTON DC: COAS General Syed Asim Munir, engaged in a candid discourse with members of prominent US think tanks and media, at Washington DC.

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

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

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

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

He said after improving their skills and qualifi-

cations, they would become a valuable asset and product as the world was in search of talent.

"I consider their journey a part of the talent hunt," he added.

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

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

To a question about the arrest of Imran Khan, he said the state had an inherent right to apprehend those who violated the laws. He was arrested under certain laws, not by the PML-N, PPP or JUI, he added.

He urged the educated class to also debate their political attitudes besides asserting their

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

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

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

President Alvi conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the government and brotherly people of Iran over the heinous terrorist attack on an Iranian police station in Siestan-Baluchistan on December 15. He expressed Pakistan's resolve to work with Iran to combat terrorism.

President Alvi reiterated that a just solution to



President Dr. Arif Alvi speaks to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi.

Nawaz, Bilawal obtain nomination papers

Nawaz received nomination papers from NA-15 Mansehra, Bilawal from NA-194 Larkana

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

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

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

Meanwhile Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received nomination papers from NA-194 Larkana. According to sources, Bilawal Bhutto's political Secretary Jameel Soomro has received nomination papers in his place.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umer Saif addressing launching ceremony of "PAK HAJJ APP".

IT ministry develops mobile app to digitize Hajj operation

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

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

Chief Executive Officer NITB Babar Majeed Bhatti briefed the participants about the application in the welcome address.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif said that the



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

Murtaza Solangi says CPEC transformed Pakistan's socio-economic landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), formally launched in 2013, had substantially transformed the socio-economic scenario of Pakistan by addressing the dire energy crisis and crumbling infrastructure.

"The CPEC has infused hope, trust and confidence in Pakistani people", Solangi said while delivering a keynote address at the 8th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum.



Prior to the CPEC, Pakistan had been facing daunting challenges in 2013, that included 10-hour blackouts, a 2500 MW electricity deficit, and a \$250 billion economic loss, he said, and added later the CPEC projects had profound positive effects on the lives of local people with provision employment opportunities.

He said the CPEC eventually expedited Pakistan's economic development process and so far multiple projects had been completed in the energy sector alone.

Nawaz Sharif highlights inflation, other challenges facing country

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has expressed sadness over what happened to the country during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government and highlighted the challenges, facing the nation currently, including unprecedented inflation.

He was speaking at the 14th parliamentary session of the PML-N here at Model Town Secretariat on Wednesday. PML-N President Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz, former federal ministers Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Sanaulah, Khawaja Asif, Rana Tanveer, Ataullah Tarar, Hamza Shehbaz, Khuram Dastagir and others were also present.

Nawaz said that after a prolonged period, it was a pleasure for him to meet his colleagues, adding that the PML-N was making comprehensive preparations for the upcoming

Nomination papers obtained by 82 contestants for three Ibd's NA seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): A total of 82 aspirants secured nomination papers for three Islamabad capital territory (ICT) National Assembly seats in upcoming elections.

Following a public notice, returning officers issued nomination papers, with 13 candidates obtaining them for NA-46 and 34 for NA-47. Additionally, 35 candidates acquired nomination papers for NA-48.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set the submission period for nomination papers for national and provincial assembly seats from December 20 to 22.

Nomination papers can be filed from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm until Friday, according to the ECP.

Govt all set to drop another electric bombshell

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

According to NEPRA, this increase has been sought in November Fuel price adjustment.

Application will be heard on December 27 in NEPRA.



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

Jordan's King Abdullah-II confers Order of Star of Jordan upon CJCS

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza, who is on an official visit to Jordan, called on King Abdullah II, Ibn Al Hussain.

Jordanian King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussain conferred the medal 'Order of the Star of Jordan' on CJCS General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza in recognition of his meritorious services.

During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed various areas of interest, in-

SC seeks candidates' stance in lifetime disqualification issue of lawmakers

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

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

The candidates willing to contest general elections in the matter of lifetime disqualification have been invited for inputs through advertisement released in the different newspapers.

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

WB approves loan of 350mn dollars for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): World Bank has approved a loan of 350 million dollars for Pakistan.

A loan of 350 million dollars has been approved by the World Bank under the Rise to Program.

The World Bank says that Pakistan will have to implement the policy of reforms for stability in the economy, implementation of financial management is necessary for stable growth.



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

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

A hurdle crossed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Mahir Ali

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

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

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

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

COP28 was deemed a step forward in calling out fossil fuels, but precious little was specified in terms of transcending them as the primary source of energy. The requisite sound

Weasel words

and fury were absent from the 'UAE consensus', which effectively signifies nothing. The worst polluters can step up their activities without violating the meaningless Dubai injunction.

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

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

Another petrostate will host the next COP, and doubts about whether these conferences serve any useful purpose have steadily been mounting. More than 2,400 fossil fuel lobbyists were accredited to the farce in Dubai, an exponentially higher figure than their numbers in Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh. The numbers in Baku may be even higher. They needn't worry too much, though — the biggest polluters will make sure that next to nothing is agreed that just might salvage the planet. And even if by some miracle a consensus were to be achieved on phasing out fossil fuels, it would mean very little without an enforcement mechanism —

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

After all, as George Monbiot points out, "more carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has been released worldwide" since 1992, when climate negotiations began, than in all of human history. He compares the oil and gas lobbyists' presence in Dubai to "allowing weapons manufacturers to dominate a peace conference". Mind you, one hardly hears of a peace conference these days, whereas they were ubiquitous between the end of World War II and the 1980s.

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

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

Part of the reason why the UN climate conferences are such a cruel farce is that they raise hopes that are then brutally dashed — shortly afterwards, if not there and then. That climate is unlikely to change. — Courtesy Dawn

South Asia's smog



Jamil Ahmad

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

tats for wildlife and biodiversity, and thus essential for a balanced ecosystem.

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

Strengthening the implementation arm of law enforcement agencies will enable the courts to penalise polluters. Other steps to help reduce pollution include expanding the network of electric transport and restricting vehicular movement in urban centres by levying a congestion toll on smoke-emitting transport. Introducing pedestrian zones is useful to protect citizens from air and noise pollution.

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

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

Commerce News

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries, Dr. Ejaz Gohar on Wednesday unveiled his vision to increase Pakistan's exports to China up to US \$25 billion to engage in trade between the two neighbours.

The newly appointed Economic Counsellor of China to Pakistan, Mr. Yang Guangyuan paid a courtesy call to the Commerce and Industries Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, said a press release issued here.

The meeting followed two successful visits to China by Dr. Ejaz which

are a part of the intensified interaction between the two countries in the field of trade.

Mr. Guangyuan extended warm congratulations to Dr. Ejaz for his successful visit to China, emphasizing the positive initiatives taken to foster economic cooperation between the two nations.

Minister Ejaz conveyed the warmth and hospitality extended by the Chinese officials during his visit to China.

Dr. Ejaz highlighted that the primary purpose of his recent visit to China was to witness first-hand

the remarkable progress China has achieved on the one hand and to seek new market segments for Pakistani exports on the other hand.

He unveiled an ambitious 5-year vision to boost trade between Pakistan and China, setting a target of \$25 billion for Pakistan's exports.

Mr. Guangyuan welcomed the Minister's sentiments for increasing bilateral trade and economic cooperation and expressed China's commitment to stand with Pakistan, emphasizing the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries

China boasts over 3.28 mln 5G base stations

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

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

In the meantime, more mobile phone users in China have embraced 5G services, Ecms reported.

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

Among them, 771 million were 5G mobile phone users, a net increase of 210.4 million from the end of last year, accounting for 44.7 percent of total mobile phone users.



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

PIDE report highlights challenges, opportunities in commerce sector

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) here on Wednesday launched its latest research report titled "The State of Commerce in Pakistan—International and Domestic," highlighting challenges and opportunities shaping the landscape of the country's commerce sector.

"As a premier institution dedicated to fostering economic development, PIDE's report serves as an invaluable source of

information and statistics on the state of commerce in Pakistan," a news release said. In his opening remarks, PIDE Vice-Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque said his institution had compiled the report for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries so that it could explore all facets of internal and external trade in Pakistan.

"The primary objective is to gain a profound understanding of markets, growth and international and domestic trade."

He emphasized that despite the vibrant sector,

it faced challenges stemming from the various governments' indifference, regulatory problems, and various other problems.

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

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers for removing bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country Speakers at 3rd International Hydropower Conference while terming the hydropower and renewable energy (RE) crucial for sustainable future of the country on Wednesday stressed the need to remove bottleneck in harnessing the hydropower and RE potential for provision of affordable electricity to the people and industry.

The third International Hydropower conference themed

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

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

Speaking on the occasion, Caretaker

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

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

Sohrab stresses strengthening of collaboration with ILO for Pak Workforce Dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik, held a significant meeting with Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Gilbert Hounbo on the sidelines of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) in Riyadh on Wednesday.

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

The meeting was a significant step towards collaboration to enhance the skills and employability of the Pakistani

workforce in line with the ILO's best practices. Both parties acknowledged the importance of aligning national policies with global standards to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the workforce.

Director-General of ILO, Gilbert Hounbo implored the global community to support and create employment opportunities for Pakistani youth. Recognizing the demographic dividend that Pakistan possesses, he emphasized the need for concerted efforts to harness the potential of the youth population and provide them with quality employment prospects.

SAPM, Jawad Sohrab reaffirmed that the Government of Pakistan is committed to working closely with the International Labour Organization.



KARACHI: Women with children purchase shoes at a roadside stall ahead of Christmas.



LAHORE: Secretary Transport Punjab Ahmed Javed Qazi drives Electric Rickshaw before launching E-Rickshaws.

PML-N to address economic issues: Nasir

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N leader Nasir Butt said that his party has experienced persons to manage the economy and if voted to power, PML-N has plans to address the key economic issues of the country.

He said that the PML-N government had achieved many economic milestones for Pakistan during its previous tenures. If voted to power, it would again bring Pakistan out of economic trouble and provide relief to the common man, he added.

He said this while talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of

Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI.

Nasir Butt said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and PML-N would finalize economic policies by taking them on board to achieve win-win outcomes.

He said that Pakistan has great potential to emerge as a strong economy and it only needs visionary leadership and good governments to achieve this goal.

He said that PML-N's leadership has the ability and experience to resolve issues and deliver up to the expectations of the people.

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

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram has said that the government is trying its best to improve Children's Hospital Lahore.

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

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

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

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

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



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

Minister inaugurates newly constructed 'Business Centre'

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

The newly constructed Business Centre at Kohat Road, Small

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

Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker minister termed the project as of high importance and directed amendments to the business model of the board for its financial stability.



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

Naqvi orders land allocation for smart police stations

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

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

smart police stations in Lahore, while an additional 17 will be strategically located in other districts.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in setting a stringent deadline for the Smart Police Station project, emphasized the phased conversion of conventional police stations into smart ones throughout the province. The meeting scrutinized the construction, repair, and rehabilitation initiatives encompassing a total of 737 police stations. A comprehensive

review of the progress on the Smart Police Station project and an evaluation of the facilities integrated into these stations took place during the briefing.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi directed the expeditious allocation of land to every landless police station across the province, stressing the swift completion of the land transfer process.

The meeting also addressed the project involving the construction of 313 houses for police officers and employees.

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

Two drugs convicts sentenced to different terms

ATTOCK (Online): Two drugs peddlers were sentenced to different terms by two different courts in Attock on Wednesday. In the first case, a special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in Attock sentenced a convict identified as Najeeb Ullah - a native of Waziristan to 9 years' imprisonment besides imposing fine over him for smuggling two kilogram of hashish from KP to Punjab.

Ban on airing Imran speeches: LHC seeks affidavit from chairman PEMRA

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought affidavit from chairman PEMRA to the effect that he has not imposed restriction on TV channels from airing former chairman PTI statements and interview. The court remarked chairman PEMRA should file this reply too that who has imposed ban. The petitions filed against ban on airing the speeches of former chairman PTI Imran Khan by T V channels despite court's orders

came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza Wednesday.

Lawyer Ahmed Pansota appeared in the court on behalf of former chairman PTI. The court sought affidavit from chairman PEMRA. The court remarked chairman PEMRA should file affidavit that he had not imposed ban on airing statements and interviews of former chairman PTI by TV channels.

LHC seeks report on cases against Omar

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

All parties have expressed confidence in ECP: PML-N

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Deputy Secretary General Attaullah Tarar has said all political parties have expressed confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), as there is no doubt about its credibility and transparency.

Talking to the media, along with PML-N leader Malik Ahmad Khan at Model Town on Wednesday, he said some elements had pointed fingers at the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ECP just for nothing, adding that free and fair elections

should be conducted in the country on the given time and his party wanted to take forward the matter smoothly toward the elections. Attaullah Tarar said the individual imprisoned in Adiala Jail is enjoying every facility and comfort in the jail, adding that walk, exercise and all recreational activities are going on in Adiala Jail. He said that everyone gets Toshakhana gifts, but no one had sold out those gifts in the black market to gain 'black profit'.

He said that those gifts were the pride of the country and not meant for sale or gaining profit.



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

Environmental shifts Seminar to tackle health challenges in KP held

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

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

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

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

International News

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

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin declared Tuesday that his country's military has seized the initiative in Ukraine after repelling a monthlong counteroffensive and is well positioned to achieve Moscow's goals. Putin spoke at a meeting with top military brass a day after he presented documents to Russia's Central Election Commission to seek reelection in the March presidential vote that he's all but certain to win.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Rescuers work amid the rubble at Shiyuan village following the earthquake in Jishishan county, Gansu province, China.

France's Macron faces cracks in his government over migration law

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron faced cracks within his ruling alliance on Wednesday after parliament passed a toughened immigration bill, leaving him needing to find ways to appease left-leaning members.

The bill, a compromise between the centrist president's party and the conservative opposition, illustrates a rightward shift in politics in much of Europe as governments try to curb the rise of the far-right

by being tougher on immigration.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The Western powers in the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran accused Tehran on Monday of developing and testing ballistic missiles, transferring hundreds of drones to Russia, and enriching uranium to an unprecedented 60% level for a country without a nuclear weapons program — all in violation of a U.N. resolution endorsing the deal.

Iran and its ally, Russia, dismissed the charges by Britain, France and Germany, strongly supported by the United States, which pulled out of the agreement

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2018. The six-party agreement was aimed at ensuring that Iran could not develop atomic weapons. Under the accord, Tehran agreed to limit enrichment of uranium to levels necessary for the peaceful use of nuclear power in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

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

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

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

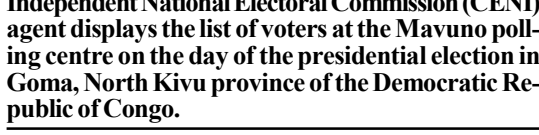
The US Justice Department last month charged an Indian citizen with plotting to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader on US soil, alleging an Indian government official was also involved in the planning. "If someone gives us any information, we would definitely look into it," Modi said in his first comments on the issue. "If a citizen of ours has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law," he added. India's foreign ministry had earlier said it set up a "high-level" inquiry committee "to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter".

US may yet back 'mild ceasefire' for Gaza

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The emergency UN Security Council meeting on the Gaza situation was adjourned on Tuesday, with discussions entering into informal consultations as hopes rise of a slight flexibility in Washington's otherwise staunch support for Israel. The council's meeting, which started on Monday for a vote on UAE's resolution calling for a sustainable cessation of hostilities in Gaza, was postponed due to US concerns over the draft's phrasing.

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

This shift in stance reflects deepening divisions within the US government, particularly from the global South. In a departure from its previous stance, the White House's willingness to consider alternative wording suggests frustration with Israel's approach. Despite diplomatic efforts, Israel's approach has faced criticism, and pressure has been mounting on the US following a UN General Assembly vote on December 12, where 153 countries called for an urgent cessation of hostilities. UAE Ambassador Mohamed Issa Abushahab underscored the urgency of the situation, declaring 2023 as the deadliest year in the history of Occupied Palestinian Territory.



Independent National Electoral Commission (CEN) agent displays the list of voters at the Mavuno polling centre on the day of the presidential election in Goma, North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Philippines rebukes China over South China Sea claims

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippine defense minister rebuked China on Wednesday for accusing his country of provoking tension and stirring trouble in the South China Sea, saying only Beijing believed what it was saying. "Truth and in fact, no country in the world, none, supports unequivocally their claim to the whole of South China Sea," Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said as both nations have exchanged accusations over recent collisions in the waterway. China claims almost the

entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of commercial shipping annually, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

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

CPEC's second phase to unveil record development, economic uplift in Pakistan: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Wednesday said Pakistan is on the right side of history by standing with China as the game changer China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s second phase will unveil record development and economic uplift in the country.

He was addressing the 8th CPEC Media Forum jointly organized by the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) and the China Economic Net under the theme of 'Next decade of CPEC: Opportunities & learning from the past decade. The caretaker minister for Information was the chief guest on the occasion who also addressed the forum.

Senator Mushahid said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has emerged as the most important development initiative of the 21st century. "BRI is a new platform, a new path to development, and a new framework for international cooperation of planning, building, and benefiting together for an open, inclusive, and interconnected

world that is the key element," he said.

The Senator who is also the chairman of the PCI said the BRI was all about openness, inclusivity, and connectivity. Under the BRI's CPEC initiative, a total of \$26 billion was devoted to investments, 236,000 jobs were generated, 8,000 megawatts of electricity were produced, and around 510 kilometers of roads and highways were built under the CPEC projects. "There are 28,000 Pakistani students in China and 8,000 of them are doing their doctorate degrees in China which is very important," he added.

Senator Mushahid said under the second phase of CPEC, the country was focusing on the Main Line-1 (ML-1) upgradation and dualization of the railway infrastructure from Karachi to Peshawar, an 1,872-kilometer railway route.

He added that this would be the biggest transformation in Pakistan's railway infrastructure since independence. The second important aspect, he said was the special economic zones and relocation of

Chinese industry and the third one which is already underway was agriculture cooperation.

"Agriculture is a key element in the whole Pakistan-China framework with new irrigation technology. Pakistan is facing an issue in its Cholistan region that has a lot of deserts like Xinjiang where China will provide technology to have multiple crops being harvested there," he added.

He underscored the need to debunk the disinformation, fake news, and propaganda encircling the CPEC project. "There are two crossing narratives, one from the west led by the United States and the other from China. In the last 10 years, China invested over a trillion dollars in the BRI's 3000 projects, lifting 40 million masses out of poverty in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the last 20 years, in the so-called war and terror, the United States squandered 6.5 trillion dollars fighting wars in Pakistan and Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. These are not my figures but of Brown University in Rhode Island the USA.



Mr. Justice Athar Minallah awards a certificate to a trainee Judicial Assistant in a certificate awarding ceremony at the conclusion of a three-day Professional Development Training for the Support Staff of the Supreme Court of Pakistan held at the Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad.

PM announces upgradation of KMC, AMC to medical universities

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Wednesday announced upgradation of Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar and Ayub Medical College (AMC), Abbottabad as public sector medical universities.

The prime minister made the important announcement while addressing the 46th annual meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistan Descent of North America (APPNA) organized by the alumni of Khyber Medical College Peshawar at Governor House. On the request of members of APPNA and its President Dr Arshad Rehman, Prime Minister Kakar said that practical work on upgradation of KMC and AMC as public sector medical universities should be initiated within 35 hours by the respective au-

thorities. Commending APPNA's rich services for aiding humanity and continued long connection with people of their home country, the prime minister directed the Governor and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to give practical shape to upgradation of KMC and AMC to a full fledged medical universities keeping in view of people and APPNA demands.

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

worthy.

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

He said that Pakistani doctors have proved their abilities and professionalism all over the world including USA and played a role of a bridge between Pakistani communities and American citizens while dedication towards duties and treating patients with friendly attitude and warmth was their hallmark. "Pakistani doctors are the best in the world and graduates of KMC doctors were known internationally for their hard work, professionalism and devotion in healthcare services," he said.

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

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

He made these remarks while speaking via online at the 8th CPEC Media Forum "Next Decade of CPEC: Opportunities and Learning from Past Decade" held in Islamabad to celebrate the completion of the first decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

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



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and mother of the deceased Sara Inaam in a group photo with prosecution and investigative team during appreciation certificate distribution ceremony.

OGRA-PEMRA jointly launches massive awareness drive against substandard sale of cylinder

ISLAMABAD (APP): Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) Spokesperson Imran Ghaznavi Wednesday said that OGRA with the joint efforts of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) had launched a massive awareness drive against the sale and use of substandard gas cylinders during winter season for ensuring safety and well-being of consumers. "All LPG marketing companies have been advised to strictly ensure the compliance of safety instructions at distributor premises in order to avoid any untoward incident in future and conducting seminars and social media campaigns for the awareness of distributors," he said while talking to a private news channel. "Our awareness drive aims With these drives we are educating local companies for ensuring

their respective distributors for thoroughly check the LPG cylinder with respect to any physical damage, leakage etc prior to handing over the same to the customers." "LPG marketing companies should also be advised to instruct their distributors to educate every customer through posters displayed at distributor's premises on safe use of LPG cylinders and also circulate the brochure among the customers for the awareness of the safety measures," he added. "It is a joint campaign and is a part of our preventive measures so as to ensure the safety of users of gas cylinders, he said. "In a bid to avoid accidents at home, the campaign will inform users about the accurate safety method of transporting and handling the LPG cylinders," he said.

Indonesian University delegation visits AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of ten senior faculty members from Terbuka Open University, Indonesia, led by Rector Prof. Dr. Ojat Darujat, visited Allama Iqbal Open University on Tuesday.

During a meeting with Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized different ways to enhance cooperation and the importance of building links between universities to promote educational development.

Former chairman DRAP arrested in corruption fake degree case

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

Islamabad Capital Police Radio FM 92.4 is working efficiently

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special directives of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan the Islamabad Capital Police Radio FM 92.4 is effectively working on a regular basis. In the last month, the station has also carried 130 distinct programs, 840 traffic updates, and 9,000 traffic-related awareness messages on a regular basis. In the last month, the station has also carried 130 distinct programs, 840 traffic updates, and 9,000 traffic-related awareness messages.

On this occasion, the CPO Safe City/Traffic states that while Islamabad Capital Police is committed to ensuring the security of life and property of city citizens, they are also actively keeping them informed about traffic matters and providing recreational opportunities.

Brig. (Retd.) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha, Chairman, PMIC is chairing the meeting at PMIC, PM Office, Islamabad on PSDP project titled "Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad" on 20-12-2023 and getting briefing from the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing & Works, Pak PWD, NHA, ICT, CDA, FIA, RDA, RCB and Punjab Prison Department.

Hearing of Toshakhana vehicles reference against Zardari, Nawaz adjourned

ISLAMABAD (Online): There are six petitions. Please issue orders on them. There are five miscellaneous applications too. The details of the applications will be provided to the court.

The court remarked we see these applications. The defence counsel said supplementary reference was to be filed today. We joined the investigation.

The prosecutor took the plea in the court the investigation officer was transferred and now we want some time for preparation.

The exemption from attendance plea was filed by former Prime Minister (PM) Yousuf Raza Gillani.

Prosecutor took the plea in the court Yousuf Raza Gillani cannot appear due to election campaign.

The court remarked this is case of court No 3. Judge will soon come. Investigation officer should appear on next hearing.



ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, famous film and TV actress Nashiz Jhangir and others clapping during the inauguration ceremony of a beautician cream at a local hotel.

ECP refutes false reports on Hafizabad delimitation decision date

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday dismissed media misinformation about Hafizabad constituency delimitation, stating the official decision by a two-member bench was declared on November 26 and promptly posted on the ECP's website for public awareness.

An ECP spokesperson explained that a subsequent order regarding the delimitation of Hafizabad district was issued on December 8, following the intervention of the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The guidelines for constituencies are explicitly outlined in the Election Act of 2017 and its corresponding Rules, as explained below.

According to Election Rules 8(1), the population of the province is divided among the seats designated for the province under Article 106, Section 51 of the

Constitution, after which the quota for each seat is established.

In the second phase, the quota calculated under Rules 8 (2) to determine district seats is divided by the district's population, establishing the number of seats for that district. If the remaining population after seat allocation is less than 0.5, the district is ignored.

However, if the remaining population is 0.50 or more, the district is granted one seat. For instance, if a district's seat share is 4.49 based on its population, it is allocated 4 seats.

On the other hand, if its seat share is 4.52, the district is allotted 5 seats.

Provided that no other district has a higher fraction, for instance, 4.56, it is essential to clarify that the allocation of seats begins with the district having the highest fraction, such as 4.80, 4.75, 4.70, 4.70, 4.66, and so on, until the last seat.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior Aftab Durrani in a meeting with the Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki.

Saudi Envoy discusses plan for Faisal Mosque renovation with Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Malki on Wednesday held a meeting with Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani to discuss the plan for the renovation of Faisal Mosque.

Secretary Interior welcomed Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Malki at his office and offered all support for renovation of the Faisal Mosque, built after the name of Shah Faisal with Saudi Arabia's cooperation.

Interior Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Malki agreed to further promote mutual relations between the two countries. He said that the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would actively participate.

were exemplary.

He also lauded the recent visit of Imam Kaaba's visit to Pakistan while the Saudi ambassador expressed best wishes for the upcoming elections in Pakistan. The Secretary Interior informed the ambassador that Road-to-Makkah was a wonderful project and added Karachi would also be included in this project for the upcoming Hajj. He informed the ambassador that Passport and Immigration department had launched E-passport process for the facilitation of public while new machines would be installed for smooth functioning. He said that Pakistan also has interests in the Jeddah Exhibition in which the Ministry of Interior would actively participate.

IHC adjourns petition against jail trial of ex-chairman PTI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing till December 28, on a petition challenging the jail trial of the founder chairman PTI in the cypher case.

The court instructed the additional attorney general to also share the copy of the trial court's notification of November 29, with the petitioner.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case filed by former chairman PTI against his jail trial.

The court inquired from the lawyer whether he had read the detailed order, pertaining to the jail trial case.

The IHC had written the details that under what circumstance a jail trial could be conducted, it said.

ICCP visits Diplomatic Enclave; orders to enhanced security measures

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan conducted a visit to the Diplomatic Enclave to assess security arrangements, monitored safe city cameras and issued directives for enhancing security measures, a public relation officer said.

He said that the ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan interacted with officers and officials of the Islamabad Capital Police entrusted with the security of the diplomatic enclave. He issued directives to senior officers for the enhancement of security

measures at the embassies. Emphasizing the need for effective monitoring on both internal and external

routes of the diplomatic enclave, the ICCPO stressed the importance of ensuring effective surveillance through the Safe City centralized camera systems. The Islamabad Capital Police remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining a peaceful environment and ensuring the protection of the lives and property of the citizens within the federal capital. Citizens are urged to cooperate with the police and report any suspicious activities or items by dialing helpline.



Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan conducted a visit to the Diplomatic Enclave to assess security arrangements, monitored safe city cameras and issued directives for enhancing security measures, a public relation officer said.