

Independent

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

Vol. XIII No. 354 Reg. mails-B / ID-445 Wednesday December 27, 2023, Jamadi-us-Sani 13 1445 A.H. Ph: 2158688, 2158997 Pages 4: Rs. 12

Progress, prosperity of people of Balochistan among priorities of government, says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Tuesday stressed upon focusing the climate resilience and climate finance aspects in all the water projects of Balochistan and reiterated that progress and prosperity of the people of province were among the top priorities of the government.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting on the important matters pertaining to the Balochistan province. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki, Education Minister Dr Qadir Baloch and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir, Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Sami Saeed, Caretaker Federal Minister for Law and Water Resources Irfan Aslam, and relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The chief secretary gave a briefing over different projects of the province. The prime minister further directed for expediting the matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi and observed that with its construction, the different parts of

the country would get an alternate leeway, besides strengthening of the linkages. He also asked for an immediate resolution of the financial issues faced by the universities in the province.

The caretaker prime minister directed for the constitution of an inter-provincial committee with regard to the matters of Kachhi Canal project and the inclusion of caretaker minister for planning and caretaker chief ministers of Punjab and Balochistan provinces as its members.

The committee would be tasked to finalize proposals about the restoration and expansion of the canal.

A directive was also issued for the construction of check dams to utilize water from the hilly rivulets and streams, and for the protection of Kachhi canal and Pet Feeder from the hilly torrents.

The caretaker prime minister ordered for formulation of a comprehensive mechanism over registration and fitness of vehicles in the province in collaboration with the National Highways and Motorways Police and the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA).



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on matters related to Balochistan.



Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacting with Heads of various Navies during 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in Bangkok, Thailand

National conference calls to promote interfaith harmony in country

KARACHI (APP): The Department of International Relations of the University of Karachi in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony organized a national conference on "bridging beliefs: interfaith harmony in Pakistan", at the KU Chinese Teachers Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday.

The conference called to promote the interfaith harmony culture in the country and emphasizes the importance of interfaith harmony, tolerance, love, dialogue, acceptance, and respect for all religions and faiths.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, in his address as the chief guest said that every person in the country condemned the incident of Jaranwala Town in Faisalabad district which was reported in August 2023. He recalled that our

scholars opened the doors of mosques for the Christian community and that gave a positive message to the world.

The minister asked the audience to play their role in promoting interfaith harmony culture in their social circle so that conspiracies against our motherland can be foiled on every platform. This is the first program arranged by the Ministry at any educational institution, he added. The federal minister stressed the importance of refraining from using the term 'minority' for other religions, asserting that citizens of all faiths are equal in Pakistan. Recalling Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's words, he reiterated the principle of freedom for churches, mosques, and temples in Pakistan.

The speakers of the conference urged that it would play a key part in developing a society that will not allow intolerance at any level.

Shaheed BB stands as nation's living movement, radiant torch: Bilawal

LARKANA (APP): Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday said the nation eloquently commemorates the indelible legacy of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the first democratically elected woman prime minister of the Islamic world as well as esteemed leader of the world, saying that the "Daughter of the East" stands not only as a historical figure but as a living movement and a radiant torch. Her nationalistic spirit, enduring struggle and steadfast leadership destined to be engrained in the hearts and minds of the Pakistani nation, he said while sharing a reflective message on the occasion of 16th martyrdom anniversary of slain Chairperson of PPP Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto to be celebrated on Wednesday. He said that her mother remained ardently dedicated

he life to the noble cause of transforming the country into a genuine welfare state, guided by the visionary ideals of the nation's founding leaders.

He said that throughout her life, BB Shaheed bound together Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan like a harmonious chain. "Her tragic assassination was a malevolent scheme, strategically targeting the momentum of advancement and the realization of Pakistan's vision for enlightened moderation and a democratic society," he added.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari pointed out that on the one hand, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, as the PPP chairperson, took the ideology of the Quaid-e-Azam and his party to new heights through her philosophy and unparalleled struggle.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a Senate House Business Advisory Committee meeting at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Defence Ministry submits reply in audio leak case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday submitted its reply with the Islamabad High Court (IHC) regarding the audio leak case involving Bushra Bibi and the son of former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar.

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar heard the case.

The ministry, in its one-page reply, stated that several inexpensive accessories and tools were readily available in the market, simplifying the process of intercepting audio during phone calls. It further pointed out that some platforms also offered such services for a fee, and the content of the audios could also be altered with the use of artificial intelligence. The ministry said that only social media platforms could provide the source of the recordings posted on them.

It mentioned that the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was the competent authority to obtain information from the social media platforms under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016.

EC directs to provide name of DC, IG Islamabad till today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has directed to provide name of Deputy Commissioner (DC) and IG Islamabad till today (Wednesday).

On the other hand interior secretary has requested the EC not to transfer both the officers in view of the security threats facing the federal capital.

The case regarding transfer of DC and IG Islamabad came up for hearing before 4-member bench of EC Tuesday. Interior secretary appeared before the commission. He told the commission that EC orders with reference to advisor to Prime Minister have been implemented. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) inquired has he brought its notification.

CNS emphasizes collaboration among regional navies for maritime security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Thailand to attend eighth Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs at Bangkok.

The event involved panel discussions on issues related to cooperation in maritime security of Indian Ocean and Blue Economy ways forward for sustainable development of IONS members, a Pakistan Navy news release said on Tuesday.

During the IONS Conclave of Chiefs, bilateral meetings between Chief of the Naval Staff and naval leadership of IONS member states were also held.

The CNS called on Commander of Qatar Emiri

Naval Forces, C-in-C of Royal Thai Navy, Deputy C-in-C of Russian Navy, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman, CNS of French Navy, Commander of Iranian Navy, Fleet Commander of Royal Navy, UK and Vice Chief of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and discussed matters of mutual interest. Admiral Naveed Ashraf focused on PN contributions to regional maritime security and emphasized on collaboration between the regional navies to enhance maritime security of the region.

He also stressed upon greater collaboration between Indian Ocean countries to exploit potentials of blue economy.

Nawaz, Prof Sajid Mir discuss political situation, preparations for polls

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) supremo Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday held a meeting with ameer Markazi Jamiat Ahle-Hadith Pakistan Professor Sajid Mir.

Chairman PML-N Raja Zafarul Haq, Senior Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif and others attended the meeting.

Prevailing political situation of the country and preparations for general election came under discussion during the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Sajid Mir commended the contribution of Nawaz Sharif in development of country and congratulated him and Maryam Nawaz for their exoneration of NAB references.

He also condemned NAB's alleged politically motivated false cases against Nawaz Sharif.

Prof Sajid Mir also discussed political collaboration with PML-N supremo for the upcoming general elections to be held on February 8, 2024.



LAHORE: PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif presiding over 16th meeting of Parliamentary Board.

Shehbaz Sharif links peace, stability to economic revival

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif has said that a crucial election is going to take place on Feb 8 and the party would win it with public support.

Addressing the 16th party parliamentary board meeting at Model Town here on Tuesday, he said that following the return of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, there was immense enthusiasm and fervor among party members and workers.

"The rally on Oct 21 at Minar-e-Pakistan was one of the most successful receptions in our political history," he said and acknowledged the participation of people from KP province in the rally and paid tribute to party workers, general public and KP leaders who had gathered to welcome their Quaid at Minar-e-Pakistan.

He emphasized the vital role of peace and stability in the economic revival

of the country and credited PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for his significant efforts in restoring peace in Karachi from 2013 to 2017. He said when he had reached Karachi in 2018 for votes, the people of Karachi expressed their gratitude for peace restoration in the business hub of Pakistan.

He said that if Quaid Nawaz Sharif had not started electricity projects, the country would still have been in darkness. He recalled that there were 20-hour load-shedding in Pakistan daily but his party successfully overcome the issue. He said that it was Quaid Nawaz who tackled the menace of terrorism, adding that people still remembered development works carried out during that period across Pakistan. "The way terrorism had been eradicated from the country was recognised even by enemies as well," he maintained.

PHC suspends ECP verdict revoking bat as PTI election symbol

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision of declaring the PTI's intra-party polls as unconstitutional and the revocation of its election symbol 'bat' till the final verdict on its petition.

The single-member bench comprising Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel announced the verdict which it had reserved on the petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf against the

ECP's decision earlier in the day.

During the course of proceedings, Justice Miankhel observed that the general elections were about to take place on February 8, 2024, and that the last date for allotting the election symbols was January 13.

He said that the arguments of all the parties involved in the case were heard.

PTI lawyers, including Barrister Ali Zafar pleaded that the intra-party polls were carried out on the orders of the ECP

and the latter's December 22 decision might be declared illegal.

They argued that according to the Constitution, any citizen could form a party or be a member of any party.

Judge Miankhel directed that notices be issued to the ECP and other respondents in the case.

It may be mentioned that the ECP on December 22 declared the intra-party elections of the PTI null and void, besides revocation of its election symbol 'bat'.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi talking with media men.

ECP warns govt. employees against political involvement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday issued a pre-general election advisory, instructing government officers and employees to refrain from participating in political activities.

The advisory specifies that government officials and employees were prohibited from taking part in election activities.

According to the issued circular, the government officials and employees are restricted from engaging in election activities.

Government officials seeking leave must obtain approval from Returning Officers (ROs), while district officers are obligated to seek permission from the District Returning Officers (DRO) for their leaves.

According to the ECP advisory, federal government employees up to grade 19 can have their leave sanctioned by DROs.

ASI among 5 injured in hand grenade attack on police mobile

Independent Report

QUETTA: A hand grenade exploded on a police mobile on patrol in Nawan Killi area of Quetta.

Due to the explosion, ASI Khuda-e-Dad among 5 persons were injured who were shifted to the hospital.

Meanwhile Caretaker Home Minister Balochistan Mir Zubair Jamali condemned the attack on the police in Nawan Killi area of Quetta.

Murtaza Solangi says Govt to explore legal options to redress journalist layoffs issue

Workers' forced dismissal from media houses unacceptable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said the government would explore maximum options to redress the problems of journalist fraternity, and seek legal action, in accordance with the Constitution, to restrict forced job layoffs of media persons.

Talking to the media after the walkout of journalist during the 334th session of the Senate in the press gallery, he expressed full solidarity with the journalist community regarding the forced dismissal by some media houses.

Solangi said the legal provisions would be explored to take punitive action and extend support to safeguard the rights of media workers.

"I stand with journalists and media workers; the issue of forced dismissals

of journalists is not acceptable," he said. He said he had an earlier discussion with the Chairman of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) regarding the forced dismissal of journalists and media workers.

He said the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting would be held on Friday afternoon, adding: "This issue will also be discussed with Chairperson of the Standing Committee, Senator Fautzia Arshad."

Murtaza Solangi said the interim government would take all the steps under the law to effectively tackle issue.

"Government's sympathies are with media workers. It is our responsibility to implement the legal protection that media workers and journalists have in the Constitution," he said.

Current Senate session to continue till Jan. 15: HBAC

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The House Business Advisory Committee (HBAC), presided over by Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani, Tuesday decided that the ongoing session of the Senate, would continue till January 15, 2024.

The meeting was attended by the leader of the opposition in the Senate Senators Dr. Shehzad Waseem, Tahir Bizenjo, Mushtaq Ahmad, Hidayatullah Khan, and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi, discussed legislative business in detail for the 334th Session of the Senate, said a news release. In addition to legislative matters, the session will hold discussions on other issues of extreme public significance.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Nominations done

From a state of uncertainty only a couple of weeks ago centring on the question of whether or not the general elections would take place, the poll process is now firmly moving forward.

Nominations for both the federal and provincial legislatures wrapped up on Sunday evening, with big guns representing the mainstream political parties throwing their hats into the ring. Meanwhile, the migratory tribe of 'electables' is also present in the contest, offering their services to those believed to have the blessings of the powers that be. Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari, Imran Khan, Fazlur Rehman, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari — all mainstays of the political landscape — have filed their nomination papers, though PTI hopefuls have repeatedly said obstacles are being placed in their way.

From here onwards, parties are expected to switch to election mode, and this requires them to communicate their programme for Pakistan's uplift to voters. It should be remembered that elections are not a popularity contest, as people expect solutions to their myriad problems from the parties vying for their votes.

In this regard, it is a matter of concern that most mainstream parties, with the exception of Jamaat-i-Islami, have not yet released their election manifestos. Perhaps the parties themselves were not expecting the polls to take place on Feb 8, hence their lethargy in finalising their policy proposals in the form of manifestos. But, as the Supreme Court has said, no more delays will be tolerated and the polls are to take place on schedule. Therefore, the parties need to release their manifestos soon. It is true that unlike in many mature democracies, the politics of clan and ethnicity still dominate Pakistan's political culture, meaning that a fair percentage of voters will care little about party programmes.

Yet it must also be said that younger and more tech-savvy voters will demand answers from the parties to their problems, and will be swayed less by cults of personality, or how their respective clans/ tribes vote.

Parties have a moral obligation to inform the people of Pakistan — in both dusty villages and the sprawling cities — how they intend to fix the economy, improve healthcare and education, bring down crime, etc. Hollow promises should not be enough; firm policy is required.

Meanwhile, as has been mentioned in these columns, it is essential that the electoral exercise has legitimacy. And this cannot be achieved when one party is being excluded from the democratic process. The state's attempts to cancel the PTI must cease, and all parties need to have a level playing field during elections. Let the people of Pakistan decide who is to steer the ship of state for the next five years. Political manoeuvring has never worked, and will only exacerbate our multiple crises.

Unjustified stigma



Ali Burhan Mustafa

Pakistan is grappling with the stigma surrounding mental health. A social fabric steeped in tradition often finds itself at odds with the critical need for progressive mental healthcare solutions. This clash is exacerbated by misguided reliance on shamans and archaic spiritual rituals, propelled by misinterpreted religious doctrines, rather than scientific psychiatric intervention. This dependence on traditional healers, especially in impoverished areas, perpetuates the stigma.

Child sexual abuse in Pakistan, with its dismal conviction rates, casts a long shadow over our human rights record. Chilling statistics from organisations like Sahil, reveal thousands of cases with a conviction rate of less than two per cent. Despite initiatives like the Zainab Alert Bill and national sex offender registries, the acute scarcity of child psychiatrists and underdevelopment of specialised branches, such as forensic and community psychiatry, are a glaring oversight in addressing mental health after abuse.

Pakistan faces a dire human rights challenge, as detailed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A woman is raped every two hours — a statistic that is potentially more frequent, with claims of such incidents occurring every 20 minutes by groups such as Pakistan Men Against Rape. The distressingly low rate of cases being reported and even fewer convictions exposes deep flaws within the justice system. A number of high-profile rape cases, including the Zainab Ansari incident and a mother abused sexually in front of her children, necessitates a demand for forensic psychiatric assessments in court proceedings.

Pakistani women are encumbered with a disproportionate share of mental health conditions compared to men. While attention has been drawn to many of the socio-cultural practices responsible, including karo kari ('honour' killings often seen in Balochistan and Sindh), watta satta and child marriages, the struggles of women in less visible rural and urban slum areas remain largely unacknowledged.

Despite Pakistan's pledge to the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030), women are brutally punished for perceived immorality. Such barbaric practices inflict fear and profound physical and psychological trauma, often leading to myriad mental health disorders.

This crisis is exacerbated by the lack of adequately trained healthcare providers who can recognise and assist victims and violence — a shortfall highlighted by the Unicef-initiated mental health and psychosocial support services programme in 2021. Medical studies corroborate this gap. In Pakistan, the intersection of mental health and human rights is brought into sharp relief by the impact of blasphemy laws on the mentally ill. Between 1986 and 2010, an alarming surge in blasphemy accusations resulted in over 50 extrajudicial deaths.

The existing laws, increasingly stringent and far-reaching, ensnare individuals with mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and autism, often misused to conceal abuse against them. There is a critical need for legal reforms that provide robust protections for those with mental health challenges, ensuring that blasphemy laws are not weaponised against them.

Pakistan stands at a critical juncture, with recent legal reforms pointing towards progress in mental health care. The decriminalisation of attempted suicide was a commendable step away from punitive measures, signalling the emerging recognition of mental illness as a public health matter and not a criminal one.

However, the realities of mental health care in Pakistan, as evidenced by high suicide rates juxtaposed with an insufficient number of mental health professionals and facilities, particularly in the rural areas, highlight a landscape in desperate need of reform. With a budget that fails to adequately address mental health and a medical community yet to fully acknowledge psychiatric specialities, Pakistan's mental health framework is alarmingly inadequate.

Forensic psychiatry in Pakistan is at a pivotal juncture, facing the challenge of reconciling its colonial legacy with contemporary human rights and psychiatric practices. Our legal system, which often places an unreasonable onus on defendants to prove mental illness with insufficient support, calls for urgent modernisation.

Pioneering decisions like the Supreme Court's ruling in the Safia Bano case are indicative of an increasing awareness of these critical issues and underscore the imperative for systemic legal reforms. Pakistan's struggle with mental health stigmatisation and human rights breaches requires a legal overhaul. The justice system, failing to shield vulnerable groups, particularly the mentally ill, highlights the need for incorporating psychiatric evaluation into judicial processes.

— Courtesy Dawn

Plantation drive



Shahzad Sharjeel

Elections are in the air, and potted plants are being transplanted to suitable soil with the most earthworms and compost available. Sunshine is essential, but the time to make hay is later. In a no-holds-barred environment, logic is the first casualty. How does one explain a televised interview by an 'encourager specialist' accusing the leadership of a political party of all manner of crime? Some people believe he did it at the instigation of the powers that be. Fine. How do you then explain ministers resigning from the caretaker cabinet to join the same party, again, ostensibly at the same power's behest?

Electoral and constitutional democracy demands constant vigilance by 'we the people.' Stamping a ballot paper can neither be the starting nor the high point of the democratic process. Due diligence of election manifestos of political parties, their past record in delivering on their promises, and an utmost commitment to hold them accountable throughout their tenures in office is the bedrock of a functioning, representative polity. The most common refrain during the election season is 'We will turn Larkana into Paris'. While the French capital's reputation has so far not been compromised, many a chateau in the south of France routinely becomes the stomping ground for these peddlers of promises from Larkana to Raiwind.

Take Karachi and most of its iconic landmarks; for instance, Frere Hall was built by the bad old Brits when they ruled us. How greedy, unscrupulous, shameless, and downright evil the colonisers were has been recorded quite sufficiently and is being rubbed in these days by Shashi Tharoor and many others. That we have no love lost for the colonisers and their Raj is axiomatic.

However, it is worth summarising that the British conceived and constructed most structures worth declaring as monuments or heritage sites in this metropolis. Take Denso Hall, Merewether Tower, Empress Market, Jehangir Kothari Parade, Pavilion, and Braband at Clifton. The Brits built them with much help from the city's Parsi and Hindu communities. Rupchand Bilaram Park, a magnificent facility, was made possible by its namesake. It has now been conveniently appropriated as Bagh Ibn-i-Qasim. Many a committee tasked to give a similar 'Islamic-touch' must have rued their inability to rename the Hindu Kush range.

One can argue that since foreign masters and conquerors-despots like the Mughals were not accountable to the populace, they could spend from the exchequer as they wished on grand schemes and fantastic monuments to themselves and their loved ones. In modern times, elected, accountable administrations can only undertake public works for the good of the populace and not for mere aesthetics and leaving a name for themselves. The problem today is that the only such 'public welfare' schemes that come to mind are overhead bridges and underpasses. While most of these are helpful to the public, they tend to crumble and flood, without any accountability and much too quickly for any chance of attaining an iconic status. -- Not sure where the

'chinaman delivery' got its name. It is the same with 'china cutting'. While the former is widely known in the world of cricket as a left-arm spin delivery, the latter is restricted to Karachi, though just the name as the practice of appropriating public property for personal gain is rampant country-wide. In the spirit of fair representation, let us look at Rawalpindi. Here, the textbook practice is putting a trash dumpster on any spot with commercial potential. Rest assured, we will dump all sorts of trash everywhere but in the dumpster. Soon, the place becomes a hell of miasma for the residents and commuters.

The next step is to remove the dumpster, level the plot, and grant the prime piece of land for a nursery. The change of scene could not be more dramatic, from a mountain of trash with accompanying flies, stray dogs, feral cats, and hovering kites to pots of saplings and flowerbeds amidst rows of terracotta ornaments. Everybody breathes a sigh of relief. The civic bodies and cantonment boards are praised instead of being asked how the lease for the nursery was granted and on what terms. The grantees are kicked out after a couple of years, and a spanking cash-and-carry is built. The process has been honed to perfection. The same community that created the trash problem and was first nauseated and then relieved on its evolution now throngs the shopping centre with their trollies laden with stuff, a lot of it from China soon to be turned into trash. Another public amenity plot, another trash site, another nursery, more saplings, more transplants; the cash-and-carry business continues. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

IPO, PITB join hands for automation, digitalization of IPO-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Tuesday joined hands and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the digitalization and automation of IPO-Pakistan. The MoU was signed by Director General, IPO Ms. Shazia Adnan and Director General, PITB Saima R. Shaikh for automation and digitalization IPO to facilitate the common masses and business in the country.

On this occasion, Chairman IPO, Ambassador Farukh Amil said that the visibility on indifferent platforms and public awareness are the major priority of IPO at this time, which will make it accessible to the business classes and especially the youth. The Chairman IPO said that at present we were working on digitalization of IPO with the support of PITB, which was an important tool for modernizing institutions in the modern world, which provided facilities to the public and business classes.

He said that a large part of the population of Pakistan consisted of youth and the youth were currently mostly connected to IT and social media and after this facility, they would be able to make online complaints or other facilities in IPO. Farukh said that IPO was currently making the youth aware of IPO in universities and educational institutions, which would increase the trend of financial education among them.

He said that after automation in the IPO, there would be transparency and simplification of processes in the institution. On this occasion, Director General, IPO, Shazia Adnan said that after this agreement with PITB, online payments and another documentation process would be made easy in the next two months and this would also promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in IPO.



KARACHI: Stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi, Pakistan, 26 December 2023. The Pakistani benchmark 100 index 59,170.97 was down 2534.12 with points during the trading session.

Punjab shift from conventional transport to electric vehicles: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Transport, Livestock, and Mines & Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad Tuesday said that the Punjab government was making a big push for electric vehicles to provide a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transportation to control air pollution. "Punjab wants to become a 'global hub of manufacturing of electric vehicles'," he said while talking to a private news channel. The government is also planning to offer incentives for manufacturing electric vehicles and batteries to boost economic growth and encourage local manufacturing, he said, adding, that other provinces should also focus on shifting their auto industry towards EV systems.

Rupee gains 15 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed the 10th consecutive recovery session as it gained 15 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs282.37 against the previous day's closing of Rs282.52. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs282.7 and Rs285.2 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 47 paise to close at Rs311.27 against the last day's closing of Rs 310.80, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.98; whereas a decrease of Rs 17 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.48 compared to the last closing of Rs358.65.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 05 and 04 paise to close at Rs 76.88 and Rs75.27 respectively.



Caretaker Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz interacting with the members of the Chairman Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Commerce Ministry in Islamabad.

80mn commuters utilized BRT Peshawar during the year 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has achieved an impressive ridership of approximately 80 million people during the outgoing calendar year 2023, contributing to a total commuter of 215 million since its inception in August 2020, said annual report shared by the TransPeshawar operator of the urban transport system here on Tuesday. It said that a noteworthy shift was observed in the gender dynamics of ridership, with women constituting 30% of the total

commuters—a significant surge compared to the meagre 2% estimated before the implementation of the BRT system. Due to the increasing popularity and demand, the system is constantly expanding. "Zu Peshawar is unwavering in its commitment to fostering inclusivity and embracing technological advancements. Our ongoing efforts to make the system more welcoming for specially-abled individuals reflect our dedication to ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from our services seamlessly," said the Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of TransPeshawar, Dr. Tariq Usman Saeed. The transformative upgrades to the Zu app enhance user experience, offering features like recharging through Omni Shop, comprehensive travel histories, and NFC-supported balance uploads, he added. He said that their focus on network expansion for wider city coverage through new feeder routes aligns with our vision of creating a world-class transit system that caters to the diverse needs of our community while duly accounting for social equity.

Modern technology can make agriculture more profitable: UAF VC

FAISALABAD (APP): Modern trends and tangible researches should be disseminated at doorsteps of farmers to make agriculture profitable in addition to achieving food security in the country, said University of Agriculture Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan. Chairing a meeting of the Punjab Agriculture

Strategy Plan 2023-2033, he said that agriculture was facing soil fertility, inputs, mechanizations, markets, water, seeds, fertilizers and other issues. He said that the fertility of land was decreasing with the passage of time for which agricultural recommendations would have to be adopted.

Growers advised to water wheat crop timely

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised growers to water their wheat crops on time to get healthy and bumper production. A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that Pakistan had to spend Rs.300 billion per annum on the import of edible oil and the amount could be saved by promoting cultivation of oil-seed crops in the country.

Call to equip youths with latest technologies to root out poverty, unemployment

FAISALABAD (APP): Youths must be equipped with latest skills and technologies to root out poverty and unemployment and in this connection government institutions must play their key role, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

In a meeting with Madam Bushra Nawaz, Senior Manager Public Relations and Marketing of the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTTC), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that youths are our most precious asset but we are not utilizing their capabilities for the uplift of

the country. He said that China and other countries had successfully revolutionized their economies by efficiently utilizing their youths. He said that 20 million youths were unemployed and we must devise strategies to train them in different market-driven skills. "It will not only make them productive for themselves but also for the country", he said and added that the skilled human resource could start their own businesses instead of running after jobs. He said that Pakistanis in the world were sending hefty remittances which had saved Pakistan from bankruptcy.



ISLAMABAD: Chair-Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO) Farukh Amil, witnesses the Signing Ceremony for the IPO-Pakistan & Punjab Information Technology (PITB) landmark agreement regarding launching of PayZen Agreement at IPO-Pakistan Headquarters.

Hybrid seed can increase sunflower production manifold: experts

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised farmers to use hybrid seed of sunflower varieties as it can increase its production manifold. A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that Pakistan had to spend Rs.300 billion per annum on the import of edible oil and the amount could be saved by promoting cultivation of oil-seed crops in the country.

He said that sunflower was a precious oil-seed crop as its seed had 40 to 50 percent oil and its production could play a major role in trimming down the export bill of edible oil in addition to catering to domestic needs. He said that the growers should prefer seed of hybrid varieties as it could give maximum production and help them mitigate their financial constraints.

Punjab Governor says: Circumstances under which Bangladesh separated reminded of a painful past

Independent Report
LAHORE: High Commissioner of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed promotion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and education during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Tuesday.

The Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh Qazi Humayun Fareed was also present on the occasion, says a handout issued here by the Governor's media team.

Muhammad Balighur Rehman and Bangladesh High Commissioner expressed concern over the Israeli bombardment and atrocities on the Palestinian people. Muhammad Balighur Rehman said the circumstances under which Bangladesh was separated reminded of a painful past. He said Pakistan and Bangladesh have once been a nation and country, and both of them share common faith, history, and culture.

The Governor Punjab said both countries can move forward as good neighbours, adding that goodwill existing between both countries needs to be translated into even stronger economic, trade, investment, educational, and cultural linkages to the benefit of both nations.

He said it is heartening to know that Pakistani medical and dental students are studying in Bangladesh on scholarships. He said that there should be maximum exchange of student delegations in the educational institutions of the two countries. He said that he would also talk to the Higher Education Commission for scholarships for Bangladeshi students in Pakistani educational institutions.

but also their excellence in getting prominent educational positions. Addressing at the first convocation of the Government Women's College of Commerce and Management Sciences here Tuesday, the Governor urged the female students not to let their education go to waste, emphasizing the transformative impact educated women can have on societal and national development.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the under construction work of Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-III Project.

Naqvi reviews progress on Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project marks a significant stride towards completion, reaching the 60 percent milestone.

Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing progress at Adda Plot Raiwind, personally inspecting the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project.

The chief minister examined the ongoing construction activities spanning 8 km from Adda Plot Raiwind to Maraka Multan Road. He closely observed the works on the entire route, including the construction of bridges. In response, the CM issued directives for the expeditious completion of the project.

During a meeting at the FWO (Frontier Works Organisation) camp office chaired by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Colonel Jamal and Colonel Ahmed provided a detailed briefing on the project's progress. The meeting addressed various issues related to the project. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that the completion of Ring Road Southern Loop 3 would enhance transportation facilities for the public.

LAHORE: Bangladesh High Commissioner in Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman.

Governor KPK highlights women's educational achievements

Independent Report
ABBOTTABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has emphasized the crucial role of education in global competitiveness.

He said that the enrollment of female students in the province now surpassed their male counterparts in both primary and higher education. He not only highlighted the greater number of female students

Two die, jeep plunges into deep ravine

Independent Report
BALAKOT (Online): A jeep is reported to have plunged into deep ravine in the area of Ghanol Thanwan in Balakot leaving two persons including a local councillor dead.

Election 2024: Candidates blow horns to attract voters after submitting nomination papers in KP

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): A transgender was killed in a firing incident by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle near Government College Chowk within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Gulaf Hussain police station on Monday.

Upon receiving the report, Superintendent Police Faqirabad Division Osama Amin Cheema and ASP Faqirabad Muhammad Aleem promptly responded, securing the crime scene and initiating an investigation. The victim's body, lacking any identification documents, has been taken into custody and transferred for post-mortem examination.

Minister visits MMC inquires health of patients

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Industries, Technical Education, and NMDs Affairs Amir Abdullah visited Mardan Medical Complex (MTI) last night and inquired about the health of the patients and the availability of medicines and doctors.

The provincial minister visited various wards of Mardan Medical Complex, including the OPD, Accident and Emergency Ward, Neurosurgery Ward, Orthopedic Ward, Medical Ward, and CCU (Cardiology Ward).

Transgender killed in firing incident

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): A transgender was killed in a firing incident by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle near Government College Chowk within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Gulaf Hussain police station on Monday.



RAWALPINDI: Workers of Pakistan Peoples Party light up the candles in memorandum of Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed), at her targeting place, Liaquat Bagh in City.

Kundi calls for free, fair general elections

Independent Report
DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party and candidate from NA-44, DI Khan-I, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday called for ensuring free and fair elections scheduled for February 8 2024, adding that it is imperative for democracy.

While addressing the press conference in DI Khan, he demanded a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the general elections to ensure a free, fair, and transparent electoral exercise. He asserted that no party should be coerced or marginalized in the political process, advocating for equal opportunities for everyone to engage in politics.

CM visits Bibi Pakdaman shrine

Independent Report
LAHORE (APP): With the completion of 97 percent of the renovation and expansion works, the historic Bibi Pakdaman shrine is set to reopen its doors to pilgrims before December 31st.

Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the site on Tuesday to review the progress firsthand.

Accompanied by provincial ministers and officials, Chief Minister Naqvi closely inspected the ongoing finishing touches on the main shrine structure and iconic domes.

King Charles, Queen Camilla, Prince William, Princess Catherine, Princes George and Louis, and Princess Charlotte, arrive at St Mary Magdalene's church to attend the royal family's Christmas service.



King Charles, Queen Camilla, Prince William, Princess Catherine, Princes George and Louis, and Princess Charlotte, arrive at St Mary Magdalene's church to attend the royal family's Christmas service.

Turkey's parliament set to debate Sweden NATO bid

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: The Turkish parliament was Tuesday set to resume debate on approving Sweden's bid to join NATO, a thorny issue that was further complicated after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan linked it to Ankara's request for F-16 fighter jets from its ally the United States.

Sweden and Finland dropped decades of military non-alignment and sought to join the US-led defence organisation after Russia invaded Ukraine last year. Their bids won fast-track approval from all NATO members except Turkey and Hungary. The two ultimately relented and Finland was accepted as NATO's 31st member in April.

Baghdad condemns US strike on Iraqi military positions

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq's government condemned on Tuesday overnight US strikes on Iraqi military positions that it said killed one serviceman and wounded 18 other people, calling them a "clear hostile act".

Philippines is not provoking conflict in South China Sea, its military says

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines is not provoking conflict in the South China Sea, its military spokesperson said on Tuesday, responding to China's accusation that Manila was encroaching on Beijing's territory.

It was the latest salvo amid rising tension as the two have traded accusations in recent months over a series of maritime run-ins, including China allegedly ramming a ship this month carrying the Philippines' military chief.



A fighter of the Iraqi Kataib Hezbollah militia group and a man inspect the site of a U.S. airstrike, in Hilla, Iraq.

Ethiopia becomes Africa's latest sovereign default

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Ethiopia became Africa's third default in as many years on Tuesday after it failed to make a \$33 million "coupon" payment on its only international government bond.

Africa's second most populous country announced earlier this month that it intended to formally go into default, having been under severe financial strain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a two-year civil war that ended in November 2022.

US carries out air strikes on sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US military carried out strikes on three sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq on Monday after an attack wounded three American personnel earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

Washington has repeatedly targeted sites used by Iran and its proxy forces in Iraq and Syria in response to dozens of attacks on American and allied forces in the region since the October 7 outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

"US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups in Iraq," Austin said in a statement. "These precision strikes are a response to a series of attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias, including an attack by Iran-affiliated Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups on Arbil Air Base earlier today," he said.



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Israel launches more Gaza strikes as Netanyahu says Hamas must be destroyed

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli shellfire slammed into central Gaza on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged no respite in attacks on Hamas, as residents of the coastal enclave mourned more dead in a war that has cost more than 20,000 Palestinian lives.

Israel is determined to pursue its goal of destroying Hamas despite global calls for a ceasefire in the 11-week-old war, amid concerns the conflict could spread with U.S. and Iran-aligned forces attacking each other elsewhere in the region. Since Hamas made the deadliest Palestinian militant attack on Israel in the country's 75-year history, Netanyahu has responded with an all-out assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said 160 soldiers have so far been killed in Gaza since ground operations began on Oct 20.

Indian navy to deploy guided missile destroyer ships after strike off its coast

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's navy will deploy guided missile destroyer ships in the Arabian Sea after an Israel-affiliated merchant vessel was struck off the Indian coast over the weekend, in an effort to "maintain a deterrent presence," it said late on Monday.

Indonesia nickel smelter furnace fire kills 13 workers, injures 46

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Thirteen workers were killed and 46 injured on Sunday in a fire at a nickel smelter furnace owned by Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel (ITSS) on Sulawesi island, the owner of the industrial park where the smelter is located said.

The fire occurred when workers repaired the furnace and installed plates at 5:30 am on Sunday (21:30 GMT on Saturday), killing nine Indonesian workers and four Chinese workers.

Ukraine carries out air assault on Crimea's port of Feodosia

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine carried out an air attack on Feodosia in Crimea, Ukraine's air force commander said on Tuesday, after the Russian-installed governor of the Crimea said that the assault sparked a fire in the town's port area. The commander of Ukraine's air force, Mykola Oleshchuk, said on the Telegram messaging app, without providing evidence.

International News



KARACHI: President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) Convocation 2023.

Government to follow Senate recommendations on employees' salaries, allowances: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday assured the Senate that the government would follow House recommendations regarding the salaries and allowances of government employees, including Balochistan.

In response to questions during the question hour regarding the less representation of officers from Balochistan at the federal level, the minister asked the lawmakers to formulate a policy and make recommendations if there was any perceived injustice.

Responding to questions from Senators Fauzia Arshad, Mohsin Aziz, and Danesh Kumar, he welcomed the suggestions from

Senate members regarding the use of zig-zag technology in rural areas for making bricks.

He acknowledged that zigzag technology was effective in reducing emissions of pollutants and increasing efficiency, though it was still expensive.

Senator Irfan Siddiqui's question about the non-allotment of plots to retired employees, the minister assured that he would inform the House after obtaining information from the department.

If the chair deemed it appropriate, the matter could be referred to the privilege committee, he added.

In response to Senator Murtaza Ahmed's question, the caretaker federal minister said that the

issue of F14, F15, and Bhara Kahu sectors should be sent to the relevant standing committee. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani referred the matter to the concerned committee for further investigation.

The minister said that currently, no caretaker minister was using bulletproof vehicles. He said that all details regarding the use of bulletproof vehicles by ministers and advisors during the previous government had been shared with the House.

Murtaza Solangi said that Ministers have the right to criticize the decisions and policies made by the previous government regarding the provision of bulletproof vehicles to ministers and advisors.

Govt to extend all-out support for uplift of KP merged districts: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that despite the availability of limited resources, the government would extend all possible support to the provincial government for uplift and welfare of the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters about KPK, said that being cognizant of their problems, the federal government stood with the government and people of the province.

He also instructed the authorities concerned to resolve the issues confronting the KPK province that had rendered immense sacrifices against terrorism.

The prime minister instructed to form a secretarial committee to resolve the KPK's financial matters and formulate recommendations regarding the payment of net hydel profits and the royalty of oil and gas.

To be headed by the federal finance secretary, the committee would consist of federal secretaries of planning, water resources, and petroleum.

PEMRA prohibits broadcast, distribution of surrogate company ads

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on Tuesday prohibited "broadcast/distribution" of advertisement of surrogate companies in any manner whatsoever with immediate effect.

The Authority, in its prohibition order, warned all the licensees, including satellite television (TV) channels, radio stations, all landing rights permission holders and distribution network operators of legal proceedings under relevant provisions of PEMRA laws in case of non-compliance and/or on repeated violation.

It said that the order was issued in continuity of its earlier letters "wherein office memorandum/advisory issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad with regard to "Zero Tolerance for Surrogate Companies" were circulated among licensees for compliance".

"The Authority, while exercising powers vested under Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2023, hereby prohibits broadcast/distribution of advertisement of surrogate companies (in any manner whatsoever) with immediate effect which are promoting gambling/betting in different sports events being telecast/broadcast/rebroadcast in the country and refers the matter to Council of Complaints (Islamabad) for appropriate recommendations to the Authority," it added.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has already vowed zero tolerance against the surrogate companies of the "betting houses".



ISLAMABAD: Younger Girls from christen Community are buying traditional "Gajray" from woman vendor at Lake View Park during the celebrations of Christmas in Federal Capital.

Forced lay offs of media workers Journalists stage walk out from press gallery in Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Media staged walk out from press gallery during Senate session against forced retrenchment of journalists and media workers from media houses.

The walk out was staged by journalists affiliated with Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) Tuesday.

Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani while taking notice of walk out of journalists directed the delegation including caretaker information minister to hold talks with the journalists.

The delegation including caretaker information minister Murtaza Solangi held talks with the journalists and the caretaker information minister assured the journalists to raise their problems at every forum.

He said they are with workers and not with owners. I will talk to chairman PEMRA today. The owners of BOL and Dunya will be called in the meeting of standing committee on Friday.

50% candidates pass NRE step-2 exam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has said that more than 50% of candidates passed the National Registration Examination (NRE) step 2.

According to the spokesperson of PMDC, a total of 367 candidates appeared for the test, which was successfully conducted by the council.

He said that these candidates were given the best possible facilities so that they were able to take the exam in a good environment.

The exam was conducted by the National University of Medical Sciences, as per the schedule announced by the council, he added.

The exam was held at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on the 10th of

35th Convocation ceremony of PNEC Self-sustenance inevitable for success in the world: President

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that self-sustenance is inevitable for the success in the world and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would progress and develop. Addressing as chief guest on the occasion of the 35th Convocation ceremony of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) at Baharia Auditorium here, he said that the world needed intellect at the moment and there was no dearth of it in Pakistan.

Rector National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Lt General Mehmoode and Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem were also present. During the convocation, a total of 368 graduates were awarded Bachelors' and Postgraduate degrees including the foreign students. The President also awarded 39 medals to the students on their outstanding performance.

Addressing the convocation, President Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated the efforts put in by the PNEC for maintaining high standards of education by providing quality engineers to the evolving industry of Pakistan.

He emphasized that responsibility of PNEC has further increased in present realm of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. He also acknowledged that foreign students were a testimony to the College's credentials in the engineering sector. He highlighted that NUST PNEC will continue with its legacy of being the premier engineering and technology institution, fulfilling present day engineering needs of the country.

The President felicitated the graduating students and their parents and advised the graduates to be active members of society in building a stronger and prosperous Pakistan and keep themselves abreast and with fast changing advancements in technology. President Dr. Arif Alvi termed the completion of degrees by students as an opening of the doors to the knowledge for the students and said, they must learn more and more. Earlier, Commandant PNEC Commodore Tauqueer Ahmad Khawaja apprised that PNEC was making all out efforts to provide the best engineering education to its students in multiple disciplines.

Further, he highlighted the achievements of students in various events held at national and international levels. He highlighted the opportunities provided to the students at different forums in order to groom and nurture the young engineers. The ceremony was attended by a large number of military and civil dignitaries and parents of graduating students.



ISLAMABAD: Newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to China Mr. Khalil Hashmi calls on the Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Pak determined to take fraternal ties with China to new heights: PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad Tuesday.

The Prime Minister expressed his best wishes for Ambassador Khalil Hashmi on assuming office.

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi took guidance from the Prime Minister regarding China-Pakistan relations. The Prime Minister said Pakistan is determined to take its fraternal relations with China to new heights. He urged the newly appointed ambassador to play role for strengthening Pak-China relations.

Court grants bail to Pashteen in two cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-terrorism Court of Islamabad on Tuesday granted bail to Manzoor Pashteen in two separate cases filed against him at the CTD Police Station.

ATC Judge Abual Hasanat Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the bail application of Manzoor Pashteen. During the hearing, the prosecutor pleaded that Pashteen's application should be rejected as he had spearheaded a gathering, where he spoke against the state institutions.

HEC bans admissions in Lakki Marwat University

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has completely banned admissions and affiliation in the Lakki Marwat University (LMU) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the notification issued by the HEC officials, the ban has been imposed due to serious irregularities and non-implementation of Higher Education Commission guidelines. There will be a complete ban on new admissions at Lakki Marwat University, HEC said. Moreover, the education commission also warned all the students not to be admitted.

Former diplomat Riaz Khokhar passes away

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Former Foreign Secretary Riaz Hussain Khokhar passed away here on Tuesday after a brief illness, according to private news channels.

Senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Sherry Rehman expressed her sincere condolences with the family and loved ones of the late ambassador.

PIA's privatization being carried out under govt's policy: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Private Partnership Authority (P3A) Act and its relevant regulations, aims to outsource the operations of three international airports in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, he told.

The Advisor highlighted that the IFC would act as a transactional advisor for the outsourcing of airports. Islamabad International Airport has been selected as the first airport to be outsourced. The outsourcing period for Islamabad International Airport is set at 15 years, while the time frames for the remaining two airports will be determined by the Federal Government based on a detailed study prepared by IFC, he added.

The Advisor said, the successful bidder for Islamabad International Airport will be disclosed after the bidding process is completed and the award of concession for outsourcing is expected to be completed before June 2024.

The Advisor clarified that only the operation and management of specific airport components would be outsourced.

29 outlaws including arrested; stolen goods, bikes, drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police apprehended 29 outlaws including two thieves, one bike lifter and four professional baggers



from different areas of the city during the last 24 hours and recovered stolen goods, bikes, drugs and weapons from their possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police has intensified crackdown against the criminal elements in order to eliminate the crime from the city.

Following these directions, the Industrial Area police team arrested two accused namely Amrool

namely James Jozaf and recovered three stolen motorbikes and weapon used in crime from his possession.

The Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Sawal Tariq and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. The Kohsar police team arrested an accused namely Shoaib Aziz and recovered 711 gram heroin from his possession. The Humak police team arrested two accused namely Naseer Ahmed and Saffdar Hussain and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Capt (R) Anwar-ul-Haq cut the along with others during an event regarding the Christmas celebrations at Open Air Theater in Shakarparian area.

Zardari pays tribute to Shaheed BB, vows to continue her mission

KARACHI (INP): Former President of Pakistan and President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Asif Ali Zardari paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on martyrdom anniversary and reiterated to continue her mission regarding struggle for a free and independent Pakistan, empowered Parliament and the rule of the Constitution.

In his message on the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, he said that eliminating poverty, unemployment and economic misery

Court accepts bail plea of Manzoor Pashteen in two cases

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has accepted bail plea of Manzoor Pashteen chairman of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM).

The court has accepted bail pleas of Manzoor Pashteen in two cases.

The court has granted bail against the surety bonds in the sum of Rs 30000 each in two cases.

It is pertinent to mention here Manzoor Pashteen was arrested from Chamman this month.

BISP receives 5,372 applications for Savings Scheme so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has received 5,372 applications so far under its newly launched 'Savings Scheme'.

The BISP has recently launched its 'Savings Scheme' with the primary goal of instilling financial independence and promoting a savings culture among consumers enrolled in the scheme.

Following the application submission, a 'Registration' process will be initiated, and upon successful completion of this stage applicants will become eligible for the 'Savings Scheme'.

This initiative aims to provide a financial buffer for unexpected expenses and emergencies, said a



A group of students of the Government High School Shafi Muhammad Umrani, Naseerabad, Balochistan visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House, Islamabad.