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

Unveils Pakistan-China Friendship Hospital and Desalination Plant in Gwadar

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

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

“Those who think to change the course (of CPEC) by force, violence or any other means are committing historic blunder as their relevance will be over very soon. The prudent decision in the nation’s fate is to join the course of development, instead of resisting it and miss the opportunity,” he remarked.

The ceremony was attended by federal ministers Sami Saeed and Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Caretaker Chief Minister of Balochistan Mir Mardan Domki, Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and the Chinese and Pakistani officials attended the event.

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

He told the gathering

that trade worth \$36 trillion was expected to take place in and around China in the near future, therefore it was a must to join the journey through skill development and claim the share, instead of showing hostility.

He said the journey of China’s modernisation was significance and steering millions of people out of poverty was unprecedented.

The prime minister said that the development of China had a positive impact across the region, particularly Pakistan and its Balochistan province.

He said the clean drinking water had been an issue faced by the Gwadar plant and the desalination project would address it to a great extent.



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

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

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

“Will include General Bajwa and US embassy officials as witnesses [in the case], General Bajwa did everything on Donald Lu’s directives,” claimed Khan during an informal conversation with journalists in Adiala jail during the cipher case hearing. A special court established under the Official Secrets Act 2023 held an open court hearing in Adiala jail where Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi are incarcerated.

The court is conducting the trial afresh after the Islamabad High Court nullified the jail trial on November 21. Both of them were indicted on October 23 but the indictment stood cancelled after the IHC order.

Speaking to the media person today, the former prime minister predicted that his party would win the February 8 polls, adding that he was arrested under a plan. Khan said he was thankful to those PTI leaders jumping the ship.

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

Nawaz, Fazl discuss possibilities of seat adjustment

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

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

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

The leaders discussed the current political landscape of the country, strategising for the upcoming elections.

Army’s help sought for general elections amid police shortage

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

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Monday sought the help of the Pakistan Army to ensure the law and order situation during the general polls, set to take place on February 8 next year. In the lead-up to the polls, all political parties have geared up for a face-off, while the ECP has notified the final list of delimitation of constituencies of the national and four provincial assemblies.

The electoral watchdog is also expected to announce the election schedule, later this month — 54 days before the polls in line with the law. During the elections, the security situation is a grave concern for the authorities concerned and to ensure that nothing goes south, law enforcers are deployed at polling stations and they are also on patrol.



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

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

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

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

He said the Election Commission of Pakistan had approached to release Rs 17.4 billion, out of the budgeted amount. “Whatever budgeted amount is needed by the ECP, will be released as per its needs accordingly,” Solangi added.

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



KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association, Javed Balwani addresses to media persons during press conference held at SITE Association office in Provincial Capital.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori giving away laptop to a student during his visit to JDC School Federal B Area

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

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

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

The press attaché emphasized the people’s desire in both countries to engage with the cultural offerings, particularly dramas and films, from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said this collaboration aimed to meet this demand by facilitating the exchange of content between the media entities of the two nations.

“We envision a future where the exchange of films and productions between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is increased.”



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

World needs to work together to support countries affected by climate change: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the world needs to work together to support the countries affected by climate change.

He said this while addressing the Pavilion Mayors Conference held in Dubai, said a statement issued here on Monday.

He said that according to the vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto, the Pakistan Peoples Party accepted the challenge of reconstruction of 2.1 million houses destroyed during the 2022 floods in Sindh province and took necessary steps to rehabilitate the affected people as soon as possible.

The Pavilion Mayors Conference held in Dubai

Governor Tessori inaugurates ‘Ghazi Tandoor’, a loaf to be sold on Rs 2

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori has inaugurated ‘Ghazi Tandoor’ here on Monday.

He said that the people could get a loaf from the Ghazi Tandoor in Rs 2 only.

He said that the initiatives for the welfare of the people would continue.

Tessori said that all 48 tandoors would be set up across the city. He further said that four more tandoors would be inaugurated soon.

CM Baqar grieves over loss of lives in accident

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar on Monday expressed his grief and sorrow over a road accident near Karampur.

The Caretaker Chief Minister said that he was deeply saddened by the death of seven people in the road accident. He directed the Commissioner to provide immediate medical aid to the injured persons. He said that the accident occurred due to a high-speed truck, which hit two passenger vans on the Indus Highway.

Karachi industries observe shutdown over hike in gas tariff

KARACHI (INP): All industrial units of the city observing shutdown Monday to protest against hike in gas tariffs.

Industrialists earlier announced a complete production shutdown on Dec 04 (today) to force the caretaker government to reverse the unprecedented hikes in the gas tariffs.

President North Karachi Industries Association has said that the export unit will also be closed today.

“We are also observing strike over the government’s failing to enforce its promise of slashing electricity tariffs,” Faisal Moiz said.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Information Minister, Ahmad Shah addresses to media persons during Meet the Press Programme, held at Karachi press club.

Minister desires elected representatives to serve people

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Information, Minorities Affairs and Social Protection Minister Mohammed Ahmed Shah while desiring the elected representatives to serve the people, said that the general elections would take place.

Talking to media persons during his visit to the Karachi Press Club (KPC), the minister said that his meeting with the caretaker Sindh chief minister was

scheduled, in which he would raise journalists’ issues for timely resolution.

Ahmed Shah said, “I am focused on working journalists’ and the issue of murdered journalists including Jan Mohammed Mahar would be taken up with the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh.”

The minister said that the issue of journalists’ dues would also be discussed with the quarters concerned.

He said that the Karachi Press Club had been his first place of training and he had been associated with it almost for 45 years.

He said that the resolution to issues of journalists’ community would be among his priorities.

He further said that a training workshop would be held for the working journalists.

In his address, Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz emphasized the need for societal balance through equality and underscored the importance of comprehensive measures for the welfare of special individuals. Expressing global concern over the presence of the polio virus in Afghanistan and Pakistan, he called for collective efforts to address this issue.

Farhat Rashid, in his speech, highlighted the exceptional abilities of special individuals and

Nusrat Trust Hosts Grand Ceremony on International Day of Special Persons, Announces Comprehensive Welfare Project

Independent Report KARACHI: In a heartwarming ceremony held at Jama Masjid Abubakar Siddique Clifton, Nusrat Trust for Special Children commemorated the International Day of Special Children, bringing together prominent figures, activists, and dignitaries. The event was graced by

the presence of Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz, Caretaker Health Minister of Sindh, serving as the chief guest, and Farhat Rasheed, Director of Westbury Group, who presided over the gathering.

Among the distinguished attendees were Mufti Muhammad Mohiuddin, Chairman of

Nusrat Trust, Mufti Abu Bakr Mohiuddin, Vice Chairman, Mufti Abu Qadada Mohiuddin, General Secretary, Haroon Chand, President of All Pakistan Jewelers Association, Haji Rahmatullah, Haji Masood Parekh, and Dr. Abdul Jabbar.

In his address, Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz emphasized the need for societal balance through equality and underscored the importance of comprehensive measures for the welfare of special individuals. Expressing global concern over the presence of the polio virus in Afghanistan and Pakistan, he called for collective efforts to address this issue.

Farhat Rashid, in his speech, highlighted the exceptional abilities of special individuals and

advocated for concerted efforts to integrate them into society. He shared personal experiences, acknowledging the crucial role played by his family in his success.

Chairman Mufti Muhammad Mohiuddin unveiled an ambitious welfare project spanning 5 acres in Malir.

The project, set to become the largest in the city, will feature a school, vocational training center, hospital, and various other facilities. Mufti Mohiuddin stressed the importance of education for special children and urged both the government and private sector to collaborate in providing them with the necessary support.

The ceremony witnessed additional insights from Mufti Abu Qadada

Mohiuddin, Haroon Chand, Haji Rahmatullah, Haji Masood Parekh, Dr. Abdul Jabbar, and others, who echoed the commitment to the cause.

Hundreds of disabled individuals and children participated in the event, with Nusrat Trust distributing cash, wheelchairs, winter package blankets, and other essentials as part of their ongoing support. The beneficiaries expressed gratitude for the organization’s unwavering dedication to their welfare.

Nusrat Trust’s event on the International Day of Special Persons served as a poignant reminder of the collective responsibility to champion the rights and well-being of special individuals in society.



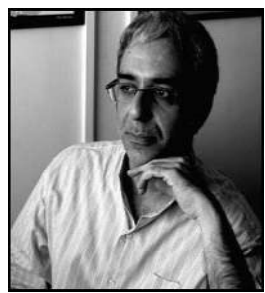
Daily Voice of Masses Independent

One crucial year of extraordinary achievements

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

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

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



Zarrar Khuhro

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

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

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

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

what the actual architects of that move had in mind.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Labour inspection



Parvez Rahim

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commerce News

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The services' imports into the country also

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



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

Sanjrani recognizes role of business community in driving economic progress

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

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

the chamber's endeavors in promoting economic growth and displayed keen interest in understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the business community in Gwadar. The discussions focused on fostering collaboration and addressing key economic issues, providing a platform for GCCCI officials to share insights on regional economic development and trade dynamics, said a press release.

The economic policies, infrastructure

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

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

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

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

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

Energy minister participates GRA session at COP 28

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

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

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

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

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

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

countries, showcasing their expertise and strengths.

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

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

countries, showcasing their expertise and strengths.

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

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

KPTMA delegation calls on KP CM

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Minister, CCIs presidents visit Business Facilitation Center

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

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

On this occasion, Provincial Minister SM Tanveer highlighted the

Business Facilitation Center as a revolutionary initiative by the caretaker provincial government to bolster investment. Completed within a month under the efficient leadership of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, the center is poised to significantly benefit the business community and accelerate the pace of industrialization, he added.

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

Governor Punjab says: Development of the country related to the promotion of education and research

Delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob called on Governor

LAHORE (Online): A delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob and Cadet College Hasan Abdal called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman at Governor House Lahore, here today. Governor Punjab welcomed the students and teachers to the Governor House.

The delegation included Prof. Khurshid Bukhari, Prof. Akbar, Prof. Sardar Ali, Mirza Saeed Ahmed, Mudassar Hasan and others.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that the development of the country is related to the promotion of education and research.

He said that in today's modern era, learning new research and technology is very important. Governor Punjab said that the students of

Punjab should adopt positive thinking and play their role in the development of the country.

He said that Cadet College Hasan Abdal is an institution of high traditions. He said that seats and scholarships are reserved for students of Balochistan in universities and medical colleges of Punjab. Governor Punjab said that the students of

Balochistan were also included in the laptop scheme so that the students of Balochistan can be brought at par with other provinces of the country in the field of education. He said that the country can progress only with the supremacy of merit. Governor Punjab said that continuity of policies is very important for development in other sectors including education.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rahman in a group photo with delegation of students and teachers of Balochistan Residential College Zhob and Cadet College Hasan Abdal called on at Governor House.



PESHAWAR: VC SBBWU Prof. Dr. Safia Ahmed, SRSP CEO Masaud ul Muluk and UNHCR KP Head Kofi Ohenenana Dwomo giving shield to Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali during 1st International Women Conference on Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges, Uniting Women's Voice for a Better World at Local hotel.

ANF seizes 31 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 31 kg drugs and arrested eight accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed a foreign passenger (Nigerian) who arrived from Bahrain by flight number GF-791 was arrested at Faisalabad International Airport. During the operation, 40 cocaine-filled capsules were recovered from his stomach.

1343 grams Ice and 558 grams heroin were recovered from a passenger's trolley bag at Jinnah International Airport. The accused was leaving for Jeddah by flight number PA-170.

240 intoxicated tablets (ecstasy) were recovered from two suspects arrested in the commercial market Rawalpindi. 3600 grams hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Hangu Road Kohat while an accused was also arrested during the operation.

CM launches one-window operation, unveils business facilitation center

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the first-ever one-window operation to streamline the services of investors here on Monday.

Under one roof, 20 provincial and federal departments now facilitate a swift system, issuing 106 NOCs within a remarkable 15 days. The inauguration ceremony, attended by the

CM, Provincial cabinet, and Consul Generals of China and Türkiye marked the official commencement of the Business Facilitation Center, also launching its online system. Chief Minister Naqvi, during the inspection of the center, emphasized the need for expediting NOC issuance to 15 days, down from 30, and sought plans for a 10-day timeline for overseas Pakistanis and foreign investors.

KP CM gives fee waiver to disable candidates in ETEA tests

PESHAWAR (APP): As an important relief to special persons, the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah has decided to give waiver in test fee to the disable candidates appearing in all kinds of screening tests under Educational Testing and Evaluation Agency (ETEA). Now onward, disabled candidates appearing in such screening tests will be exempted from test fee.

This, he decided while chairing the 31st meeting of the Board of Governors of KP, ETEA here on Monday. Provincial Caretaker Minister for Higher Education, Dr. Qasim Jan, Secretary Higher Education, Arshad Khan, Secretary Health, Mehmood Aslam and other members of the Board attended the meeting.

It was decided in the meeting to constitute a committee headed by Provincial Minister Justice

@ Irshad Qaiser for evolving a mechanism to dispose off the cellular phones confiscated from candidates during screening tests. The committee will come up with final proposals to this end after looking into all the legal and technical aspects of the matter. Various matters related to curb the menace of cheating in examinations and screening tests came under discussion in the meeting and it was decided to put in place.

Election 2023: Great enthusiasm witnesses among female voters

PESHAWAR (APP): Great enthusiasm is being witnessed among female voters of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ahead of General Election 2023.

Sidra Sheraz and her sister Samina Qaiser, the young female voters of Wapda Town Nowshera district were excited to exercise their right to vote for the first time in the February 8, 2024 General Election after their names were enrolled by ECP.

"We are eagerly awaiting the February 8 general election and would

cast our first vote and become part of the electoral process viz a viz decision making for setting of future Govt," said Sidra who associated with the teaching profession, adding that women were about half of the country's population and their votes would play key role in deciding fates of political parties.

"I would cast my first vote based on political parties' past performance record and manifestos," she said, adding votes of young voters, especially females

would be a deciding factor in February 8 General Election.

According to ECP's data, approximately 127 million registered voters would exercise their right of franchise in the upcoming general election.

About 72.31 million (56.9pc) of total voters were registered in Punjab, 26.65 million voters are in Sindh (21pc), 21.69 million voters (17.1pc) in KP while 5.28 million (4.2pc) of all registered voters in Balochistan were exercise their right of votes in 2024

general election.

The total number of registered voters was recorded in 2018 as 106 million which had increased to 127 million this year.

The gender gap among voters slashed with an addition of 11.74 million female voters compared to 9.28m male voters, to the electoral rolls since the 2018 general election raised the total number of registered voters to 127 million in 2023.

The total number of registered voters in the country in 2018 was nearly

106 million including 59.22m men and 46.73m women voters with 12.49 million defences in all provinces of Pakistan.

This difference of 12.49 million was further increased to an all-time high of 12.72m next year when 62.55 million men and 49.83 million women were found eligible to cast a vote.

A significant drop in the gender gap was witnessed last year when the total number of registered male voters slashed from 66.50 million to 66.40 million.

International News

Turkey's Erdogan says Israel's Netanyahu 'will be tried as war criminal'

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would eventually be tried as a war criminal over Israel's ongoing offensive in the Gaza Strip, while slamming Western countries supporting Israel.

Turkey, which supports a two-state solution to the decades-old conflict, has sharply criticised Israel over its campaign in Gaza, launched in response to Hamas' rampage on Oct. 7. More than 15,500 people have been killed in the Israeli air and ground attacks, according to Gaza's health ministry.

In a speech to an

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) committee meeting in Istanbul, Erdogan said the Western nations supporting Israel were giving it "unconditional support to kill babies" and were complicit in its crimes.

"Beyond being a war criminal, Netanyahu, who is the butcher of Gaza right now, will be tried as the butcher of Gaza, just as Milosevic was tried," Erdogan said, in reference to Yugoslav ex-President Slobodan Milosevic who was tried for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes at a tribunal in The Hague.

"Those who try to skip over the deaths of all

those innocent people by using the excuse of Hamas have nothing left to say to humanity," he added, referring to Western powers, which he said were "blind and deaf".

Unlike most of its Western allies and some Gulf states, NATO member Turkey does not view Hamas as a terrorist group and hosts some of its members. Erdogan, whose ruling party has Islamist roots, said a so-called contact group of Muslim countries, which was formed by the OIC and Arab League last month to hold talks on Gaza with Western countries and others, would continue discussions until the fighting in Gaza stopped, but added more must be done.

Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk voiced alarm that hundreds of thousands of Gazans "are being confined into ever smaller areas" in the southern of the territory.

"There is no safe place in Gaza," he said.

UN-OCHA said at least 160 Palestinian deaths were reported in two incidents in northern Gaza on Saturday: the bombing of a six-storey building in Jabalia refugee camp, and of an entire block in Gaza City.

In a new estimate, OCHA said around 1.8 million people in Gaza, roughly 75 per cent of the population, had been displaced, many to overcrowded and unsanitary shelters.

Jumana Murad said her son Mohammad, 19, was killed as he tried to help women and children out of a tent inside a school.

"A piece of shrapnel hit him in the head," she told AFP before bursting into tears. Nasser hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Yunis overflowed with both the wounded and the dead.

Hospitals in the southern Gaza Strip have descended into chaos since the resumption of hostilities, and WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that some patients there were being treated on the floor, in conditions "unimaginable for the provision of health care".



RAFAH: An elderly woman, injured in an Israeli strike, appears to be in shock as she sits amid the rubble of her bombed-out building in the southern Gaza Strip.

Nowhere safe as Israeli army overruns Gaza

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Israeli forces overrun nearly all parts of the Gaza Strip on Sunday, as more than 700 Palestinians were reported to have been killed after Tel Aviv ended a week-long truce.

A statement from Israeli Chief of General Staff Herzi Halevi said that his forces were operating across north and south Gaza, with tanks and soldiers seen moving through the besieged territory over the weekend.

The death toll from Israel's relentless bombing has climbed above 15,500, including 280 medical staff, in more than eight weeks of Israeli aggression.

United Nations High

Ukraine accuses Russia of killing surrendering soldiers

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine launched an inquiry on Sunday into what it said was an "execution" by Russia forces of two unarmed Ukrainian soldiers who had signalled their intention to surrender.

Ukrainian officials condemned the reported incident as a "war crime". There was no official reaction from Moscow.

On Saturday a short video, whose authenticity could be confirmed, was posted on Telegram showing two men coming out of a shelter, one with his hands above his head, before lying on the ground in front of another group of soldiers.

This is followed by what appears to be gunfire, and rising smoke, before the video cuts off abruptly.

Palestinian student shot in US is paralysed, says family

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: One of the three college students of Palestinian descent who were shot in Vermont last month is paralysed from the chest down after a bullet lodged in his spine, the student's family said.

Hisham Awartani, a 20-year-old student at Brown University who grew up in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

China says a US Navy ship 'illegally intruded' into waters in the South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: The Chinese military said that an American naval ship had "illegally intruded" on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea. A Chinese naval force was mobilized to track the USS Gabrielle Giffords during the operation, according to a statement from the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater. The U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet said the ship "was conducting routine operations in international waters... consistent with international law." Chinese and Philippine naval and coast guard

ships have confronted each other repeatedly around the shoal in the Spratly Islands in recent months as China tries to prevent the Philippines from resupplying and repairing a rusting warship that it intentionally ran aground in 1999 to serve as a military outpost.

Dwarfed by China's military might, the Philippines has sought America's help in its multiple territorial disputes with China in the South China Sea. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. agreed to an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the country early this year and launched joint sea and air patrols with the United States late last month.



People move in a boat past partially submerged vehicles in a residential area following heavy rains ahead of Cyclone Michaung in Chennai, India.

Cyprus pushes Gaza corridor idea; leader to visit Egypt, Jordan

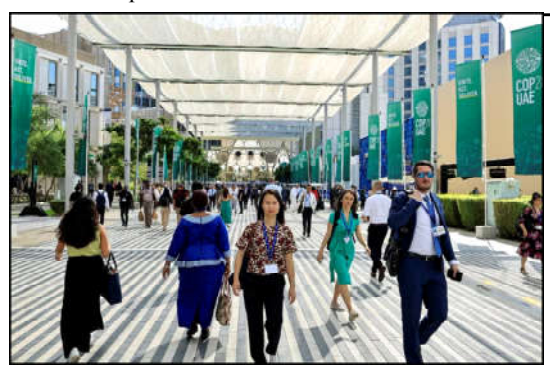
Monitoring Desk
NICOSIA: Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides will visit Egypt and Jordan on Tuesday as part of an initiative to establish a humanitarian aid corridor to Israeli-besieged Gaza.

Cyprus, the closest European Union member state to the Middle East, has offered to host and operate facilities for sustained aid directly into the Gaza Strip once hostilities between Israel and the Palestinian militant Hamas group cease.

Christodoulides planned to meet Egyptian

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and King Abdullah of Jordan. There were "technical discussions" on the matter between Cyprus and Israeli officials on Sunday. The Cypriot plan is aimed at expanding capacity for humanitarian relief directly to the coastal Gaza Strip beyond limited deliveries being made through the Rafah crossing between Egypt and the Palestinian enclave.

Such an aid corridor faces logistical, political and security challenges - Gaza has no port and its waters are shallow.



Delegates walk at the Dubai's Expo City during the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Floods kill more than 20 people in northern Tanzania

Monitoring Desk
DAR ES SALAAM: At least 20 people have been killed by floods after heavy rain in the Manyara region of northern Tanzania, the ministry of health said on Sunday.

Severe flooding caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon has killed hundreds of people in Kenya and Somalia in recent weeks.

The rains have also left a trail of destruction, ruining infrastructure like roads and submerging

towns in East Africa, displacing hundreds of thousands of people.

"We are very shocked by this event," President Samia Suluhu Hassan said in a video message posted online by the Tanzanian ministry of health.

She directed security agencies, the ministry of health and other relevant bodies to put in all efforts into ongoing search and rescue efforts to prevent more deaths.

Four killed in Philippines bomb attack

Monitoring Desk
MARAWI: At least four people died and several others were wounded on Sunday in a bomb attack on a Catholic mass in the insurgency-plagued southern Philippines.

The blast, claimed by the militant Islamic State group, happened during a morning service at Mindanao State University's gymnasium in Marawi, the country's largest Muslim city, which was besieged by militant groups in 2017.

Police Lieutenant General Emmanuel Peralta said four people were killed and around 50 wounded in the blast from an improvised explosive device.

Photos posted on the Lanao del Sur provincial government's Facebook page showed several overturned plastic chairs, shattered glass and debris around a black patch on the floor of the gymnasium.

University student Chris Jurado, said that the explosion happened during the first Bible reading of the morning mass at 7am.

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

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

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

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

The president underlined the need for inclusion and encouragement of women in the agriculture sector as the country was looking towards such initia-

tives, leading towards further women empowerment. "With such changes in attitude, they can stimulate changes in the country's economy," he added.

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

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

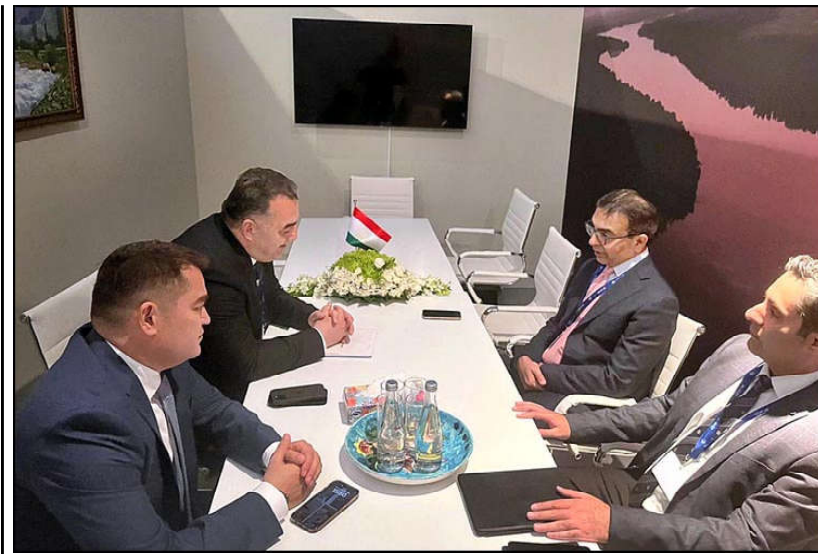
He also suggested for exploring the organic cultivation of rice crop as the world including Pakistan were facing water scarcity. He opined that if the world resources were properly utilized, about 7 billion world's population could be

fed properly and regretted that along with the global trade, the exploitation of population and accumulation of wealth also continued.

He said that hoarding of food stuff was also a reason which led to food crises and it could be ended if priorities across the globe were set, adding that only \$1 trillion could be suffice to address the food scarcity in the world.

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

The president also stressed upon measures to water conservation in the agri-sector, particularly during the rice cultivation as it was a water intensive crop. Besides, value addition products based upon rice crop, the exporters could increase Basmati outreach to different parts of the world, he said, and lauded REAP for projecting the soft image of Pakistan and promoting their culture, industry and livelihood.



UAE: Energy Minister Muhammad Ali held a meeting with Minister for Energy of Tajikistan H.E Daler Juma Shofair on the sidelines of COP28.

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

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

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

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

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

Pakistan-UAE bilateral trade during 2022-23 amounted to \$9 billion, he said. He expressed satisfaction that Pakistan's exports to UAE surged to \$1.4 billion in fiscal year 2022-23, highest in the last five years.

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

"Pakistan's Investment Policy has been designed to provide a comprehensive framework for cre-

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

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

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

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

Masood calls Pak-American physicians 'valuable asset'

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

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

they will be just a blip in the country's long history. "We will negotiate a transition. We have the wherewithal to do that."

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

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

"You should not be on the fringes. You should be in the mainstream because you have the requisite competencies to do that," he told the gathering. The Ambassador also expressed satisfaction at the growing numbers and influence of Pakistani-Americans in the US political system and other sectors.



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

IGP emphasizes crackdown on aerial firing, organized crime

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, stressed the urgency of addressing incidents of aerial firing, stating that they cannot be overlooked and those responsible must face consequences. This assertion came during a meeting chaired by IGP Raja with DIGs and SSPs from the province to discuss law and order.

The meeting delved into various topics including the Smart Verification System (SVAS), surprise inspections, aerial firing in-

sidents, police actions, checkpoints, and measures against police officials involved in organized crime.

IGP Raja highlighted the importance of a stringent SVAS at entry and exit points to curb smuggling and illegal weapon trade from other provinces, urging strict snap checks for effective monitoring.

He instructed SSPs to conduct surprise visits to police stations and checkpoints, demanding reports via concerned DSPs and DPOs.

New measures introduced to boost tax revenue on IMF 'pressure'

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

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

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

Under the new plan, individuals with an annual income of Rs6.6 million or

more, ownership of multiple properties, vehicles of 1000 cc or more, and frequent international travel are obligated to file income tax returns.

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

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

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



HYDERABAD: Former MPA, Jabbar Khan inaugurating the Awami Family Festival, at Badin Stop in Hyderabad.

Dr. Nadeem Jan says: Pak gets \$100m support for polio eradication

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan on Monday said that a support of \$100 million had been obtained from the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for the eradication of polio.

Addressing the "Reaching the last mile" forum related to Polio in COP-28 in UAE, the minister said that this was a major accomplishment. He said that the efforts towards the eradication of polio had achieved significant success.

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

Dr. Nadeem Jan pledged full determination for the eradication of polio from Pakistan. He said that

the grant allocated for the eradication of polio was being efficiently utilized, ensuring effective expenditure.

The minister said, "We are ensuring the fulfillment of the desired objectives for the eradication of polio with utmost certainty."

He added that for the eradication of polio, existing resources would be utilized in line with the broader agenda of Global Health Security.

The minister emphasized that our strategy for the eradication of polio was based on four practical pillars. The first pillar involves collaboration and engagement with all stakeholders, the second pillar focuses on integration, while the third pillar is innovation and fourth is investment sensitive operations, he added.

CTD busts auto theft gang, recovers stolen car

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Monday announced the dismantling of a five-member gang engaged in auto theft, accompanied by the recovery of a stolen car in their possession.

The CTD apprehended the suspects within the jurisdiction of Sachal police station and found the vehicle registered as BCR-572, which had been reported stolen from Mubina Town, as per the CTD spokesperson. The apprehended individuals, namely Javed Ali, Qurban Ali, Zeeshan, Khadim, and Aslam, disclosed during initial interrogations that they had been involved in auto thefts since approximately 2006 or 2007.

Police seize 500 packets of gutka at Hub check post

KARACHI (APP): In an operation conducted at the Mochko check post within District Keamari by Mochko police station intercepted a rickshaw arriving from Hub, Balochistan.

According to SSP Keamari, Arif Aslam Rao, the rickshaw concealed packets of hazardous gutka/nawa within its secret compartments.

The police recovered a total of 500 packets of the banned substance from these hidden compartments.

Mochko police nabs criminals in three operations

KARACHI (APP): The Mochko police station in district Keamari achieved success through operations carried out at three separate locations, apprehending suspects allegedly engaged in street crime, motorcycle theft, and smuggling activities. SSP Keamari, Arif Aslam Rao, confirmed these arrests and provided details of each operation.

During the first operation, Muhammad alias Bablu, accused of street crimes, was apprehended, and an illegal pistol with ammunition was seized from his possession. Authorities have initiated further investigation and filed a case against the suspect under the Sindh Arms Act.

In the second operation, the Mochko police arrested Ashfaq Ahmed, known for his involvement in motorcycle thefts.

MQM raises concerns with ECP regarding constituencies, level playing field

ISLAMABAD (INP): A delegation of the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM) met with the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) on Monday to express concerns over the delimitation of constituencies and the level playing field for the upcoming general elections.

The MQM delegation, led by Farooq Sattar, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Faisal Ahmad Uqeli Monday planned to de-silting Mathrao, Jamrao, Thar Division, and LBOD drains coming out of Sukkur barrage. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting to review the annual cleaning of the canals coming out of Mathrao, Jamrao, and Thar Division from Sukkur Barrage and taking necessary measures during the Warabandi in the Commissioner's Conference Hall.

(PPP). MQM leaders also expressed concern about the role of a caretaker government in Sindh, saying that this has created an uneven playing field for all parties contesting the elections. They called on the Election Commission to take steps to ensure that the elections are free and fair.

CEC Sikandar Sultar Raja assured the MQM delegation that the Election Commission is committed to holding fair and transparent elections. He said that the commission will address all concerns raised by the MQM and other parties.

Meeting held to de-silt Mirpurkhas

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Commissioner Mirpurkhas Faisal Ahmad Uqeli Monday planned to de-silting Mathrao, Jamrao, Thar Division, and LBOD drains coming out of Sukkur barrage. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting to review the annual cleaning of the canals coming out of Mathrao, Jamrao, and Thar Division from Sukkur Barrage and taking necessary measures during the Warabandi in the Commissioner's Conference Hall.

In this regard irrigation department, related departments, and revenue officers should work in mutual coordination so that people can benefit from it, he added. Director Nara Canal Naem Memon said a plan has been made to clean the canals coming out of Mathrao, Jamrao, and Thar Divisions from Nara Canal from January 10, 2024, and in this regard, a program has been completed by the irrigation department. Project Director LBOD Shah Nawaz Bhutto said there are three main drains in Mirpurkhas district, in which sanitation work is going on, on the main drain of LBOD and Dhoro Pran, till now Jhado, Kot Ghulam Muhammad, Shujaabad.



LARKANA: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Sindh General Secretary, Rashid Mahmood Soomro addresses to media persons during press conference, at Larkana press club.

Colorful events, rallies held in different schools on occasion of Sindh Culture Day

By Aijaz Mughal

UMAR KOT: According to the details, on the occasion of Sindh Culture Day, colorful events and parades are going on in various schools across Umarkot district.

talibul moula High School Memon kunri Ghulam Yasin Memon, former chairman of UC Memon Kanri, school principal Muhammad Zahid Arain, education department officers Parviz Mozam Langrial, Niaz Ahmed Kapri, Rahmatullah Lashari, Muhammad Ashraf Arain, Abid Hussain Arain, teachers, students and their parents attended the ceremony in Kanri. attended the event.

All the people of all ages present were wearing the cultural dress of Sindh, Tan Karkatha, Sindh cap and Ajrak and they looked

very happy in the cultural color of Sindh. Sindh dance was performed and Bhangar played, on which the participants also got up.

While in the ceremony held at Fazal Umar Higher Secondary School Kunri, Haji Shakeel Bajwa, Chairman of Town Committee Kunri, Vice Chairman Shiva nand Sindh, Councillor Imran Mughal, Sajid Aziz bhati, Imran FM, Hindu Panchayat leader Sispal Das, along with teachers, students and their parents, were present.

A large number attended this occasion. However, the school principal Syed Mehboob Shah presented Sindh gifts to all the guests, a grand rally was held by the New Vision School in Bastan, in which the girls carried the cultural items of Sindh.

UC Bastan Vice Chairman Haji Imran Bhatti, MQM Umarkot in the rally. Leaders of Muhammad Qasim Bhatti, Muhammad Ashraf Bhatti, Dr. Rafiq Bhatti, teachers, students and their parents, along with local dignitaries participated in large numbers.

That Sindh Culture Day is Eid for us no less than the day, Sindh cap and ajrak are our identity and this is the culture of the Sindh nation, which is the duty of all of us to save. Sindh is known for its ancient civilization. It was said that Sindh Culture Day will be celebrated every year in a grand manner, at the end of the celebrations Prizes were given to the students who showed excellent performance and they were strongly encouraged.



KARACHI: Heavy machinery busy in cleaning the road during campaign under the supervision of Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB), at Malir Saudabad area in Karachi.

An awareness session with trade associations held in Larkana

LARKANA (APP): Nutrition International organized in collaboration with Sindh Food Authority held here on Monday, an awareness session for trade associations of edible oil in Larkana, which was attended by officials of Sindh Food Authority, members of a trade association, wholesalers, retailers, and edible oil millers.

The major purpose of this session was to orient trade associations on the importance of consuming packed, refined, and fortified edible oil which is mandatory to reduce the risk of micronutrient deficiencies, especially deficiency Vitamin-A and D, and to discourage the marketing of loose oil, which is cheap, unhealthy, and unfortified that causing several heart and bone-related diseases.

In the opening remarks, Assistant Director of Sindh Food Authority Ihsan Ali Abbasi welcomed all the participants and appreciated the efforts of Nutrition International for supporting in providing technical assistance and equipment to strengthen the capacity of Sindh Food Authority.

He also highlighted that loose oil is very harmful to the users because it is unhygienic and unfortified. For this, the Sindh Food Authority is taking action to stop selling loose oil and promote packed oil which is fortified with vitamin A.

He said that the Sindh Food Authority was utilizing all available resources to ensure the fortification of edible oil and food security.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Tando Hyder are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Hyderabad press club.

Student week gets under way at Hamdard University

KARACHI (APP): Vice Chancellor of Hamdard University (HU) Prof Dr Syed Shabib-ul-Hasan opened the Student Week 2023 on Monday with the confidence that students would use the values of sportsmanship learnt during the sports, co-curricular and cultural activities held during the week to turn themselves into better citizens. During the opening ceremony, Fatema was also offered by the students, faculty members and for all those who were martyred in Palestine.

Speaking at the opening ceremony held on the main cricket ground of the

Madinat al-Hikmah campus, the VC said that during various competitions, some students would score victories while others would get to taste defeat. In his speech, Registrar Kaleem Ahmed Ghias said that the activities held during the week would give the students chances to interact with students from other departments and faculties. Prof Dr Raza-ur-Rehman of the Faculty of Health and Management Sciences pointed out that those who were physically more active generally had a better life expectancy than those with sedentary lifestyles.