Alvi, Raisi for coordinated

efforts by Islamic states for

an end to Gaza massacre

ity in Gaza.

minutes, President Alvi

voiced deep concern over the

dire situation in occupied

Palestine, including Gaza as

a result of ongoing Israeli ag-

spite the deaths of over

19,000 Palestinians, includ-

ing women and children,

the United Nations Secu-

He regretted that de-

gression and occupation.

ndenemaent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

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Meeting with US think tanks

Pak wishes to develop as hub of connectivity: COAS

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

RAWALPINDI (APP): cording to an Inter Services Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed news release issued here.

The COAS also high-lighted, "Pakistan stood as Pakistan sto Asim Munir, said Pakistan was a country of conselitical and geoeconomic per- regional spective and wished to develop itself as a hub of connectivity and a gateway to Central Asia and beyond.

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

came after he engaged in a and military leadership

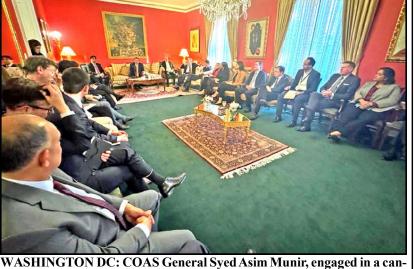
The COAS, during the interaction, put across transnational terrorism, and the importance of maintain-South Asia. General Asim Munir highlighted that Pabilateral engagement with the U.S. through a long-term multi-domain partnership. He highlighted, "His Munir said.

interactions during the visit The COAS remarks to the U.S. with political

bulwark against transnational terrorism for quence both from a geopo- Pakistan's perspective on decades, ensuring regional security, stability and global peace and security.

"It has made unparaling strategic stability in leled contributions and sacrifices in its enduring fight against terrorism and will kistan desired to broaden continue to fight till the logical end, in line with the aspirations of people in Pakistan," General Syed Asim

The COAS also stressed the need for resolution of the Kashmir issue candid discourse with the have been very positive, as per the aspirations of the members of prominent US and he looks forward to think tanks and media, action further strengthening the think tanks and media, action further strengthening the think tanks and media, action for the tanks and media, action



did discourse with members of prominent US think tanks and media, at Washington DC.

CM orders inquiry against contracting firm, recovery of funds released to the firm

MITHI (INP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Jus- was told that the plant had plant has been made functice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar visited 2 MGD River Osmos Plant Mithi and 1.5 MGD RO Islamkot but both the plants were non-functional, therefore he ordered the completion of pending inquiries against the contracting firm, Oslo so that the firm could be prosecuted and recovery of the funds amounting to Rs380 million and Rs80million of electricity liabilities respectively could be recovered from the de-

faulting firm.

The CM on Wednesday morning started his visit to Tharparkar district.

He was accompanied by caretaker Information Minister Ahmad Shah. Mithi RO Plant: The Chief Minister visited the solar desalination plant complex, Mithi. The project, the RO plant, gave him an aban-

been non-operational for the last eight years and mostly the solar plates installed on

the rooftop were missing.
The CM was told that
Asia's largest solar desalination plant complex, Mithi, was run by the Energy Department and Inaugurated in January 2015. The plant had to provide drinking water in addition to producing one megawatt of electricity, benefitting the people of Mithi city besides the other 100 villages.

Later it was handed over to PHED Tharparkar in running condition, but due to negligence, the machinery rusted.

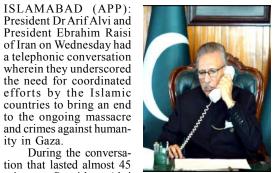
The Chief Minister was told that the contracting firm, The Oslo was given the contract to run the plant but they left the plant in unfunctional condition leaving the liability of Rs80 tube wells.

tional on a generator just to test how it could be made functional.

The CM was told that the plant needed the re-placement of all the membranes and replacement of some of the rusted equipment. But, on top of it, the electricity bill of Rs80 million has to be cleared be-fore taking the task of making it functional.
The CM ordered a fo

rensic audit of the expendi-tures incurred by the private firm, The Oslo on the plant.RO Plant Islamkot: The CM visited the 1.5 MGD Islamkot RO Plant inaugurated in January 2015. Sindh Coal Authority installed the plant for Rs388.6174 million.

The plant has a 650 KVA transformer, a 650 KVA generator and eight



Karachi

impose a ceasefire and bring an end to the unspeakable Israeli atrocities.

President Alvi reiterated that a just solution to the Palestinian question based on an independent and contiguous Palestinian State with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as capital was critical for lasting peace in the Middle East.



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar during his visit to **Peoples Primary Health Care Initiative Health** Centre at Islam Kot.

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

SWABI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul- ing their skills and qualifi-Haq on Wednesday, calling cations, they would become the brain drain, a part of a valuable asset and prodtalent hunt, said those leav- uct as the world was in ing Pakistan for better op- search of talent. "I consider portunities would eventu- their journey a part of the ally become a strength for talent hunt," he added. the country, which ought to

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

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

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

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

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



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

Mayor Karachi joins pre-Christmas celebrations in St. Anthony Church

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Wednesday met Cardinal Joseph Coutts at his residence adjacent to St. Anthony's Church and discussed Christmas programs with him. The Mayor Karachi

also presented him a cake on behalf of Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and cut the cake with him as pre-Christmas celebrations.

The Mayor Karachi visited St. Anthony and Holy Trinity Church, where he met with Cardinal Joseph Coutts and Bishop Frederick Jhon.

Mayor Karachi's Representative for Political Affairs Karamullah Waqasi, Deputy Parliamentary Leader of the People's Party in the City Council Dil Muhammad and others were also present on the

On the occasion, Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the people and KMC are with the Christian community on this important occasion, and all possible municipal facilities will be provided around the places of worship of the Christian mmunity.

Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that the Christian community has done wonderful services for the development and stability of Pakistan. Christmas is one of the major festivals of the world, this festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm by the Christian community all over the world,

Cardinal Joseph Coutts said that because of the atrocities being committed against the Palestinians in Gaza, this year Christmas will be celebrated simply.

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

Murtaza Solangi says **CPEC** transformed Pakistan's socioeconomic landscape

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

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

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

He said the CPEC eventually expedited Pakistan's economic development process and so far multiple projects had been completed in the energy sector alone. "CPEC significantly Pakistan's boosted economic growth," he noted.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi addressing at 8th CPEC Media Forum on "Next Decade of **CPEC Opportunities & Learning from Past Decade" at COMSTECH.**

SC seeks candidates' stance in lifetime disqualification issue of lawmakers

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

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

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

"Interested candidates can submit detailed written replies to SC if they want,"

seven-member bench of SC will take up pleas to resolve the discrepancy between the judicial decision on lifetime disqualification under Article 62 (1) (f) and section 232 of the amended Elections Act, 2017.

The advertisement released by SC further stated that the decision on the pleas can affect the candidates willing to contest the general elections 2024. In the last hearing on the pleas on December 11, SC issued notices to Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan advocate generals of all the provinces and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to assist the court.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received nomination paper from NA-194 Larkana

LARKANA (Online): Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has received nomination papers for NA-194 Larkana.

According to sources, Bilawal Bhutto's political Secretary Jameel Soomro has received nomination papers in his place.

On the other hand, a meeting of Parliamentary Board of PPP Punjab was held in Lahore under Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in which names of suitable candidates for general elections were discussed.

Parliamentary Board has submitted the names of possible candidates from Punjab to Party Chairman.

Govt all set to drop another electric bombshell

ISLAMABAD (Online): Preparations have been made to drop another elecbombshell on tricity

people. Electricity tariff is likely to increase by RS 4.66 per unit.

Central Power Purchasing Agency has submitted the application to NEPRA.

According to NEPRA, this increase has been sought in November Fuel price adjustment. PTI founder to contest elections

from three constituencies: Gohar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Ínsaf's founder will contest election from three constituencies, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali and Barrister Ali Zafar announced in a news conference. PTI founder will contest elections from the National Assembly constituencies of Mianwali, Lahore and Islamabad, party chairman Gohar Ali Khan said. Barrister Ali Zafar said that the PTI wants general election on February 08, at any cost. "Restraining from submitting nomination papers is against the spirit of demo-

cratic process," he said.

ECC approves Rs 57 billion for payment of K-Electric arrears

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Wednesday approved the summary of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) for technical supplementary grant (TSG) of Rs 57 billion for payment of K-Electric ar-

The ECC meeting, chaired by Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar, also approved another summary of the Power Division for settlement of payables to the Government-Owned Power Plants (GPPs) at par with Independent Power Producers (IPPs), and directed to release Rs 262.075 billion through a technical supplementary grant (TSCG) to the GPPs. It decided to discuss the matter in next meeting also, a Finance Ministry press re-

The committee agreed to initiate phase out of the

lease said.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Export Finance Scheme of the State Bank of Pakistana requirement of the IMF Standby Arrangement. To operationalize the requirement, it gave approval to release of Rs 3.87 billion to the EXIM Bank for the current fiscal year.

KARACHI: Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad

While deliberating the report on its decisions about the liabilities of Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) towards the government as discussed on September 19, the finance minister directed the Ministry of Industries to carry out a diagnostic survey to determine why the liabilities of PSM persisted even though it had not been operational since 2015 and how its land had been allocated to housing companies and served other industries without due pro-

The ECC showed its displeasure on the PSM Board and recommended that the Industries Division might look into the issue for further necessary action.



KARACHI: MQM Pakistan leader Mustafa Kamal submitting nomination paper at Office of the deputy Commissioner Kemari for upcoming General Election.

Khan Jogezai talking with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori. **World Bank** approves loan of 350 million dollars for Pak

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

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

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

Two killed, three injured in Karachi road mishap

KARACHI (INP): Two people were killed and three others injured as passenger coaster ran over a pedestrians and motorcycle riders near Bagh Korangi Bridge in Karachi on Wednesday.

Rescue sources said that due to over speeding a passenger coaster got out of control of driver and crushed pedestrians and motorcyclists.

As a result of accident two people died on the spot while three others including Muhammad Ali, Afzal Ali and Mazhar sustained injuries. The coast driver fled the scene.

The bodies and injured were shifted to hospital The police impounded the vehicle and after registering a case against driver at large started raids for his arrest.

Daily Aoice of Masse, Independent

A hurdle crossed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Weasel words



Thursday December 21, 2023

Mahir Ali

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

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

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

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

COP28 was deemed a step forward in calling out little was specified in terms the primary source of energy. The requisite sound

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

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

to transform the narrative.

It was only partially

junction.

successful, particularly once it was alleged that al-Jaher was keen on using COP28 as a platform for negotiating lucrative oil as the 1950s. They were deals. And that he doubted the science behind decreeing fossil fuels as the chief hurdle to achieving net zero emissions. He pushed back against those media reports, acknowledging that the phase-out of fossil fuels was essential to cooling the Earth. But after the conference concluded, he returned to his job at the helm of the oil company, which reportedly intends to fire up its production levels in the vears to come.

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

forcement mechanism —

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

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

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

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

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

South Asia's smog



Jamil Ahmad

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

years compared to the glo- tats for wildlife and bal average reduction of biodiversity, and thus essential for a balanced ecosystem

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

penalise polluters. Other steps to help reduce pollution include expanding the network of electric transport and restricting vehi-cular movement in urban centres by levying a congestion toll on smoke-emitting transport. Introducing pedestrian zones is useful to protect citizens from air and noise pollution.

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

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

Commerce News

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

Commerce and Industries, two countries in the field Dr. Ejaz Gohar on of trade. Wednesday unveiled his Mr. vision to increase extended Pakistan's exports to China up to US \$25 billion to congratulations to Dr. Ejaz for his successful visit to engage in trade between the China, emphasizing the two neighbours.

Economic Counsellor of China to Pakistan, Mr. two nations.

Cooperation between the Pakistan's exports.

Mr. Guan Yang Guangyuan paid a courtesy call to the conveyed the warmth and said a press release issued his visit to China.

Minister

China by Dr. Ejaz which was to witness first-hand

ISLAMABAD (APP): are a part of the intensified the remarkable progress Federal Minister for interaction between the China has achieved on the one hand and to seek new market segments for Guangyuan Pakistani exports on the warm other hand.

He unveiled an ambitious 5-year vision to boost trade between neighbours.

The newly appointed positive initiatives taken to positive initiatives taken to positive initiatives taken to positive initiatives taken to pakistan and China, setting a target of \$ 25 billion for Guangyuan

Ejaz welcomed the Minister's sentiments for increasing Commerce and Industries hospitality extended by bilateral trade and Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the Chinese officials during economic cooperation and expressed Dr. Ejaz highlighted commitment to stand with The meeting followed that the primary purpose Pakistan, emphasizing the two successful visits to of his recent visit to China deep-rooted friendship deep-rooted friendship

China boasts over 3.28 mln 5G base stations

between the two countries

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

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

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

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

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



State of Commerce in Pakistan–International and Domestic," highlighting challenges and opportunities.

PIDE report highlights challenges, opportunities in commerce sector

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of

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

"As a premier to gain a profound institution dedicated to understanding of markets, fostering economic development, PIDE's and domestic trade." report serves as an

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

"The primary objective is

He emphasized that invaluable source of despite the vibrant sector,

information and statistics it faced challenges regulatory problems, and various other problems.

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

Sohrab stresses strengthening of collaboration with ILO for Pak Workforce Dev. ISLAMABAD (APP): workforce in line with the

The Special Assistant to ILO's best practices. Both (SAPM) on Overseas Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik, held a significant meeting with of the workforce. Director-General of the International Labour Organization Gilbert Houngbo on the sidelines of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) in Riyadh on Wednesday.

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

The meeting was a significant step towards fostering international collaboration to enhance the skills and employ ability of the Pakistani Labour Organization.

Prime Minister parties acknowledged the importance of aligning Pakistanis and Human national policies with global standards to ensure the welfare and prosperity Director-General of

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

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



at a roadside stall ahead of Christmas.

PML-N to address economic issues: Nasir

LAHORE: Secretary Transport Punjab Ahmed

Javed Qazi drives Electric Rickshaw before

PML-N leader Nasir Butt said that his party has experienced persons to the business community is manage the economy and if voted to power, PML-N has plans to address the key economic issues of the

launching E-Rickshaws.

He said that the outcomes. PML-N government had achieved many economic has great potential to milestones for Pakistan emerge as a strong during its previous tenures.

If voted to power, it would again bring Pakistan out of economic trouble achieve this goal. and provide relief to the common man, he added.

Islamabad Chamber of the people.

ISLAMABAD (Online): Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI. Nasir Butt said that

the backbone of the economy and PML-N would finalize economic policies by taking them on board to achieve win-win He said that Pakistan

He said that PML-N's leadership has the He said this while ability and experience to talking to Ahsan Zafar resolve issues and deliver Bakhtawari, President of up to the expectations of

economy and it only needs

visionary leadership and

good governments to

hydropower, RE potential in country Speakers at 3rd International Hydropower Conference while terming the hydropower and renewable energy (RE)

phone users.

Speakers for removing bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country ISLAMABAD (APP): "Hydropower: A Renewable Energy Source bottleneck to harness for a Sustainable Future" Muhammad Ali lauded the Energy Update for

Association (IHA). crucial for sustainable future of the country on Wednesday stressed the need to remove bottleneck in harnessing the hydropower and RE potential for provision of affordable electricity to the people and industry.

third people. The International Hydropower conference themed

Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and International Hydropower

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

Speaking on the 31 per cent adding that the asion, Caretaker government has embarked occasion,

was organized by the organizing the conference Energy Update in and said that it would help collaboration with Private us to improve the policy framework in the energy

and hydropower share in They were of the energy mix was the government top priority as it was the only way to reduce the power tariff besides provision of affordable energy to the people. Currently, the share of hydel and RE in total energy mix stood at

by 2030, he said.

He said Pakistan has tremendous potential of wind, solar, and hydropower. We could or. alone generate around He said enhancing RE 64,000 megawatts (MW) from hydel and only tapped 11,000 MW so far. Hydropower considered cheapest source of electricity in the world, he said. He said hydropower

opportunities. He said work on 4200 800 MW Mohmand dam

A Minister for Power on ambitious plan to and 4500 MW Diamer ree Muhammad Ali lauded the enhance it to 61 per cent Basha dam was being carried out. However, financing was a big issue for such mega projects, he and added.

> The minister said Pakistan has 175 billion tons of Thar coal reserves which could generate electricity for decades.

On energy conservation side, the minister said that some 3000-4000 MW could be projects could also saved only through energy generate employment efficient fans across the country. A sum of \$ 1 billion could be saved MW Dasu hydropower, annually through energy conservation, he said.

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

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

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

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

decisions of the 7 Syndicate meeting. During the Syndicate meeting, 100 per cent implementation on the Lahore High Court's trying its best to improve Children's Hospital performance SOPs was emphasized.

approve the statues of the ÚCHS and send them to the chancellor for final approval through the department. All the decisions of the finance erless university. and planning committee of the 8th syndicate meeting were approved.

the ongoing progress on the complex under was also reviewed in detail



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

Minister inaugurates newly constructed 'Business Centre'

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

at Kohat Road, Small for its financial stability.

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

Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker minister termed the project as of high importance and newly directed amendments the constructed Business Centre business model of the board

It was decided to

During the meeting,



doctors of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) at the 46th Winter Khyber Medical College Convention organized in collaboration with APPNA on 20 Dec 2023.

Naqvi orders land allocation for smart police stations

Independent Report AHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has issued directives for the allocation of land dedicated to Smart

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

Two drugs

convicts

sentenced to

different terms

ATTOCK (Online): Two

drugs peddlers were

sentenced to different

terms by two different

courts in Attock on

Wednesday.In the first

case, a special court for the

Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in

Attock on sentenced a

convict identified as

Najeeb Ullah- a native of

Waziristan to 9 years

imprisonment besides

imposing fine over him for

smuggling two kilogram of

hashish from KP to Punjab.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in setting a stringent deadline for the Smart Police Station project, emphasized the phased conversion of police conventional stations into smart ones

Lahore, while an additional

located in other districts.

throughout the province. The meeting scrutinized the construction, repair, rehabilitation initiatives encompassing a total of 737 police stations. **Ban on airing Imran speeches:**

effect that he has not

imposed restriction on TV

channels from airing former

chairman PTI statements

and interview. The court remarked chairman PEMRA

should file this reply too

that who has imposed ban.

against ban on airing the

speeches of former chairman PTI Imran Khan by T V

The petitions filed

channels despite court's orders TV channels.

smart police stations in review of the progress on the Smart Police Station 17 will be strategically project and an evaluation of the facilities integrated Minister into these stations took place during the briefing.

Chief

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

Minister

addressed the project atives encompassing a involving the construction of 313 houses for police officers and employees.

Mirza Wednesday.

Lawver

Pansota appeared in the

court on behalf of former chairman PTI. The court

sought affidavit from

chairman PEMRA. The

court remarked chairman

PEMRA should file

affidavit that he had not

imposed ban on airing

statements and interviews

of former chairman PTI by

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

LHC seeks report on cases against Omar

proposition to establish.

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

All parties have expressed confidence in ECP: PML-N

Deputy General Secretary Attaullah Tarar has said all expressed confidence in said the individual the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), as there is enjoying every facility is no doubt about its credibility

transparency. Talking to the media, along with PML-N leader Malik Ahmad Khan at Model Town on Wednesday, he said some elements had pointed fingers at the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ECP just free and fair elections

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan should be conducted in Muslim League-Nawaz the country on the given time and his party wanted to take forward the matter smoothly toward the political parties have elections. Attaullah Tarar imprisoned in Adiala Jail and comfort in the jail, adding that walk, exercise and all recreational activities are going on in Adiala Jial. He said that everyone Toshakhana gifts, but no one had sold out those

to gain 'black profit'. He said that those gifts were the pride of the for nothing, adding that country and not meant for sale or gaining profit.

gifts in the black market



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

Environmental shifts Seminar to tackle health challenges in KP held

Addressing the growing impact of climate change on public health, Evidence for Health in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a comprehensive one-day seminar for health managers

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

Dr. Shaukat Ali underscored

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

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

International News

LHC seeks affidavit

from chairman PEMRA

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

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin declared Tuesday that his country's military has seized the initiative in Ukraine after repelling a monthslong counteroffensive and is well positioned to achieve Moscow's goals.

Putin spoke at a meeting with top military brass a day after he presented documents to Russia's Central Election Commission to seek reelection in the March presidential vote that he's all but certain to win.

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

fenses they are doing so, and we are improving our positions where it's needed.

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

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

sary to stick to active de- of our armed forces and the potential of our military industries," Putin said.

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

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

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

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

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

screening irregular mithe European Union, procedures for handling asylum applications, rules on determining which EU country is responsible for ways to handle crises. Migrant arrivals in the European Union are way down year to November.



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

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

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

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

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

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

The sharp exchanges came at the Security Council's semi-annual meeting on the implementation of its resolution en-

than 100 hostages were re-Biden looks to secure Black support in visit

Hamas leader

visits Egypt

Monitoring Desk

CAIRO: The leader of

Hamas made his first visit

to Egypt for more than a

month on Wednesday, a rare

personal intervention in di-

plomacy amid what a

source described as inten-

sive talks on a new ceasefire

to let aid reach Gaza and

Haniyeh, who normally re-

sides in Qatar, typically

intervenes in diplomacy

publicly only when progress seems likely. He

last travelled to Egypt in

early November before the

announcement of the only

agreement on a ceasefire in

the war so far, a week-long

pause during which more

Hamas leader Ismail

get hostages freed.

to Wisconsin **Monitoring Desk**

WASHINGTŎN: US would definitely look into President Joe Biden will announce a Black-owned business coalition could win funding to revive downtown Milwaukee on a visit to Wisconsin on Wednesday, as he looks to shore up support in a state that may prove pivotal to his re-election up a "high-level" inquiry chances in 2024. Biden committee "to look into all will visit the Milwaukee the relevant aspects of the Black Chamber of Commerce to discuss

US may yet back 'mild ceasefire' for Gaza

Monitoring Desk eme-r-gency UN Security Cou-ncil meeting on the Gaza situation was adjourned on Tuesday, with discussions entering into

informal consultations as hopes rise of a slight flexibility in Washington's otherwise staunch support for Israel. The council's meeting, which started on Monday for a vote on UAE's resolution calling for a sustainable cessation of hostilities in Gaza, was postponed due to US concerns over the draft's phrasing.

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

reflects deepening divisions within the US government, with growing discontent, particularly from the global South. In a departure from its previous stance, the White House's willingness to consider alternative wording suggests frustra-

tion with Israel's approach. Despite diplomatic efforts, Israel's approach has faced criticism, and pressure has been mounting on the US following a UN General Assembly vote on December 12, where 153 countries called for an urgent cessation of hostilities.

UAE Ambassador Mohamed Issa Abushahab underscored the urgency of the situation, declaring 2023 as the deadliest year in the history of Occupied Palestinian Territory.



Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) agent displays the list of voters at the Mavuno polling centre on the day of the presidential election in Goma, North Kivu province of the Democratic Re-

Philippines rebukes China over South China Sea claims

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

way. China claims almost the

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

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

Gansu province, China. France's Macron faces cracks in his government over migration law

Rescuers work amid the rubble at Shiyuan village

following the earthquake in Jishishan county,

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

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

by being tougher on immi-

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

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

Monitoring Desk

The laws cover grants when they arrive in handling applications and from the 2015 peak of more than 1 million, but have steadily crept up from a 2020 low to 255,000 in the

dorsing the 2015 nuclear pulled out of the agreement deal. India's Modi willing to 'look into' US assassination plot claim

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHĬ: Indian

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he will investigate any evidence provided regarding an alleged plot to kill a Sikh separatist in the United States, the Financial Times

reported on Wednesday. The US Justice Department last month charged an Indian citizen with plotting to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader on US soil, alleging an Indian government official was also involved in the planning. "If someone gives us any information, we

it," Modi said in his first comments on the issue. "If a citizen of ours has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law," he added. India's foreign ministry had earlier said it set

PM announces upgradation of KMC, AMC to medical universities

PESHAWAR (APP): CareMinister, C o m m e n d i n g

Common men d i n g Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Wednesday announced upgradation of Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar and Ayub Medical College (AMC), rected the Governor and Abbottabad as public sec-Chief Minister Khyber tor medical universities.

The prime minister made the important announcement while addressing the 46th annual meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistan Descent of North America (APPNA) organized by the alumni of Khyber Medical College Peshawar at Governor House.

On the request of members of APPNA and its President Dr Arshad Rehman, Prime Minister Kakar said that practical work on upgradation of KMC and ÂMC as public cal services besides philanshould be initiated within 35 hours by the respective au-

APPNA's rich services for ailing humanity and continued long connection with people of their home country, the prime minister di- have established strong Pakthunkhwa to give practical shape to upgradation of KMC and AMC to a full fledge medical universities keeping in view of people and APPNA demands.

While lauding services of students of both these medical colleges in healthcare services in the country as well as abroad, the prime minister said that Pakistani doctors serving in United States and others foreign countries were like an ambassador of Pakistan and their medical and surgiearthquake, floods and

other natural calamities in

Judicial Assistants of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a group photo with

Pengiran Norhashimah

Binti Pg Mohd Hassan, a

Foreign Office press release

noted that Pakistan and

longstanding, warm and fra-

Pakistan was committed to

with Brunei with a focus on

ternal relationship.

Secretary of Pakistan, Am- multifaceted partnership | before arrest

down, he said.

duced demand.

of many imports.

KARACHI: Students of Medical and Dental Col-

leges Admission Test (MDCAT) are holding pro-

test demonstration for acceptance of their demands,

Married woman

committed suicide

Brunei

The foreign secretary

enjoyed

He underscored that

Talking to business

community on Wednesday

Mian Zahid Hussain said

that a surplus of nine mil-

lion dollars in the current

account in November was

a good development. This

achievement was made

possible due to the tight

monetary policy, which re-

tion to the central bank's

initiatives, imports were

also controlled, which posi-

tively impacted foreign ex-

change reserves and proved

that the country could sur-

vive in the absence or lack

licemen to her house and

pressured and harassed her.

Soomro appealed to the higher authorities to provide

protection along with her mother on the social media

website, but they did not pro-

vide her protection.Narcotic

pills were taken which made

her condition worse, which

was immediately shifted to

the hospital but she could not

survive. On the other hand,

the relatives kept the body of

Sadia Soomro in front of

Daharki Police Station, SSP

Ghotki Muhammad Anwar

Khetran immediately took no-

tice of the incident and ordered

the arrest of the influential

accused Hameed Chachadar

Two days ago, Sadia

He said that in addi-

Mr. Justice Athar Minallah at the Federal Judicial Academy Islamabad.

Pakistan, Brunei hold

inaugural round of

bilateral consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The of Foreign Affairs of Brunei

was co-chaired by Foreign developing a broad and

Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Per- trade, investment and close

Harsh decisions affected people

but restored confidence of

int'l institutions: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chair- count deficit has come

manent Secretary, Ministry cultural cooperation.

inaugural round of Pakistan-

Brunei Bilateral Consulta-

tion and Cooperation (BCC)

was held virtually on

Wednesday wherein the two

sides engaged in extensive

discussion on bilateral rela-

tions, regional develop-

ments and multilateral is-

bassador Muhammad

man of National Business Group Pakistan, President

Pakistan Businessmen and

Intellectuals Forum, and All

Karachi Industrial Alliance

and former provincial min-

ister Mian Zahid Hussain

has said the unpopular,

harsh decision of the gov-

ernment and the central

bank has added to the mis-

eries of the common man

and the business commu-

sions helped restore the

confidence of international

institutions, while the pres-

sure on foreign exchange

reserves, the rupee has eased and the current ac-

held at Karachi press club.

By Tanveer Soomro

MIRPUR MATHELO: A

married woman committed

suicide by consuming a large

amount of narcotic pills af-

ter a young man held her

hand in a crowded market.

According to the details, a

married woman, Sadia

Soomro, committed suicide

by taking a large amount of

narcotic pills in Imam bargah

man, Abdul Hameed

Chachar, held hands in the

crowded market and pres-

sured the woman and her

husband to be friends,

which scared the woman

Later, the accused used

and her husband.

An influential young

Mohalla of Daharki city.

However, these deci-

The inaugural round

sues of mutual interest.

Pakistan was highly praised

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

He said that Pakistani doctors have proved their abilities and professionalism all over the world including USA and played a role of a bridge between Pakistani communities and American citizens while dedication towards duties and treating patients with friendly attitude and warmth was their hallmark.

"Pakistani doctors are the best in the world and graduates of KMC doctors were known internationally sector medical universities thropy contribution during for their hard work, professionalism and devotion in healthcare services." he said

Former chairman

DRAP arrested

in corruption

fake degree case

SLAMABAD (Online):

Former chairman Drug

Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Sheikh

Akhtar has been arrested by

FIA in fake degree and cor-

ruption case.
FIA has arrested

Sheikh Akhtar former chair-

man DRAP following the

Judge Shahrukh Arjmand of FIA Court cen-

tral has cancelled the bail

former chairman DRAP

Sheikh Akhtar was facing

Rs 2.5 billion corruption

As per FIA spokes-person Sheikh Akhtar had

secured his appointment on post of CEO of Drug

Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) on fake

SBP announces

public holiday

on Dec 25

KARACHI (APP):The

State Bank of Pakistan,

Wednesday, announced public holiday on Decem-

ber 25 on the occasion of

Quaid-e-Azam Day and

The State Bank of Pakistan will remain closed on December 25,

2023 (Monday) being public holiday on the oc-

casions of Quaid-e-Azam

Day and Christmas, as

declared by the Govern-ment of Pakistan," said a

statement issued here.

Christmas.

Shahrukh

cancellation of his bail.



Mirza called by King of Jordan King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussain at Jordan.

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman of the Joint

Jordanian Abdullah Ibn Al Hussain conferred the medal 'Order of the Star of Jordan' on CJCSC General Sahir Shamshad Mirza in recognition of his meritorious

various areas of interest.

including bilateral politicodiplomatic and military cooperation and the prevailing regional security situation, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued

separate meetings with

liminary list of the candidates will be released while Muhammad

scrutiny of nomination papers will be held from 24th to 30th December. As per the schedule. electoral symbols will be allotted to the candidates on January 13 and polling for the general elections will be held on February 8.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Tuesday issued guidelines for candidates to submit nomination papers.

Submission of

nomination

papers for

2024 elections

kicks off

ISLAMABAD (INP)

Submission of nomination

papers for participation in

general elections kicked off

issued by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP),

the desiring candidates could get and submit the

nomination papers till 4:30 pm December 22.

According to schedule

On December 23, pre-

on Wednesday.

Aitza<u>z Ahsans ays:</u> Its London plan election date should be what

Nawaz wants ISLAMABAD (Online): Senior lawyer Barrister Aitzaz Ahsan has said it is London plan that the election date should be the same what Nawaz Sharif

He said this while talking to media men outside IHC here Wednesday. He claimed PML-N

wanted to escape from election. The communications of bars are identical, he said adding their key leader is Azam Nazir Tarar.

The senior politician said now chief election commissioner is being pres surized. He is being attacked. No one has attacked chief election commissioner before me

He underlined if chief election commissioner is removed then election can be delayed. Their next step is this Tariq Masood should come. Aitzaz Ahsan also said "I said he is criminal. Chief election commissioner should summon me in contempt of court. I will face trial. Why the chief election commissioner doe not call me.

Three-member gang of robbers arrested

KARACHI (APP):Threemember gang of wanted robbers were arrested in a successful operation by the

Baldia town police. The arrested accused are identified as Asad, Farman and Jalil

Shah, said police sources on Wednesday. Two illegal pistols with rounds, a mobile phone and a motorcycle

were recovered from the possession of the accused. The cases have been registered against the accused and further investi

gation is underway Police arrest accused in

injured condition HYDERABAD (APP):

The Pinyari police on Tuesday arrested a suspect in injured condition with a weapon during an alleged encounter.

According to a spokesperson, Pinyari police last night, signalled two suspicious persons to stop while patrolling, the two motorcycle-riding suspects tried to escape and started firing at the police.

In retaliation, the police apprehended one suspect Åĥmed Khaskheli in injured condition along with a weapon. However, his accomplice took advantage of the darkness and successfully fled on the motorcycle.

The arrested suspect was immediately transferred to the hospi tal for medical treatment, while efforts were underway to arrest the fleeing accomplice.

IT ministry develops mobile app to digitize Hajj operation

Hajj operations for pilgrims have been digitalized as Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications has developed a mobile app in record time to facilitate Hajj Pilgrims. Caretaker Minister

for IT Dr Umar Saif and

Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed jointly launched the application developed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB) on Wednesday, said a statement issued here. Chief Executive Of-

ficer NITB Babar Majeed Bhatti briefed the participants about the application in the welcome ad-Speaking on the occa-

sion, the Minister for Information Technology and Umar Saif said that the pro- updates, he said

ISLAMABAD (APP): cess of digitalization has been accelerated in the country under the directions of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The launch of Hajj application was a milestone in this connection, he said.

Highlighting the key features of the application Dr. Umar Saif said that the Application will enable pilgrims to register using the OTP received via SMS. Users will be provided with a unique ID, that is their CNIC and application number, he said.

He said pilgrims can view and update their personal information, including contact details and identification information. The application will enable Pilgrims to view their Hajj application status i.e (submitted, successful, unsuc-Telecommunications Dr. cessful, refunded) real time



Al Remeithi cut the Christmas cake along with others during ceremony at UAE Consulate in Pro-

Best of CPEC is yet to come: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman, the Senate Defense Committee and Pakistan-China Institute, Mushahid Hussain Sayed while speaking at the 8th CPEC Media Forum on Wednesday said, "When we talk of the next round, I think the best of CPEC is yet to come".

The Forum, themed Next decade of CPEC: Opportunities & learning from past decade", was hosted by the Embassy of China in Pakistan, and coorganized by China Economic Net and Pakistan-China Institute on Dec 20 in Beijing, Islamabad and Gwadar both online and offline, Gwadar Pro reported.

Mushahid Hussain Sayed reviewed the achievements of CPEC in the past decade and clarified the smears of the West against

He noted the achievements of CEPC by referring to the \$25.4 billion of direct investment in Pakistan, 236,000 jobs generated, 8,000 megawatts of electricity, and 510 kilometers of highways by the end of 2022. "28,000 Pakistani students are studying in China and 8,000 of them are doing their doctorate in China.

So this is, I think, a very important aspect of the whole development,'

Imran, Bushra summoned in NAB Toshakhana reference

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi have been summoned on December 23, in connection with NAB Toshakhana refer-

The NAB filed Toshakhana reference against the former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Accountability Court countability court which was accepted for take further action.

The accused had obtained 108 items from the with them, the reference

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday filed a reference with the Accountability Court against PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi pertaining to Toshakhana case.

The NAB Rawalpindi has named two accused in the graft reference and after scrutiny of the case, the Registrar Office of the accountability court would

NAB prosecutor Sohail Arif and Investigation Officer Mohsin Toshakhana and kept 58 Haroon submitted the reference to Registrar's Office.



LARKANA: Employees of Municipal Corporation Larkana are holding protest demonstration against the transfer of employees to the other towns held at

Rare bird makes a splash after 29 years at Sindh's Langh Lake Sindh even more note-

KARACHI (INP): Birdwatchers in Sindh rejoiced as a rare Oriental Darter, last seen in the region 29 years ago, made a surprise appearance at Langh Lake in rural Sindh. This elegant bird, known for its spear-like beak and swimming prowess, marked a significant moment for conservation ef-

forts in the area. These graceful creatures, often called "snake birds" due to their long, curved necks resembling serpents when submerged, are expert swimmers and divers, feasting on small fish, frogs, snakes, and insects. Unlike many migratory birds, Oriental Darters prefer shorter journeys, making their presence in

"It's a delightful sight

to see a Yantel Darter back in the lakes of Sindh," exclaimed Javed Mehr, Conservator of Sindh Wildlife. He further explained the significance of these birds as "indicator species," reflecting the health of the ecosystem they inhabit. Interestingly, this isn't

the first Darter sighting in recent years. Last year, one was rescued from individual possession near the Sindh Delta.

However, the decline in freshwater availability over the past three decades, primarily due to reduced Indus River flow and depleted lake levels, had rendered these birds increas-

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

Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, who is on an official visit to Jordan, called on King Abdullah II, Ibn Al Hussain. King

During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed here Wednesday.
The CJCSC also held

Major General Yousef Ahmed Al-Hnaity, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and Brigadier

General Hyasat, Commander of the Royal Jordan Air Force

JUI, MQM-P demand extension in deadline for nomination papers filing

ISLAMABAD (INP): believes this adjustment Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) would still allow elections to on Wednesday has demanded the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to amend the election schedule, requesting an extension to the deadline for receiving nomination papers. Senator Kamran Murtaza, a JUI representative, wrote a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, expressing concerns about the limited time allotted for submitting nomination papers. The current schedule allows only three days for

this crucial step. Murtaza argued that political parties need more time to distribute tickets to candidates at both the national and provincial levels. He proposed adding three days to the nomination paper receipt period to facilitate this process.

extended nomination window, Murtaza suggested reducing the time for scrutiny of nomination papers from

of February 8th. Meanwhile the Muttahida Qaumi Move-ment-Pakistan (MQM-P) has demanded the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan to extend the deadline for filing of nomination papers for the general elections to be held on February 08, 2024. According to the election schedule issued by

would still allow elections to

be held on the scheduled date

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), nomination papers could be filed with respective returning officers by the candidates from December 20 to 22, while names of all nominated candidates would be published on December 23.

In a letter to CEC Sikandar Raja Sultan, the MQM-P expressed concern over duration – three papers, saying that the process is a "tedious job, and has a long list of formalities requiring time and a lot of

the results of their food

systems, identify chal-

lenges, and devise interven-

tions for improving nutri-

tion, health and environ-

mental outcomes, he added.

board (FSD) is the first ini-

tiative for collecting coun-

try-level data from all com-

ponents of the food system

and provide in-depth

analysis and guidance on result oriented utilization of the data, he stated.

malnutrition and food inse-

curity were major challenges

encountered by less devel-

oped countries and estab-

lishing a relevant dashboard

Agha Fakhr said that

Food Systems Dash-



HYDERABAD: Leader of PPP Jam Khan Shoro filed his nomination papers for the seat of Provincial Assembly for General Election.

Food System Dashboard to help improving nutrition, health outcomes: DG SFA

KARACHI (APP): Direc- stakeholders to compare tor General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhar Hussain, Wednesday, said that Food System Dash-board will help identifying challenges of food security and finding out ways to improve nutrition, health and environmental out-

Agha Fakhar Hussain said that the dashboard encompasses the entire food system by collecting data from multiple sources.

can be of great help to policy makers. The DG also highlighted various measures taken by Sindh Food Authority to deal with the issues and informed that such steps have yielded positive



Christmas preparations in full swing

UKKUR (APP): The Christian community has started thronging shopping malls to buy new clothes and gifts for their relatives, as Christmas approaches.

The community is also busy decorating their houses with Christmas trees and flowers.

Christmas preparations in several churches of the Sukkur division have been completed. These include Catholic, Protestant and other missionary churches.

The biggest ceremony for the Catholic school of thought will be held at Saint Mary Church. Meanwhile, the largest event for Protestants will be organised at the Cathedral Church Oueence Road where Christian leaders will hold prayers for the country's rosperity and safety.

Talking to APP here on Wednesday, Christian leader Father Yaqoob Masih said that this day strengthens the resolve to encourage peace, fraternity. love, and interfaith harmony. "We need to end hatred, differences and unite for prosperity, peace, safety, and development of Pakistan, he added.

He was addressing a workshop held here to discuss matters relating to creation of the first food system dashboard in the coun-

The workshop was jointly organized by Gain Pakistan, Food and Agriculture Organization, Columbia Climate School and Cornell University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

It enables relevant to over speeding and break failed, located near

and an FIR was filed. Bagh-e-Korangi area in Karachi. his influence to send the po-Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah printed at Dhoom Printing Press Building No. RY/9/11/6X11/7, Mashoor Mahal, Off: I. I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi and Published from Room # 44, 3rd Floor, Handicraft Building, Abdullah Haroon Road, Saddar, Karachi Cell No. 0300-3898091 E-mail: dailyindkhi@gmail.com, khi.editor@gmail.com