

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vdt XXV No 102, Jamadi-ul-Awwal 17, 1445 AH Saturday December 02, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

PM holds informal interactions with world leaders on COP28 margins

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday held informal interactions with multiple world leaders, on the sidelines of the COP28 summit.

Among those whom the prime minister interacted with informally, included British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Danish Prime Minister Mette Fredrickson.

The prime minister also held an informal interaction with British King Charles III as they participated in the family photo of High Level Segment of 28th Conference of Parties.

At the Summit, the prime minister is accompanied by Caretaker Ministers including Foreign Minister Jilil Abbas Jilani, Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Climate Change Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Energy Minister Muhammad Ali.

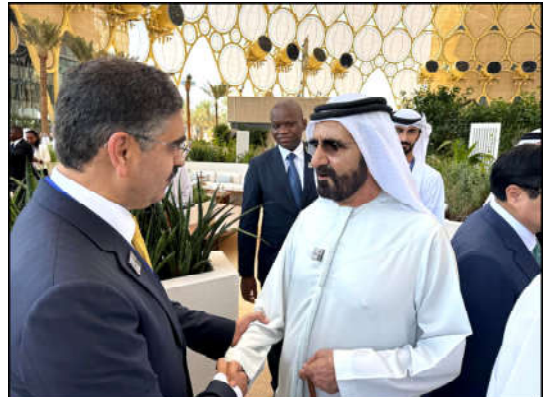
Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-

Haq Kakar on Friday visited the Pakistan Pavilion, established here at the venue of United Nations' 28th Conference of Parties (COP 28). The prime minister was briefed on the efforts being made by Pakistan with regard to the negotiations and facilitation in the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund.

He was also briefed on the 'Living Indus Initiative' which is designed to rehabilitate the health of the Indus Basin in Pakistan through climate-resilient approaches and nature-based solutions.

The prime minister also met the Pakistani climate experts at the Pavilion and appreciated their efforts with regard to climate change risk mitigation.

Caretaker ministers for Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, and Pakistan's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates also accompanied the prime minister.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets with Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on the sidelines of the high level segment of COP-28.

Pak calls for permanent ceasefire in Gaza, investigation into attacks by Israel on medical facilities

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan while calling for permanent ceasefire in Gaza has said investigation into attacks by Israel on medical facilities centers be got conducted.

'Indian forces brutalities are continuing in Occupied Kashmir. India should stop terrorism in Kashmir valley. The terrorists attacks from Afghanistan and terrorists safe havens therein are matter of grave concern, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during weekly press brief-

ing here Friday. She said care taker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar ul Haq Kakar is on his visit to Dubai to represent Pakistan in opening session of World Climate Action summit Cop-28 conference. He has visited UAE and Kuwait as well. He met UAE president and held talks on bilateral relations and regional issues.

She said Pakistan has once again asked Afghan authorities to take immediate and effective steps against terrorist entities operating from their soil.



QUETTA: Activists of National Democratic Movement (NDM), Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) and Awami National Party (ANP) are holding protest demonstration against forced deportation of Afghans, at Mannan Chowk in Quetta.

Al-Qadir Trust case NAB files reference against Imran, Bushra and 6 others

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday filed a reference against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and seven others, including the ex-premier's wife Bushra Bibi and property tycoon Malik Riaz, in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The case alleges that Imran and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion that was identified and returned to the country by the UK during the previous PTI government.

Imran was initially arrested in the case earlier this year from the premises of the Islamabad High Court

but was later released after the Supreme Court declared the arrest unlawful.

On Nov 14, the PTI chief, who is already imprisoned in Adiala Jail in the cipher case, was again arrested by the accountability watchdog in the case. He was then handed over to the watchdog on physical remand, before being sent on judicial remand.

The others named in the reference include Farhat Shahzadi, a close friend of Imran's spouse, former special assistants to the prime minister (SAPM) Mirza Shahzad Akbar and Zulfikar Bukhari, legal expert for the PTI government's Assets Recovery Unit (ARU) Ziaul Mustafa Nasim and Ahmed Riaz.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar being received by the President of the United Arab Emirates His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres on his arrival at Dubai Expo City to attend the High Level Segment of United Nations' 28th Conference of Parties.

Let people make decisions of Pakistan: Bilawal pledges to move ahead and serve masses & country burying politics of hatred, division & ego

Chairman PPP says he can change destiny of country together with people; urges people not to let decide those destiny of country who have made politics of hatred and division; emphasizes upon giving up traditional thinking and approach of politics & rule

QUETTA: The Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reiterated his pledge to move ahead and serve masses of the country burying the politics of hatred, division and ego.

The Chairman PPP said that let people of Pakistan make decisions about fate of the country, as when they (people) take any decision then no power of the world can stop them from doing so.

Bilawal Bhutto said that we are being told that the person who remained Prime Minister of the country would resolve the problems and steer out of

the hardships after becoming Premier for fourth time. The PPP chief was addressing the Balochistan High Court Bar here on Friday morning.

He said that we have full confidence on the people of Pakistan that they would hear us. He said that he can change the destiny of country together with the people.

Chairman PPP thanked the people of Balochistan for the wholehearted participation and response in the party's foundation day gathering in Quetta.

He said that the people of Balochistan gave the message that they are with Pakistan Peoples Party.

Referring the 8th August 2016 tragedy of civil hospital Quetta, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he knew Balochistan and well aware of the agony the people have gone through.

He said that he has gone through the agony and grief, which the people of Balochistan have passed.

He said that my grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged to death while his mother and uncles were martyred too. "Today, when I see a mother in Balochistan sad because of her son's target killing or disappearance, I understand her pain," said Chairman.

Continued on page 2

Chairman PTI moves court against order for his jail trial

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI has filed petition in the court against the order of his jail trial.

The petition has been filed in Special court established under official secret act led by judge Ahsan Ali Zaidi in the court complex on November 28.

It was further said in the petition the court issued order on November 28 in connection with jail trial.

In the presence of November 23 order, November 28 order is illegal. The court is therefore, requested to get implement November 23, 2023 order.

PkMAP to observe DA of Samad Khan Achakzai today

QUETTA: The death anniversary of eminent Pashtoon nationalist leader, Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achakzai is scheduled to be observed today (Saturday). Marking the death anniversary, a grand public meeting has been arranged by the Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) at the Ayub stadium today.

The Chairman PkMAP, Mehmood Khan Achakzai and other key leaders of the party would address the public meeting.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Information Imran Khan and Director General Public Relations Muhammad Noor Khetran meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai

Training skills being imparted to 20,000 youth: State's responsibility to provide livelihood chances to people, says caretaker Chief Minister

Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki says every youngster can't be provided govt. job due to limited employments in public sector

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that it is responsibility of the state to provide livelihood opportunities to the people, but still each and every youngster can't be provided government job just because of the limited employments in the public sector.

The Chief Minister was speaking to a representative delegation of the Overseas Employment Promoters' Association who called on him here on Friday.

The Chairman of Association, Asad Kayani led the delegation. Also present in the meeting were caretaker Provincial Minister for Fi-

nance and Revenue, Amjad Rasheed, and other concerned high ups.

The Chief Minister said that the training skills are being imparted to some 20,000 youth in different sectors under the Prime Minister Youth Skills Programme.

He mentioned that the youth whom training is being imparted are also included 7,000 women. He was confident that these skilled youth would be employed in different sectors once complete the phase of training. He said that there are very limited number of jobs in the government sector, and as such every individual can't be provided job in the public sector.

He said that it is re-

sponsibility of the state to provide opportunities of livelihood to the people, but the livelihood means not mere government job.

He said that there is a demand of skilled persons in the national and international market, therefore, we are imparting training to the youth in different sectors.

He mentioned that some 20,000 youngsters have got admissions for training in different courses in the province.

The caretaker Minister Finance on the occasion informed that the quota of jawans of Balochistan has been increased to 10,000 from 4,000 in NEVTEC. The quota of youngsters would be increased to 20,000 further, he added.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a meeting regarding progress on ongoing projects with cooperation of World Bank

PM attends COP28 in Dubai

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday joined the world leaders at the high-level segment of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) of the United Nations to discuss actions on climate change.

The prime minister was received by President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres on his arrival at the venue, Dubai Expo City. Besides attending the opening session of the World Climate Action Summit, PM Kakar is expected to meet the prime ministers of the Netherlands and Estonia, on the sidelines of the conference.

Governor calls for providing necessary opportunities to youth to show potential

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to provide necessary opportunities and facilities to the youth so that they are able to show their hidden potential.

He said that the youth can't utilise their hidden capabilities because of lack of necessary opportunities and facilities.

In this regard, we are determined to provide livelihood to the unemployed youth and keep them abreast with the modern technology and requirements so that they are able to earn lakhs of rupees with

support of online offshore companies.

The Governor was speaking to the Vice Chancellor of Gwadar University, Professor Dr. Abdul Razaq Sabir who called on him here on Friday.

The Governor said that our youth are talented and hard working, however, they need necessary opportunities to show their hidden potential.

He said that it is very necessary for youth to learn any of the modern skill.

The Governor urged the Vice Chancellors of public sector universities to guide the students to make them skilled alongside degree holders.



QUETTA: A delegation comprising of newly elected cabinet members led by President Balochistan Civil Service Association Mujeeb Rehman Qambrani meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

ECP moves closer to elections, releases the final list of constituencies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has released the final list of constituencies derived from the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 for the upcoming general elections. According to the notification issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan, the number of general seats has been reduced from 272 to 266. The 12 seats originally designated for elsewhere FATA have been abolished, with six seats reallocated to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa based on population.

The Election Commission reports that the National Assembly will have 266 constituencies for gen-

eral seats, and there will be 593 constituencies for general seats in the provincial assemblies nationwide. According to the finalized constituencies, Islamabad is allocated 3 general seats in the National Assembly, Punjab will have 141 general seats, and the Provincial Assembly is set to have 297 general seats. Sindh is designated 61 general seats in the National Assembly and 130 in the Provincial Assembly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is allotted 45 general seats in the National Assembly and 115 in the Provincial Assembly.

Meanwhile, Balochistan holds 16 general seats in the National Assembly and 51 in the Provincial Assembly. As

outlined by the Election Commission, the National Assembly will include 60 seats for women and 10 reserved seats for minorities. The total membership of the National Assembly will be 336, comprising 266 general seats. Providing specifics on reserved seats for women, the election commission stated that the National Assembly will allocate 32 seats for women from Punjab, 14 from Sindh, 10 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 4 from Balochistan. Providing a breakdown of the 141 general seats in Punjab, the final list of constituencies issued by the Election Commission indicates that

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: A Thai girl presenting flowers to Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif during National Day of Thailand ceremony at a local hotel in Federal Capital.

Demo in Muzaffarabad against blasphemous post by Hindu student

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A strong protest was held in Muzaffarabad, today, against a derogatory video about the Holy Prophet (SAW) posted on social media by a Hindu student from India studying at an institute in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

A large number of people participated in the protest organized by Pasban-e Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir. The protesters raising pro-Islam slogans marched from the Central Press Club to Burhan Wani Chowk.

Addressing the demonstration, the speakers maintained that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir will not forgive any insolence in the glory of the Holy Prophet (SAW). They said,

"The love for the Prophet (SAW) is more than everything in the world, the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir will strongly resist the attacks of Hindu extremists on their religion, Quran, mosques, madrasas and Islamic rituals."

The speakers said the Bharatiya Janata Party has sown the seeds of hatred against Islam and Muslims in India. They said, the Indian government under the leadership of Narendra Modi is directly sponsoring Hindu organizations which are openly attacking Islamic rituals in India. They warned the BJP government to desist from transferring the politics of Islamophobia and hatred to occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

pealed to the United Nations Security Council to stop the Indian actions against the Muslim identity and their majority in the internationally recognized disputed territory.

Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat Uzair Ahmed Ghazali leaders of various political, social and religious parties Shaukat Javed Mir, Abdul Razzaq Khan, Khalid Mehmood Zaidi, Mushatq-ul-Islam, Maulana Bilal Ahmad Farooqui, Qari Aqeel Shams, Shuja-ul-Haque, Riaz Ahmed Awan, Mehtab Hameed, Chaudhary Ismail, Haji Rangeel Butt, Ghulam Hussain Butt, Chaudhry Shah Wali, Abdul Hameed Lone, Akhtar Khan, Tanzeer Iqbal and others participated in the demonstrations.

The protestors ap-



QUETTA: Former Speaker Provincial Assembly Malik Sikandar Advocate meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

Couple commit suicide after killing 3 daughters over 'loan repayment'

FAISALABAD (INP): In a shocking incident, a Faisalabad couple committed suicide after killing their daughters in Faisalabad over loan repayment on Friday.

According to police, the incident took place in Dajkot area of Faisalabad, where a man named Tahir and his wife Naeed committed suicide after killing their three children.

The police said Tahir took a loan of about Rs300,000 from various persons and the couple took this step after failing to pay back the amount.

A letter found from the body of Tahir stated that he was committing suicide after failing to pay his loan, the police said.

The bodies have been shifted to the hospital by the rescue teams for legal formalities.

Last year in December, a man killed his wife and three minor daughters on the pretext of saving his honour in Muzaffargarh.

Bilawal pledges to move ahead and...

Continued from page 1
man Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and questioned that whether it is written in our destiny that the blood of the people of Pakistan, especially the people of Balochistan, is cheap. Has the system for 70 years brought justice to the citizens living in this country?

Chairman PPP said that general elections are going to be held on February 8 next year, and added: "We are being told that the one who became the prime minister for three times, now he will become the prime minister for the fourth time and after that he will get the country out of trouble. (And) the other person is the one who was the prime minister a few years ago, who had said that the protesting Hazara community in Balochistan were black-mailers, and who, being prime minister, considered the issue of missing persons unimportant, and liked to call himself a youth leader despite being 70 years old." He questioned whether these people are the options of the people of Pakistan, Balochistan and the country?

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari urged that those politicians who made our blood cheap should not be given another chance, adding that let the people decide the future of Pakistan. "I also know that when the people and the youth take a decision, no power in the world can reverse it. I request you to surprise them all on February 8, use your voting power, come out in large numbers, and don't leave the fate of the country to 2 people," he added.

"My objection is not

at all that they have become elders," said Chairman PPP, adding that age does not matter, you can adopt a new style of politics for this country even when you are old, and you can be interested in the same old style of politics even when you are young. He emphasized that we have to leave the traditional and old political thinking. "We will bury the politics of hate, ego and division and move forward. Inshallah, PPP will be in the government. We will first give the people of Balochistan their right," he continued.

He said that he wants to replicate the model of Thar project in Balochistan. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that it was victory of people of Balochistan when President Zardari signed the 18th amendment in the past, and so when the NFC Award was announced after long time and then announced Aghaz Haqooq Balochistan Package and started implementation on it.

In the meantime, when President Zardari tendered apology to the people of Balochistan on the past's highhandedness, it was also their (people) victory, he maintained.

Earlier, the PPP chairman was welcomed by President Balochistan High Court Bar Association, Afzal Harifal and President Quetta Bar Association, Abid Kakar along with Vice Chairman Balochistan Bar Council, Amanullah Kakar and President Peoples' Lawyers Forum, Behram Tareen.

Also accompanied with PPP Chairman were the senior leaders of party, Faisal Karim Kundi, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri Mir Changez Jamali and others.

hand, while the implementation on the Aghaz Haqooq Balochistan Package announced by the then President Asif Ali Zardari was also stopped.

He said that our constitution gives right to the people over the resources their provinces have, and we would surely ensure it after coming into power. He referred the example of Thar coal project and said that we made the people of Thar partners and share holders to give them economic benefits.

He said that we want to replicate the model of Thar project in Balochistan.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that it was victory of people of Balochistan when President Zardari signed the 18th amendment in the past, and so when the NFC Award was announced after long time and then announced Aghaz Haqooq Balochistan Package and started implementation on it.

In the meantime, when President Zardari tendered apology to the people of Balochistan on the past's highhandedness, it was also their (people) victory, he maintained.

Earlier, the PPP chairman was welcomed by President Balochistan High Court Bar Association, Afzal Harifal and President Quetta Bar Association, Abid Kakar along with Vice Chairman Balochistan Bar Council, Amanullah Kakar and President Peoples' Lawyers Forum, Behram Tareen.

Also accompanied with PPP Chairman were the senior leaders of party, Faisal Karim Kundi, Nawab Sanauallah Zehri Mir Changez Jamali and others.

BISP largest social protection programme of Pakistan: Amjad Saqib

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, said on Friday that BISP was the largest Social Protection programme in the country.

During his visit to BISP Zonal Office South Punjab and District Office Multan, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib showcased his commitment to the welfare of needy women and the sustainability of the programme.

Dr. Amjad Saqib heard the concerns of needy women and directed relevant authorities to resolve their issues promptly.

He further directed the staff to ensure transparent payments, and also emphasized dialogues with POS agents, and instructed the team to facilitate needy people with available re-

sources. Dr. Amjad Saqib stressed the importance of maintaining cleanliness standards in offices and treating needy women with respect and empathy emphasizing the human-centric approach of BISP.

In an address to BISP employees at Jamia Masjid Dream Garden Multan, Dr. Amjad Saqib reiterated the significance of the program, highlighting its budget of Rs 471 billion allocated by the government of Pakistan.

He described financial assistance to 9.3 million poor families as an expression of love, sacrifice, and brotherhood.

Dr. Amjad Saqib expressed the aim to make BISP a sustainable program for public service, asserting that assistance to poor families is not charity but

their right. Furthermore, Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized on lifting needy households out of poverty, connecting children from such families with technical skills, and highlighting the importance of small businesses in poverty alleviation.

He proposed the establishment of an endowment fund to improve the economic conditions of needy households, considering it a social responsibility to create an exemplary institution in the form of the Benazir Income Support Program.

Dr. Amjad Saqib also listened to suggestions from BISP employees for program enhancement, showcasing a collaborative approach to refine and strengthen Pakistan's social protection initiatives.

Pakistan elected as chair of CWC's Conference of States Parties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Ambassador Suljok Mustansar Tarar has been elected as chairperson of the 28th session of the Conference of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction. The position will be for a period of one year.

The position of chair is rotated among the five regional groups in the CSP and candidature of Ambassador Suljok Mustansar Tarar has been proposed to the 193-member conference by the Asia Group. The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development,

Production and Stockpiling of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction (CWC) - with 193 States Parties - is a comprehensive disarmament treaty, eliminating an entire class of weapons of mass destruction.

The Conference of States Parties comprises all states parties to the CWC and is the principal organ overseeing the implementation of the Convention. It is a matter of great honour for Pakistan to have been elected to this prestigious position and reflects the confidence of states parties in Pakistan's diplomacy and commitment to the CWC. This is the first time that Pakistan has been elected as the Chair of the Hague-based Conference of States Parties of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Decision taken to auction precious imported vehicles provided to CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): The imported luxury vehicles provided to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) will be put to auction. Registrar Supreme Court (SC) has written a letter to cabinet secretary and chief secretary Punjab for auctioning these vehicles.

It has been said in the letter that the Mercedes Benz which was purchased at the cost of Rs 61 million in 2020 will be auctioned. Bullet proof land cruiser provided by Punjab government will also be put to auction. Importing luxury vehicles for those holding constitutional slots is not proper. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has not used both the vehicles. The amount to be acquired from the auction of the vehicles will be spent on public transport.

Salman Butt, Kamran Akmal, Rao Iftikhar appointed members of PCB's selection committee

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday appointed former cricketers Salman Butt, Kamran Akmal and Rao Iftikhar Anjum as members of the selection committee led by chief selector Wahab Riaz.

The appointments come as part of a series of change across the team's management structure, which started with the removal of Babar Azam as captain and also saw Mohammad Hafeez as-

sume coaching duties and Riaz getting the nod for chief selector's position. In a press release issued today, the cricket board stated that the "three [former cricketers] have assumed their responsibilities in the selection panel with immediate effect".

"Their first assignment as consultant members to the chief selector includes the upcoming five-match T20I series against New Zealand, set to commence on 12 January 2024 following the conclusion of the

Test tour to Australia," PCB said.

According to the board, the former players may be assigned additional tasks such as conducting skills camps when they are not engaged in selection duties.

"Kamran Akmal, in a 15-year career from 2002 to 2017, played 53 Tests, 157 ODIs and 58 T20Is. The former wicketkeeper-batter amassed 6,871 runs across formats and bagged 453 dismissals behind the stumps.



QUETTA: Participants are holding awareness walk on the occasion of World AIDS Day organized by Society of Collective Interests Orientation (SICIO) held in Quetta.

Continued from page 1

Attack district will have 2 National Assembly seats, Rawalpindi will have 6, and Wazirabad and Murree combined will have 1 National Assembly seat.

Likewise, Chakwal is allocated 1 National Assembly seat, while Talagang and Chakwal combined will have 1 seat. Jhelum will hold 2 seats, and Gujarat will have 4 National Assembly seats. Wazirabad and Hafizabad will each have 1 seat, Mandi Bahaudin will have 2, Sialkot 5, Narowal 2, and Gujranwala 5 seats. Similarly, sargodha is set to have 5 National Assembly seats, Khushab 2, Mianwali 2, while both Bhakkar and Chiniot will each have 2 seats. Faisalabad will account for 10 National Assembly seats, Toba Tek Singh 3, Jhang 3, Nankana Sahib 2, and Sheikhupura 4.

Lahore is allocated 14 seats in the National Assembly, Kasur 4, Okara 4, Pakpattan 2, Sahiwal 3, Khanewal 4, and Multan will have 6 National Assembly seats. The number of

National Assembly seats for Lodhran will be 2, Wahari 4, Bahawalnagar 4 and Bahawalpur 5 while Rahim Yar Khan will have 6, Muzaffargarh 4, Kot Addu 2, Lyiyyah 2 and Taunsa will have one seat. According to the conclusive list of constituencies issued by the Election Commission, Dera Ghazi Khan is assigned 3 National Assembly seats, while Rajanpur is also allocated 3 seats. Sindh province is allocated 61 general seats in the National Assembly. The final constituency list indicates that Jacobabad district in Sindh will have 1 National Assembly seat, with Jacobabad and Kashmir jointly forming 1 constituency. Shikarpur will be represented by 1 National Assembly seat, and combined, Kashmir and Shikarpur will share 1 seat. Additionally, Larkana and Qambar Shahdadkot will jointly hold 2 National Assembly seats. Ghotki, Sukkur, and Khairpur will each have 3

National Assembly seats, while Nauvshero Feroze and Shaheed Benazirabad will both have 2 seats. Sanghar is allocated 2 National Assembly seats, Mirpur Khas 2, Umartkot 1, and Tharparkar will have 2 seats. The final constituency list indicates that Matiari, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Sajawal, Thatta, and Jamshoro will each hold 1 National Assembly seat. Hyderabad is set to have 3 seats, while Badin and Dadu will each have 2 seats in the National Assembly. According to the final list of constituencies from the Election Commission, Malir district in Karachi will have 3 National Assembly seats, Korangi 3, Karachi East 4, and Karachi South 4 seats. Kemari will be represented by 2 seats, Karachi West 3, and Karachi Central is designated 4 National Assembly seats. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will have 45 general seats in the National Assembly. According to the Election Commission's final

PM Kakar meets world leaders on COP28 margins



Lara hopes West Indies redeems itself by winning ICC T20 World Cup 2024

BARBADOS (INP): West Indies batting legend Brian Lara reckons missing an important competition such as ICC Cricket World Cup 2023 was a huge setback to West Indies cricket in more than one way.

The legendary cricketer - who has scored the most runs for the West Indies in the ODI World Cup history (1225 between 1992 and 2007) - hopes the Men in Maroon - who failed to qualify for the ODI World Cup in India - will redeem themselves by winning the next ICC event.

Andre Russell Tunes Into Team India Games Only To Watch Rinku Singh Bat West Indies failed to get a direct ODI World Cup qualification as they failed to finish amongst the top eight in the ODI Rankings. The team had to play the ICC ODI World Cup 2024 Qualifiers in Zimbabwe where Sri Lanka and Netherlands pipped them to book the ticket for the ten-team showpiece.

Musakhel, Barkhan, Loralai, and Daki will each have 1 National Assembly seat. Ziarat, Harnai, Sibbi, Kohlu, Dera Bugti will constitute 1 seat of National Assembly while Jhal Magasi, Kachchi and Naserabad will be 1 constituency of the National Assembly. Sohbatpur, Jafarabad, Aosta Muhammad, and Naserabad will collectively form 1 National Assembly constituency, and Khuzdar will have 1 seat in the National Assembly. Additionally, there will be 1 National Assembly seat comprising Panjgur and Kech, along with 1 constituency consisting of Kech and Gwadar.

Similarly, Chaghi, Naushki, Kharan and Wasak will have 1 National Assembly constituency while Sorab, Kalat, Mastung will have 1 National Assembly Constituency. The number of National Assembly seats for Quetta will be 3 while the National Assembly consisting of Pashin, Qila Abdullah and Chaman will have 1 seat.

Pakistan-Uzbekistan connected by centuries-old cultural ties: Jamal Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah on Friday said that Uzbekistan and Pakistan are connected by a centuries-old cultural relationship, which has strong roots in history. He said this while addressing the opening ceremony of the Photo Exhibition on Joint Cultural Heritage, along with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Pakistan, Oybek Arif Usmanov, organized by the patronage of Federal Minister for Culture and National Heritage, Syed Jamal Shah. The minister said that 30 years after the independence of Uzbekistan is a small part of mutual modern cultural history, the two countries have been engaged in a mutual venture of literature, music and architecture for centuries, which is moving forward and strengthening after each passing day.

Jamal Shah said that the folklore in Pakistan literature has been adopted from the literature of Samarkand and Bokhara,

the influence of which is still present in our folk literature. He said that the literary and cultural heritage of both countries is common and the writers and poets of both countries are equally popular on both sides. He said that Pashto literature is closely related to the literature and culture of Uzbekistan, like Pashto Sufi poet Rehman Baba is also influenced by the culture and literature of Samarkand and Bokhara.

The minister said that Uzbekistan's ambassador to Pakistan understands Pashto and other regional languages very eloquently. He said that Uzbekistan is a significant part of the ancient silk route, from here there was trade between the countries of the region and other continents as well. Jamal Shah said that Samarkand Bukhara is famous in the world for carpets and spices since ancient times and the commercial goods made by them are very popular here.

Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Pakistan, Oybek Arif Usmanov said

that today, "we are able to show to Pakistani public and Diplomatic representatives the retrospective and historical photos demonstrating the very active dynamic interaction of Uzbek and Pakistani leaders - Presidents, Prime Ministers and federal ministers.

He said that after 3 decades of our active interaction let's focus on the connectivity strategy of our two regions South Asia and Central Asia - implementation of the projects for boosting trade and economics, transport linkages and cultural and people-to-people re-connectivity.

He said that this strategic approach is also actively promoted by our country's governments, experts community and most importantly supported by our young generation.

"Our connectivity logically emanates from the closeness of cultures and religious traditions - caravan's roads of Central Asia with South Asia - Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh."



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah taking keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition titled "Quwat o Akhuwat" at COMSATS Art Gallery in Federal Capital.

HEC, NDF to collaborate for success of green youth movement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the National Dialogue Forum (NDF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on one of the development projects of HEC, "Green Youth Movement (GYM)-Prime Minister's Youth Programme."

According to the terms outlined in the MoU held here the other day, the NDF will actively engage with university students, offering both technical guidance and financial support for capacity-building training and social action projects. These initiatives are designed to address environmental challenges and instigate positive transformations within local communities. The collaborative efforts underscore a shared commitment to fostering environmental awareness, education, and tangible so-

lutions for a more sustainable future. Executive Director HEC Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum and Executive Director NDF officially sealed the partnership by signing the MoU. Advisor (Planning and Development) HEC Dr. Mazhar, Project Director GYM Irfan Ullah and the Project Management Unit attended the ceremony. On this occasion, Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum said that climate change was an imminent threat that demands a collective attention and action. "The collaboration through the GYM project holds the promise of mobilizing Green Youth Movement Clubs to actively combat climate challenges," he said. Dr. Zia emphasized the importance of engaging the youth in environmental initiatives and stated, "The future belongs to our youth and their involvement is crucial in finding sustainable solutions."

Pakistan Navy deploys ship for regional maritime security patrol in GoA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amidst the prevailing maritime situation in the Middle East, Pakistan Navy has deployed PNS TUGHRIL to ensure safety and security of merchant ships carrying shipments to and from Pakistani ports passing through one of the world's busiest choke points.

Pakistan Navy is committed to ensure freedom of navigation on high seas and safety of international sea lanes of communication besides safeguard-

ing national maritime interests and trade through sea, a Pakistan Navy news release on Friday said.

Pakistan Navy is well cognizant of its national obligation with regards to maintenance of rule based order in the region.

In the same spirit, Pakistan Navy regularly deploys its ships on Regional Maritime Security Patrols and also contributes to collaborative maritime security efforts under the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces.



ISLAMABAD: Amidst the prevailing maritime situation in the Middle East, Pakistan Navy has deployed PNS TUGHRIL to ensure safety and security of merchant ships carrying shipments to and from Pakistani ports passing through one of the world's busiest choke points.

IHC orders to remove Mazari's name from Passport control list

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ordered to remove the name of Former Federal Minister Shireen Mazari from the passport control list (PCL).

Court said that it has also been declared unfair and illegal to include her name in the passport control list.

DG Immigration should remove Shireen Mazari's name from PCL and submit a report within a week.

DG Immigration should submit a report to the Deputy Registrar High Court within a week.

IRSA releases 89,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 89,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 44,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1496.93 feet and was 96.93 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 22,400 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1175.35 feet, which was 125.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 6,100 cusecs and 28,000 cusecs respectively.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister Primary and Secondary Healthcare of Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique and others cutting the cake during 52nd Bangladesh Armed Forces Day ceremony, at a local in Federal Capital.

APHC leaders flay sacrilegious act of Hindu student

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders, including Agha Syed Hassan Al-Moosvi Al-Safvi, have strongly denounced the sacrilegious act of a Hindu student from India studying at an institute in Srinagar. According to Kashmir Media Service, the Hindu student studying at the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar posted a derogatory video clip on social media about the Holy Prophet (PBUH) on Tuesday. Since then the occupied territory was simmering with anger.

Agha Syed Hassan Al-Moosvi Al-Safvi addressing a gathering in Badgam strongly denounced the content posted on social media about the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

which the Muslims cannot tolerate. He also rejected anything that gives rise to prejudice against all religious figures and symbols.

APHC leader Advocate Devendar Singh Behl in a statement in Jammu said India is a so-called democratic country and the preachers of Hindutva have always attacked the religion of minorities in the country. He said minorities and non-Hindu religions are not safe in any state of India.

Devendar Singh Behl said Muslims are the most civilized and peace-loving, but in India, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, Hindutva priests do some kind of insulting act against the Prophet of Islam (PBUH), which hurts the sentiments of Muslims. He said actually these

extremists supported by the Indian government are using such nefarious tactics to deliberately hurt the sentiments of Muslims in the region. APHC leaders, Fayaz Hussain Jafari and Syed Sibte Shabbir Qummi, in a joint statement issued in Srinagar said Muslims cannot tolerate any kind of blasphemous acts against their beloved Prophet (PBUH). Hindu leaders and activists should keep in mind that nothing is more important to Muslims than the honour of their Prophet (PBUH), they added.

The Chairman of Jammu Kashmir Pir Panjal Freedom Movement, Israr Ahmed, in a statement in Jammu said the Indian government is playing with the sentiment of Muslims in occupied Kashmir.

Polio immunization drive continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third nationwide polio immunization campaign of the current year continued to vaccinate over 44.3 million children under five years of age in 159 districts.

In a message, Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan urged parents to ensure the vaccination of their children during the ongoing polio immunization drive.

He said that all the children deserved a healthy life and future. "We cannot allow a vaccine-preventable disease to continue to harm our children like this."

He said that protecting children's well-being was a collective responsibility. "Every country that has eliminated polio so far has done so with the support of communities, parents, religious leaders, and social organizations."

Dr Nadeem said, "We need the same in Pakistan, for communities to join the government in its fight against polio."

Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication, Dr Shahzad Baig said: "Polio cases are fewer than they have ever been, yet the virus has shown up in sewage samples in several major cities this year, indicating that some population pockets that have missed out on the vaccine." He said, "The programme is continuously reviewing and reassessing its strategies and campaigns." "We will ensure that we find these missed populations and vaccinate them."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary of Health Iftikhar Ali Shallwani addressing on the occasion of World Aids Day.

Election Commission refutes Awan's allegation on KP, NA seats reduction

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) dismissed Dr. Babar Awan Advocate's assertion of a decrease in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's National Assembly seats, deeming it an ineffective effort to sow confusion among the public.

A spokesperson for ECP underscored that, in his capacity as a legal professional, Babar Awan should adhere to constitutional and legal constraints.

The authority to determine seats in the National and Provincial As-

semblies lies within the purview of the Parliament, and the Election Commission has defined constituencies based on the constitutionally designated seats.

The 25th constitutional amendment in 2018 resulted in the merger of the former FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to the elimination of 12 National Assembly seats from FATA. Simultaneously, 6 seats were added to the National Assembly seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bringing the total from 39 to 45 seats.

Bukhari directs PPP ticket aspirants to submit application till Dec 4

ISLAMABAD (INP): Secretary General Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Syed Nayyer Hussain Bukhari Friday directed the candidates seeking PPP tickets to contest National and Provincial Assemblies to submit applications for party tickets till December 4. "The candidates who have submitted applications for party tickets earlier are advised to send their applications without bank drafts," he said.

Nayyer Bukhari said that PPPP issued these instructions to the candidates who want to contest up-

coming general elections on PPP tickets to write their constituency no in accordance with the new constituencies announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The General Secretary said that the new applicants are directed to attach a bank draft of Rs 40,000 for the National Assembly and Rs 30,000 for the Provincial Assembly seats. Nayyer Bukhari said that the applications would be in the name of President PPPP and sent the same to the address of Bilawal House Karachi or House No. 1, Street 85 Embassy Road Islamabad.

IHC issues written order about Nawaz's acquittal in Avenfield

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday issued a short written order regarding the acquittal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif in the Avenfield property reference.

The IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, in its order, stated that the NAB prosecutor gave the reference of the verdict in the appeals of co-accused Maryam Nawaz and Cap-

tain @ Muhammad Safdar. In the said order, the high court had given an observation that the prosecution had no document to prove its case against Nawaz Sharif.

It further said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had not challenged the verdict regarding the acquittal of Maryam Nawaz and her husband. The court, subsequently, accepting the reference of the verdict in the appeals of co-accused Maryam Nawaz and Cap-

Islootes breath moderate air after light drizzle subsides months ambient pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The air quality of the federal capital was recorded as moderate on Friday as the air pollutants ratio in the atmosphere was below the permissible limits of the national environmental quality standards of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency after yesterday's drizzle in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad helped subside the air pollutants.

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) daily air quality report indicated a reduced ratio of air pollutants, recorded below

permissible limits, and the air quality was moderate. The Agency is responsible for ensuring the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997.

The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 14.4 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which was lower than the national environmental quality standards (NEQS) of 35 mic-programmes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy for sensitive people.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) are digging for plantation on a green alongside Islamabad Highway.

ICCPO orders AIG Establishment to hold orderly room; to address the concerns of officials

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan has directed the AIG Establishment to hold an orderly room on a permanent basis to ensure timely and prioritized resolution of institutional and personal matters concerning police personnel.

The establishment of an orderly room aims to prioritize and address issues faced by police officers and officials on a timely basis, emphasizing their welfare and issue resolution.

Following these directives, the AIG Establishment holds an orderly room at Central Police Office Islamabad. Officers and officials of Islamabad Capital Police participated in the orderly room.

During the orderly room, police personnel brought forth both personal and official concerns before the AIG Establishment.

Immediate directives were issued for the resolution of pressing matters, while directives were given to senior officers to address remaining issues promptly.

On the occasion, the AIG Establishment highlighted various measures taken for the welfare of police personnel, including initiatives aimed at improving residence facilities, enhancing healthcare provisions, and raising educational standards.

He assured all personnel of an open-door policy at his office, encouraging them to bring forward any concerns for immediate resolution.

ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that, the primary objective of the orderly room is not only to address the welfare, personal, and official issues of police personnel but also to elevate their morale by prioritizing resolutions based on their well-being.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to build Chak Beli Link Road in the outskirts of the city.

Police ensure installation of surveillance cameras in I-9 and I-10 Markaz

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police are set to enhance security measures by installing surveillance cameras in I-9 and I-10 Markaz which aims to strengthen collaborative efforts in safeguarding commercial spaces and proactively preventing potential threats to public safety. The focus is on ensuring collective action and promptly initiating the next phase of camera installations to eliminate any opportunities for nefarious elements. Police sources said a collective effort is essential to swiftly address any challenges to public safety.

Previously, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), alongside the Islamabad business community, inaugurated new surveillance cameras at I-8

Markaz.

This initiative aims to strengthen collaborative efforts in safeguarding commercial spaces and proactively preventing potential threats to public safety. The focus is on ensuring collective action and promptly initiating the next phase of camera installations to eliminate any opportunities for nefarious elements. Police sources said a collective effort is essential to swiftly address any challenges to public safety.

Similarly protective measures will be extended to all commercial centres in collaboration with Islamabad's business community, fostering a sense of security among traders and residents.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Saturday December 02, 2023

Half victories

The entire point of an independent judiciary arises from the need for neutral arbiters who can determine, through objective assessment of facts and a dispassionate interpretation and application of the law, whether any member(s) of society has broken the social contract.

It is our great misfortune that our justice system repeatedly fails on this count. Nowhere are the implications of this failure more evident than on the political stage, where careers are made and ended on court cases that seem to be decided not on facts and laws but on the whims of the powers that be. The latest such example is the exoneration of PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif in the Avenfield case.

The charges brought against him had seemed enough five years ago for the judiciary to convict him and end his political career but have now disappeared at the stroke of a pen. Were the judges wrong then, or are they wrong now? It is a pity that it depends on whom one asks.

In a just society, innocence — especially in cases involving allegations of moral turpitude — cannot be a matter of perspective alone. Mr Sharif's position has not been helped by the fact that the case against him has been dismissed because NAB, which had once relentlessly hounded him and his family, suddenly has no interest in prosecuting him.

People will ask what prompted this change of heart and wonder if it had something to do with Mr Sharif's perceived status as the 'new selected'; few will bother to consider the weaknesses of the original case. Therefore, while the PML-N supremo may have technically been deemed innocent, the shadow of his conviction will continue to linger and may even turn against him in case he steps out of line again.

It would have been far wiser for Mr Sharif to have returned to the country much earlier to fight his legal battles and secure a more compelling victory in them.

It would have established some distance between his acquittals and the accusation being made by other parties that the state is going all out to skew the playing field in favour of the PML-N. But perhaps Mr Sharif knew better than to have faith in a system that had failed him thrice.

If one considers where his primary rival, PTI's Imran Khan, is today, Mr Sharif cannot be considered irrational for lacking faith in the judicial process. The treatment being meted out to Mr Khan parallels what Mr Sharif was forced to endure some five years ago.

In the former's case, too, it seems to matter little what the facts and the laws say. And this, again, is the tragedy of the Pakistani judicial system: that justice is rarely ever seen to be done.

Empowering Women In Pakistan: A Call for Change



By Ayesha Rafiq

Today Pakistan stands as a nation with a rich tapestry of history, culture, and traditions. However, woven into this tapestry are threads of inequality and oppression that continue to stifle the growth and empowerment of its women. As we celebrate progress on various fronts, it is crucial to turn our gaze towards the desperate need for women's rights and empowerment in Pakistani society.

Pakistan, like many other countries, has made strides in acknowledging the importance of women in various spheres of life. However, the ground reality reveals a stark contrast. Women in Pakistan face multifaceted challenges, ranging from gender-based violence and limited educational opportunities to workplace discrimination and restricted mobility. It is in this context that the urgent call for empowerment echoes through the voices of countless women

yearning for change. Quoting the Voices of Silence

In the quest for understanding the depth of this issue, it is imperative to listen to the voices that often remain unheard. In rural areas of Pakistan, women face cultural norms that curtail their freedom and opportunities. Rukhsar, a young woman from a small village in Punjab, shares, "I dream of an education, a life beyond the confines of my home, but societal expectations weigh heavily on my aspirations."

Her words encapsulate the struggle faced by many women in conservative pockets of the country. In urban settings, the challenges may manifest differently, but the essence remains the same. Ayesha, a professional in Karachi, reflects on the workplace dynamics: "Breaking the glass ceiling is a constant battle. Gender bias permeates our professional lives, limiting our growth and potential."

These voices underscore the need for a collective effort to dismantle the barriers that hinder women from realizing their full potential. Educational Empowerment: A Key Catalyst

Economic Empowerment: Beyond Tokenism

While strides have been made to improve access to education, disparities persist. According to UNESCO, female literacy rates in Pakistan lag behind those of males, and dropout rates among girls remain alarming.

Empowering women through education not only opens doors to economic independence but also challenges societal norms. Malala Yousafzai, a Nobel laureate hailing from Pakistan, stands as a testament to the transformative power of education. Her words resound: "Education is the only solution. Education first."

Yet, Malala's journey is just one facet of the struggle. Countless girls in Pakistan face systemic challenges in accessing quality education. Investments in education, coupled with community awareness programs, are essential to dismantle the barriers that limit the educational empowerment of women.

Economic Empowerment: Beyond Tokenism

Economic independence is a vital aspect of women's empowerment, and it extends beyond merely providing job opportunities. Ayesha Jalal, a prominent Pakistani historian, emphasizes the need for substantive change: "True empowerment comes when women are not just participants but leaders in the economic landscape."

While there has been progress in women joining the workforce, there is a pressing need to address wage gaps and discriminatory practices. Additionally, supporting women entrepreneurs can play a pivotal role in reshaping economic dynamics. Initiatives that provide financial literacy, access to credit, and mentorship opportunities can nurture a generation of women who contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic growth.

Legal Reforms: Navigating the Path Forward

Legal frameworks are instrumental in shaping societal attitudes and ensuring the protection of women's rights. Pakistan has witnessed legislative changes aimed at safeguarding women, such as the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, which addresses issues like honor killings and acid attacks. However, the implementation of these laws remains a challenge.

Quoting Asma Jahangir, a prominent human rights lawyer, sheds light on the necessity of effective implementation: "Laws alone cannot bring change; they must be enforced. We need a paradigm shift in societal attitudes and a commitment to justice for all."

Efforts must be intensified to bridge the gap between legislation and its implementation. Awareness campaigns, legal aid services, and a robust judiciary are essential components of a system that truly protects and empowers women.

Cultural Paradigm Shift: Breaking Chains of Tradition

Cultural norms often act as formidable barriers to women's empowerment. The concept of honor, deeply embedded in Pakistani society, sometimes leads to the suppression of women's voices. It is crucial to initiate a cultural paradigm shift that redefines notions of honor, placing dignity in the empowerment of women rather than in restricting their choices.

The words of Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, an Academy Award-winning filmmaker, resonate in this context: "We need stories that challenge stereotypes, that depict women as architects of their destiny rather than victims of circumstance."

Media, art, and literature can play pivotal roles in shaping narratives that challenge traditional gender roles. By portraying women as agents of change, these mediums can influence societal perceptions and pave the way for a more inclusive and empowering cultural landscape.

Conclusion: A Collec-

tive Call to Action

As Pakistan marks another year in its journey, it is crucial to reflect on the path ahead. The empowerment of women is not a solitary endeavor but a collective call to action. It requires governments, communities, families, and individuals to unite in dismantling the barriers that stifle the potential of half the population.

In the words of Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's first female Prime Minister: "Democracy needs support, and the best support for democracy comes from other democracies." The support for women's rights and empowerment must transcend borders, ideologies, and differences, weaving a global tapestry of equality and justice.

The urgency of this call lies in recognizing that empowering women is not just a matter of justice; it is an investment in the prosperity and well-being of society as a whole. As we celebrate progress made, let us also acknowledge the gaps that persist and commit to forging a future where every woman in Pakistan can live with dignity, equality, and the freedom to pursue her dreams. — (Student of National Defense University (NDU), Pursuing A Degree In Peace And Conflict Studies, Islamabad.)

What ails public-sector education?



Dr Ayesha Razzaque

I asked 12 year-old Sultan (pseudonym) to read from his Urdu textbook. He struggled to read a simple sentence ("more sher ki tarha jungle kaa badshah hai"). While he eventually read the sentence, he could not tell me what it meant. According to the teacher, his parents pulled him out of an Islamabad public school because he was not doing well and tried putting him to work. He promised he would do better and begged his parents not to send him to work. So, they admitted him to the non-formal Basic Education Community School (BECS) where I met him. His teacher explained that many stu-

dents like Sultan, who struggle academically, are often not supported by regular schools, and end up leaving before the centralized Grade-V exams conducted by the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE).

Sajida (pseudonym) and her family live in a slum of sector G-7. She used to attend Grade-II in the nearby public school administered by the FDE. Public schools provide children with free textbooks but according to her father, a sanitation worker, both his and his brother's children were refused textbooks but were asked to pay a fee instead. Sajida now attends a non-formal BECS school in her neighbourhood. Sultan and Sajida's former schools were both public institutions run by public funds. It should not be so easy for a publicly funded school to deny the right to education to local residents.

Federal public primary schools are assessed, in part, on the performance of their students in the centralized

exam at the end of Grade-V (the centralized exams policy varies across regions). Government schools could respond in one of two ways — either take steps to improve their students' learning or push the ones they expect to perform worst out of the school before the exam is conducted. This being the Land of the Pure, Sultan and Sajida's schools opted for the latter.

There is no official policy to push out underperforming children but for some school administrators and teachers it is an easy way to avoid closer scrutiny of their performance. Allegedly, these are not isolated incidents. Over the years, I have heard from several teachers that some FDE schools create conditions that force parents to take their children, usually low-performing students from disadvantaged households, out of formal schools.

For many children abandoned by the public school system this means the end of their educational journey. Some lucky ones

are caught by BECS schools operating in unplanned, informal settlements and slums that have cropped up in walled-off enclaves in the city and peripheral areas such as in and around Bara Kahu, Khana, Nilore, Bari Imam, Golra, and Tarnol.

Despite these shenanigans, and the fudging of performance metrics, where do we stand? A report based on a recent math test of all primary school children, in Islamabad's formal and non-formal schools, shows that only around 10 per cent of Grade-V students in Islamabad perform at grade level. Schools in other regions of the country are not faring much better. More than 20 million children across the country remain out of school. Seventy-nine per cent are 'learning poor'.

In the TIMSS test of Math and Science for Grade-V, Pakistani children place second from the bottom among participating countries. Only 27 per cent meet 'basic' benchmarks of math knowledge. Only

eight per cent meet the 'intermediate' and only one per cent the 'high' benchmark for math knowledge, respectively. Matters are not much better at the higher education level: 24 per cent of degree holders are unemployed, and Coursera's latest Global Skills report puts Pakistani users at 92 out of 100, far behind many countries in our region.

As if to make my point for me, on Nov 21 the caretaker minister for federal education, Madad Ali Sindhvi, was widely reported to have made the following statement in a Senate session: "If I am allowed, I will ban all private universities." Even after months, the honourable minister appears unaware that if he got his wish and private universities (and private schools) were to close tomorrow, roughly half of those students would have no place to study. The private sector is holding up half the sky in Pakistan because the public educa-

tion sector he represents is incapable of fulfilling its obligation. But his angry roar made for a fantastic headline, so who cares?

Lastly, no one has patience for delayed gratification, everyone wants an instant win, or at the latest before the end of their tenure — two to four years for bureaucrats and up to five years for politicians. If a set of reforms does not bring immediate headlines and rewards, there is no appetite for it. Quick fixes and short-term thinking trump sustainable long-term solutions where the payback is slow but gradual.

If I were to sum it up: (largely) unqualified people are deciding the fate of people they know little about and lack both interest and patience to address their problems. That is why decisions continue to be guided by short-term thinking, convenience and, dare I say, benefit to decision-makers, rather than the long-term interests of students. -- Courtesy TheNews

To read or not



Zubeida Mustafa

Do our children read books? In the absence of reliable statistics, one must turn to anecdotal evidence, which suggests that the book reading culture does not exist in Pakistan — be it among adults or children. I have yet to meet a publisher who is satisfied with his sales. School textbooks are the publishing industry's bread and butter. Hence publishers do not focus much on storybooks for younger readers.

It's no wonder then that Pakistan has traditionally lacked a thriving children's books industry. Popular authors such as Sufi Tabassum and poets like Allama Iqbal notwithstanding, the industry never picked up. Educators noticed this vacuum and individuals stepped in. The Bookgroup, Nigar Nazaf of Gogi fame and the Alif Laila Book Bus Society emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, with exciting, innovative books that attracted children. But they were not enough to turn around the non-reading culture.

To break this resistance to book-reading, a massive multidimensional effort is clearly needed. First, attractive and colourful books based on our own cultures have to be published for children. Second, these publications must be made accessible to all students through a network of school libraries. Third, the concept of the 'book mentor' must be developed.

Librarians can play a role only if they understand clearly what is expected of them. They are not just 'book keepers', who ar-

range their ware on shelves and issue them to students, ensuring that the books are returned on time. More important, they should stimulate children's interest in the books they issue and be capable of discussing it meaningfully with them. That presupposes that librarians too have read the books in their care.

A beginning has been made in this direction and the much-needed massive push has come from the Idara-i-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA), organisers of the Pakistan Learning Festival (previously the Children's Literature Festival). It has set the ball rolling, with countless storytelling sessions apart from other enjoyable learning activities. True, the child also learns informally from her experience and exposure. But will she start reading books by attending festivals on and off when they are held? Unlikely.

Still, ITA director Baela Jamil, an incurable optimist, is hopeful, as she is also a doer. Baela is working on a number of fronts. To make children's books easily available, she has gone into publishing and setting up libraries. ITA's activities have been diversified. It has set up a number of low-cost libraries, such as the rickshaw library in Karachi and the Digi Kutub-khana in Mubarak Village, which was initially housed in a trunk. They serve as inexpensive models for others.

Recently, 48 stand-alone libraries and 200 classroom libraries with open shelves and 2,000 books were set up in 68 government schools in Lahore and Bahawalpur districts, thanks to an agreement between ITA and Room to Read (RTR), a California-based non-profit organisation that seeks to promote literacy and gender equality in education in many Afro-Asian countries in the latter's own languages.

ITA has also been taking initiatives to boost

children's book publishing in Pakistan. It instituted the Young Authors' Awards a few years ago to encourage children with writing skills to write books. Promising authors were provided mentoring by Rumana Husain, a writer, an illustrator of 75 books and co-founder of the Bookgroup.

The RTR agreement goes much further. In the first phase, Rumana as team leader selected 28 English books from RTR's cloud collection and had them published in our languages. They became instant hits. The next phase promises to be more significant; it will induct local publishers, writers, illustrators and editors into the children's book industry. Training workshops have been conducted by RTR's resource person and 15 titles are in the pipeline; 6,000 copies of each will be printed to be distributed free of cost to public and low-fee schools. The publishers will be allowed to print and sell more than the stipulated number at affordable prices.

The project has made remarkable progress in just three years and should succeed if expanded exponentially, especially to higher levels. Promoting the culture of reading among children calls for the deep engagement of 'book mentors', including principals, teachers and librarians. They have been trained by RTR and a library period has been included in the timetable. But the real challenge is to get teachers genuinely interested in reading, which is not a solitary activity as is widely believed. It has to be followed by an interactive discussion between the participants who are also engaged with the book. The book culture is a collective pursuit to encourage further reading. That is why the success of the project will ultimately depend on the mentors. -

Courtesy Dawn

Rooted in evidence



Arif Azad

In our times, in line with the ascendancy of empirical evidence in global policy frameworks, nations are embarking on a new chapter of governance, driven by data, research, and real-world insights. Their 'evidence-based policymaking' means that better utilisation of evidence and research can help save lives, reduce poverty and optimise limited resources.

One such case is that of Pakistan. Despite a rich history and a concentrated focus on policy research matters, evidence-based policymaking is less practised. Reasons range from the urgent necessity of delivering on political manifestos without waiting for the slow evidence-generation processes, non-availability of relevant evidence and research, and underutilised research departments, to research-policy gaps and lack of sustained political and institutionalised will to erect policymaking on the foundation of concrete data. However, these challenges are being addressed.

At the heart of Pakistan's evolving governance paradigm is practising evidence-based policymaking. Policies must be anchored in credible research, ensuring they are not only politically aspirational but also grounded in reality. Two domains where this approach is making its presence felt are social protection and social health protection.

This fresh approach

is evident in the policy matrix at the federal and provincial levels. The matrix at both levels retains a vision centred on citizen welfare. The Benazir Income Support Programme, for instance, is not just a policy initiative but, as borne out by its philosophy of focusing on a safety net for the people, is also a reflection of a commitment to the most vulnerable. Similarly, the Sehat Card initiative has been a tangible stride towards broader universal health coverage, with a view to bringing quality healthcare within the reach of every Pakistani.

And yet, despite sound intentions and efforts, the spectrum of policy ambition stretching from conceptualisation to on-ground realisation is replete with challenges. At the centre of these challenges is the need for continuous feedback loops, agile policy adaptability to new research and evidence, and most importantly, a culture of ongoing research and insights into policymaking processes.

The Research Hub, that focuses on social protection and social health protection, represents a strategic answer to this challenge. Conceptualised as a nexus, this new initiative brings together Pakistan's eminent research institutions, NGOs, development partners and policy architects from various areas including KP, Punjab and the federal government. A collaborative approach is stressed, where research agendas are co-developed and a balance between academic pursuits and real-world policy exigencies is maintained.

The initiative comes at a time of a global momentum towards increasing evidence in policymaking (as also evidenced in the formation of the multi-nation Global Evidence Commission).

The usefulness of a collaborative research approach can be seen in its first study on the population's willingness to participate as co-contributors towards the health insurance programme in KP. The study offers insights into people's perceptions about the programme, and allows decision-makers to fine-tune modalities to make the programme financially sustainable.

Such research projects, based on evidence-based policy research in health, can help health managers shape their respective programmes to absorb the financial squeeze while keeping their nets wide and inclusive.

An earlier mu-l-ti-country initiative, Strengthening Evidence Use for Development Impact, has focussed on increasing the use of evidence in policy-making in Uganda, Ghana and Pakistan. Its flagship report on policymaking in the areas of child labour, education and economic development in Pakistan spotlighted the centrality of using evidence. But there was no further follow-up.

The Global Evidence Commission, in its 2022 report and the follow-up 2023 update, further reinforced the importance of improving the use of evidence by formalising domestic evidence-support systems, leveraging global evidence architecture and placing evidence at the heart of policymaking at all levels.

In addition to promoting a culture of evidence-based policy making in line with the recommendations of the Global Evidence Commission, there is an urgent need for more studies in other policy sectors such as education, housing and the environment to broaden the practice of on-the-ground evidence generation in Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

AJK PM denies social media reports about abolishment of NTS system

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while refuting the social media reports about the abolishment of the NTS system, has said that the NTS system was still in force and will continue in future as well.

He stated this while addressing the AJK legislative assembly session in the State metropolis on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the AJK prime minister regrettably noted that on the basis of social media information, it was propagated that the government was scrapping the Recruitment Amendment Act. He said that nobody even bothered to fact check the source of information to ascertain whether it was real or fake.

Referring to fake news on social media and its impact on the society, he said that the government

would not allow those spreading lies on social media to hold the society hostage. "Society has to stop the trend of being held hostage by lies peddled through the social media platforms," he said.

He said that today, favoritism, cronyism and nepotism had been completely eradicated through the legislation. "Now, those who are qualified and capable will be eligible to get government jobs", the PM said adding educated youth could not get jobs due to a litigation that has been pending in the court of law for the past two and a half years.

He said that merit would be ensured by all means no matter whether recruitments were made through the Public Service Commission or NTS.

He said that the government had spent 21 billion rupees during the last six months.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan, Henny de Vries, Honorary Consul of Netherlands Asma Hamid and others on the eve of ceremony held to celebrate completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Netherlands.

Minister inaugurates 14th Sartyoon Sang Crafts exhibition

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Education & Literacy and Women Development Sindh, Mrs Rana Hussain inaugurated the three-day 14th SRSO Sartyoon Sang Crafts' exhibition at Ocean Mall Clifton, here on Friday.

On the occasion, the minister appreciated the endeavours of SRSO for poor communities and voiced her expectation of the continuation of such support for rural communities of Sindh.

She met and purchased wares from artisan women who came from far-flung areas of Sindh and appreciated their work and craftsmanship.

Appreciating the exhibition, the Minister said arranging such activity to promote artisans, handicrafts and Sindh's culture was a great effort



MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir shouting slogans during protest rally in favor of their demands at Azadi Chowk in the city.

Govt land worth millions embezzled Major corruption scandal unveiled in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): The Anti-Corruption Department Abbottabad on Friday has exposed a major corruption scandal involving the misappropriation of government land amounting to millions of rupees. The illicit activities include fraudulent transactions and clear forgery, leading to the arrest of two suspects.

Under the guidance of the Director of Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, legal proceedings have been initiated against six persons including a former Tehsildar, land revenue officer, patwari, and a member of the cantonment board. The accused are facing charges under various sections, including 477A/468/471/419/420, as detailed in FIR number 15.

Further intensifying the investigation, authorities are pursuing the arrest of four additional suspects. The Anti-

Corruption Department's case alleges that the accused individuals engaged in the fabrication of government land documents and blatant bribery, facilitating illegal transfers and sales.

In response to a complaint filed by Aurangzeb son of Muhammad Shafi, a targeted raid has been initiated within the jurisdiction of Cantonment Police Station. This raid is related to a business deal involving 25 Kanal and 68 Marlas of land in the Urban Area, incurring a substantial loss of 2.5 million per marla. The suspicious transactions occurred between Khasra numbers 10690 to 10696 and involve the land of Tehsil Municipal Abbottabad.

The implicated individuals, including Muhammad Bashir, Sardar Zulfiqar Ali, Syed Shahzad Shah, Patwari Daryaft Khan,



KARACHI: Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice (ret) Maqbool Baqar presides over the Provincial Cabinet meeting.

Sindh Cabinet approves Rs1.38b for purchase of water canons, equipment, vehicles for Rangers

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh Cabinet on Friday approved the release of Rs.1.38 billion funds for the purchase of water canons, quick response vehicles and communication equipment for Pakistan Rangers.

Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister chaired the provincial Cabinet meeting at CM house which was attended by Minister's, Chief Secretary, Advocate General Sindh and other officers concerned.

Sindh Home Minister Brig © Haris Nawaz informed the meeting that Pakistan Rangers

submitted request for release of the amount worth Rs 1.38 billion for the purchase of equipments and the vehicles on which cabinet accorded approval.

Sindh Irrigation Secretary Niaz Abbasi while presenting the Flood Protection Sector Project before the cabinet informed that 40 flood projects of the province are included in the scheme. The federal government will get 11.970 billion rupees loan from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) for the project and the amount with share of 50 percent each to be paid

back by the federal and provincial governments, the Secretary Irrigation said. The caretaker Chief Minister also constituted a cabinet committee consisting of the cabinet members Muhammad Younus Dagher, Eshwer Lal, Chairman P&D and the Secretary Finance for getting the loan.

The committee will submit its recommendations to the Chief Minister Sindh in this regard.

Sindh Cabinet also decided to conduct the recruitment of ASIs in Sindh Police through the

Sindh Public Service Commission.

The meeting was informed that Sindh Police needs 1046 Assistant Sub Inspectors and candidates having BA degrees will be eligible to apply for the post.

The Cabinet also decided to set up a surplus pool of Larkana Development Authority (LDA) employees in the Local Government department instead of S&GA.

The LG department will be authorized to send surplus employees to the department as per the need.



RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating Dadocha Dam.

CM Punjab lays foundation stone of Dadocha Dam

RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Chief Minister (CM) Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi here on Friday laid the foundation stone of the Dadocha Dam, and also inspected the site of the project.

He said that the construction work of the dam, which was stalled for 13 years, had finally started.

The CM said that Rawalpindi city was facing a severe water shortage. The water supply situation deteriorates in summer as the shortfall reaches up to 60 MGD, he added.

Emergency work had been started on Dadocha Dam to meet the water shortage, said Mohsin Naqvi. The Dadocha dam project which would be

completed at a cost of 14 billion, would help meet the water shortage issue, he added.

After its completion, this dam would provide 35 million gallons of clean drinking water per day to Rawalpindi city, the CM informed.

The construction of Dadocha Dam would address the long-standing water problem being faced by the citizens, he said and appreciated the efforts and hard work done by the Chief Secretary Punjab and Commissioner Rawalpindi Division.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Dadocha Dam would be completed in two years period.

Frontier Works Organization (FWO) which is working on the Ring Road Rawalpindi

project would also complete the dam swiftly, the CM informed.

The dam project was pending for a long time, the CM said and informed that the preparations were being made in Murree for the winter season. Solid steps would be taken to increase tourism, said Mohsin Naqvi.

Special operation against illegal housing societies had been launched, he informed.

The CM said, "Up-gradation work of the hospitals would continue and we will not allow anyone to obstruct this project."

During a briefing, the CM was informed that work on the dam site was progressing rapidly, with 26% financial progress and 12% physical progress.

Homosexuals festival challenged in LHC

LAHORE (Online): Festival of homosexuals has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC).

Petition in this regard has been filed by a citizen Ammar Hanif through his counsel advocate Nadim Sarwar.

Through the petition DC Lahore, IG Punjab and others have been made respondents.

The petitioner took the plea that festival of homosexuals is going to take place tomorrow in Lahore. Event is un-Islamic and unconstitutional. The petitioner requested the court to order for stopping this festival.

Free glucometer distributed among diabetic patients

PESHAWAR (APP): The Mercy Teaching Hospital (MTH) in Peshawar has organized the ceremony for the free distribution of glucometers among diabetic patients.

NIMA holds focused talk on Indian Kashmir policy, implications and way forward

M. Ilyas PESHAWAR: National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) organized a focused talk on the 'Indian Kashmir Policy - Implications and Way Forward' at NIMA Islamabad on 01 Dec 23. Former Chief of the Naval Staff & Chairman NIMA BoA, Admiral (Retd) Muhammad Zakaullah graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He said that Kashmir issue is unfinished agenda of partition

that the plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions is the only way forward. She also highlighted that Pakistan needs to unveil human right atrocities and international laws violations being committed by India. She further elaborated the need to guard against Indian agenda of changing the demography of Indian occupied Kashmir and suggested to hold census on both sides of divide under UN arrangements. Vice Ad-



miral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed, DG NIMA in his welcome remarks stated that Kashmir is the core issue between India and Pakistan. Post 2019 annulment of Article-370 & 35-A, Indian Government is systematically destroying Kashmiri identity and culture. During the discussions, prominent speakers shed light on the current situation of Kashmir.

Pakistan attaches great importance to bilateral ties with the Netherlands

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended a ceremony held at Lahore Fort to celebrate the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands as a special guest. Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan, Henny de Vries, Honorary Consul of Netherlands Asma Hamid, former Federal Minister Khurshid Kasuri, Tahir Khalil Sindhu, former Governor Shahid Hamid and other distinguished guests were present in the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that Pakistan attaches great importance to bilateral relations with the Netherlands.

He said that Pakistan appreciates the cooperation of the Netherlands in political, economic, climate change, education, culture, and multilateral fora. Governor Punjab said that both

countries stood by each other in testing times.

He stated that Pakistan had helped the people of the Netherlands in the floods of 1953, adding that Pakistan values the Dutch humanitarian and technical assistance after different natural disasters, including the last floods of 2022.

He said that the economic and trade cooperation between the two countries is increasing. Governor Punjab said that the Netherlands is the second largest export destination of Pakistani products in the European Union.

He said that the Netherlands is among the top ten (10) countries to invest in Pakistan, while more than 60 Dutch companies are currently operating in Pakistan. Governor Punjab said that Pakistan has taken various initiatives with a view to boost foreign investment, including the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council.



KARACHI: Drug addict's smokes heroin at a slum area in Provincial Capital, As World AIDS Day.

Punjab launches prison health initiative screening AIDS

Independent Report

LAHORE: Punjab's Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Dr. Jamal Nasir, announced that, on Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's directive, 52,000 prisoners across 43 Punjab prisons underwent screening for AIDS, hepatitis B & C, TB, and non-communicable diseases.

Addressing a program on World AIDS Day on Friday, the minister disclosed the commencement of AIDS treatment for affected prisoners following PCR tests. Additionally, regular biannual screenings for prisoners in Punjab have been mandated. Free diagnosis and treatment facilities for HIV patients are available in 45 clinics across 36 districts under the Punjab AIDS Control Program. Presently, over 21,000 registered AIDS patients receive free medicines and counseling.

Dr. Jamal Nasir highlighted the role of syringe use among drug addicts in AIDS transmission and emphasized cautious blood transfusions. He urged adherence to Islamic teachings, advocating fidelity to legitimate life partners to prevent AIDS.

The minister stressed the importance of public awareness and called for collaboration between social organizations and the government for a healthy society.

Expressing gratitude to organizations like the WHO and UNICEF, he acknowledged their ongoing support in combating AIDS in Pakistan. The Punjab AIDS Control Program boasts 21,690 active patients receiving free monthly medicine, achieving over 700 HIV-negative childbirths. The program collaborates with Community Based Organizations, utilizes various media for awareness, and conducts free screening camps.



FAISALABAD: Participants hold a banner during walk on the eve of World AIDS Day, at Allied Trust Hospital in the city.

Development projects in merged areas will bring change in lives of tribal

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for merged districts affairs, industries, commerce and technical education, Dr. Aamir Abdullah on Friday paid a one-day visit to District Khyber and participated in a large Jirga and Kuli Kacheri of the tribal elders and interacted with the tribal youth at district headquarters Landi Kotal.

During the visit, the district administration and police department also gave separate briefings to the minister regarding the performance and activities of the district administration and police in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Sanaulah Khan briefed the caretaker minister about the overall security situation in the district, administrative matters, education, health, construction and other sectors of life, service

delivery performance and development projects. District Police Officer Salim Abbas Kalachi also gave a detailed briefing to the caretaker minister on the security and law and order situation in the district.

The DPO informed that one and a half hundred ghost employees in the district police have been identified and were expelled from the police force, while the investigative performance of the local police has improved.

During his visit, the caretaker minister addressed the tribal leaders and dignitaries from different tehsils at district Jirga Hall Landi Kotal and thanked them for their generous hospitality. He said that for the development of the Khyber district, the great communication project of the Khyber Pass Economic Corridor has been initiated.

PM invites Dutch firms to invest in Pakistan's agriculture, energy sectors

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday met Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte wherein he invited the Dutch firms to invest in agriculture, horticulture, water management and renewable energy sectors of Pakistan.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of COP 28, they appreciated the celebrations held in Islamabad and The Hague to mark 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

meeting of both leaders well as through the European Union on matters of mutual interest.

Both the leaders expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory in bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of concrete outcome on climate action and referred to Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities despite being one of the lowest carbon emitters.

Prime Minister Kakar underscored that Pakistan and the Netherlands should

work together bilaterally as well as through the European Union on matters of mutual interest.

Both the leaders expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory in bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of concrete outcome on climate action and referred to Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities despite being one of the lowest carbon emitters.

Prime Minister Kakar underscored that Pakistan and the Netherlands should



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets the Prime Minister of Netherlands Mr. Mark Rutte on the sidelines of the high level segment of the UN's 28th Conference of Parties.

Pakistani engineers from CPEC transmission project receive training in China

BEIJING (INP): Muhammad Talha is one of 11 Pakistani engineers who have recently attended a technical training program in China's State Grid technical college of Tai'an city in east China's Shandong province. Talha is serving as a supervisor of a converter station at ±660kV Matiari-Lahore high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The training program focused on skill development as well as exploring Chinese culture

and society.

"I am really happy in China with my team for our training. It has been a great experience for me to embrace Chinese culture and of course, learn technical knowledge from the best professionals at the college," he told Xinhua recently while expressing excitement about his first trip to China.

The training program, which started in October, comprised around 47 professional courses, including converter station equipment inspection, direct current power

adjustment, and operation and maintenance of converter station, in order to help them enhance techniques of HVDC operation at Matiari-Lahore project. This was Pakistan's first HVDC transmission project funded, constructed and operated by the State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC) under the CPEC framework. The project was officially put into commercial operation in September 2021. It has the maximum capacity to transmit electricity of 35 billion kilowatt-hours annually.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad chairing a meeting of Privatisation Commission Board, in Islamabad.

Pak heading towards self sufficiency in maize seed production

MULTAN (Online): Pakistan's share in producing maize seed will rise from 50 to 70 percent within next five years in the world market leading to self sufficiency in the commodity, hoped CEO Kisan Saeed, Shafiq Ur Rehman.

Taking to APP here Friday, he informed that thirty years back, Pakistan used to import 100 percent seed while it had its 50 percent production share in world market now and will increase up to 70 percent within next five years. He stated that maize had two crops named "Masoomi and Bhariya" which were grown in summer and winter respectively. He informed that a group of

govt officials including Federal Seed Certification department DG, Director Registration and Plant Readers Breeders Rights Registry Registrar, Director and Deputy Director and others visited two farms in Multan the other day and appreciated our efforts in maize seed self sufficiency adding that ministry of food security is pondering over whether or not to introduce Genetically Modified Corn in the county. The CEO noted that the annual production of maize went from six million tonnes to 10 million tonnes and added that per acre production had gone up to 63 acre mound in last seven years from 45 mound.

MoST to establish Pak Advanced Research Project Agency

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Science and Technology has entered into final stages of establishing the Pakistan Advanced Research Project Agency to create a linkage between defence, academia and industry.

In a tweet, the Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif said, "At the final stages of establishing Pakistan Advanced Research Project Agency, similar to DARPA in US-linking defence, academia and industry".

"Chaired a meeting at the Ministry of Science and Technology to finalize the structure of this new organization", the minister stated.

CDNS collect Rs 730bln targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 730 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November, 30. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Friday.

He said this was Rs 200 billion additional annual targets than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year

(2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said. In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said.

The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.

"At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS had collected an

Rupee gains 20 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained 20 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.96 against the previous day's closing at Rs 285.16.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.35 and Rs 287.9 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 1.88 to close at Rs 310.49 against the last day's closing of Rs 312.37, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen lost 02 paise to close at Rs 1.92, whereas a decrease of Rs 12 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 360.05 as compared to the last closing of Rs 362.17. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 06 and 05 paise to close at Rs 77.59 and Rs 75.96 respectively.

Mega KPEC project under construction in district Khyber: Aamir

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) Affairs, Dr Aamir Abdullah has said that a mega communication sector project of Khyber Pass Economic Corridor comprising a wide expressway from Torkham to Peshawar is under construction, which will also be connected to the motorway.

He expressed these views while addressing a jirga of the tribal elders and elites from various tehsils of district Khyber at District Jirga Hall, Landi Kotal on Friday.

The caretaker minister for NMDs Affairs paid a one-day visit to district Khyber, where he also attended a Tribal Jirga as chief guest and met local youth.

He also took briefings from both district administration and district

police regarding administrative affairs, uplift process, and law and order.

The minister said that the provincial cabinet has approved a scheme of Rs.700 million for the provision of interest-free loans to tribal youth including women to start decent employment for themselves. An interest-free loan of Rs.0.3 million to Rs.1 million is being given to men and women aged 18 years to 50 years.

Similarly, 5500 scholarships are also being provided for imparting skills and vocational training to stand the youth of the tribal districts on their own feet.

The caretaker minister assured that Khyber district will be given an adequate share in the ongoing projects under the special package of the Accelerated Implementation Programme.



MULTAN: Director General Federal Seed Certification & Registration Department, Muhammad Azam Khan and the Registrar Dr. Hayatullah Tareen along with their staff visit the Maize Research Station of Kissan Seed Corporation at Qasba Marral.

Trade deficit shrinks by 33.59 percent, export grow by 1.93% in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (INP): The country's merchandise trade deficit contracted by 33.59 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The Trade deficit from July-November (2023-24) was recorded at \$9.378 billion as against the deficit of \$14.122 billion in July-November (2022-23), showing negative growth of 33.59 per cent.

During the period under review, the exports increased by 1.93 per cent to \$12.172 billion compared to the exports of \$11.942 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 17.32 per cent and were

recorded at \$21.550 billion compared to \$26.064 billion last year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 7.66 per cent in November compared to the exports of the same month of last year. The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.572 billion as against the exports of \$2.389 billion in November 2022.

On the other hand, the imports during November 2023 were recorded at \$4.460 billion compared to the imports of \$5.154 billion in November 2022, showing a decrease of 13.47 per cent, according to the data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country decreased by 4.39 per cent when compared to the exports of \$2.690 billion during October 2023.

LESCO detects 323 power pilferers in 24hrs

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) detected a total of 323 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 83rd day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

A LESCO spokesman told the media on Friday that the company had also submitted FIR applications against 323 electricity thieves, out of which 178 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 24

accused have been arrested. Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice.



QUETTA: People purchasing orange from a push cart at Joint Road.

Pakistan's exports to China increase by 40.36% in 4 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 40.36 per cent during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to China were recorded at US \$952.216 million during July-October (2023-24) against exports of US \$678.386 million during July-October (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to China

also surged by 79.74 per cent from \$177.386 million in October 2022, against the exports of \$318.842 million in October 2023. Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to China rose by 12.63 per cent during October 2023 as compared to the exports of \$283.077 million in September 2023, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 1.13 per cent in the first four months, from US \$9.666 billion to US \$9.776 billion, the SBP data revealed.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold witnessed a decrease of Rs.500 on Friday and was sold at Rs.220,500 against its sale at Rs.221,000 the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat also decreased by Rs.429 to Rs.189,043 from Rs.189,472 whereas that of 10 gram 22 Karat gold declined to Rs.173,290 from Rs.173,683. The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,620 and Rs.2,246.21 respectively.

However, the price of gold in the international market decreased by \$4 to \$2,060 from \$2,064, the Association reported.



BAHAWALPUR: Laborers engaged in packing maize in suburb of Bahawalpur which is being loaded on tractor trolley and transport them to grain market and cooking oil factories.

Weekly inflation goes down by 0.23%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.23 percent for the combined consumption group during the week ended on November 30, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 308.20 points as compared to 308.90 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 41.05 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for

all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs.17,732, decreased by 0.23 percent and went down to 307.11 points from last week's 307.81 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs.17,732-22,888; Rs.22,889-29,517; Rs.29,518-44,175 and above Rs.44,175 decreased by 0.26 percent, 0.25 percent, 0.24 percent and 0.21 percent respectively. During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 13 (25.49%) items increased, 14 (27.45%) items decreased and 24 (47.06%) items remained stable. The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a week-on-week (WoW) included tomatoes (17.64%), potatoes (5.11%), chicken (3.58%), sugar (2.01%), tea lipton (1.29%).



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Obayek Arif Osmanaov called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik.

K-Electric officers meet LESCO chief

LAHORE (APP): K-Electric General Manager (HSEO) Shiraz Ahmed and Head of Corporate Rizwan Ahmed met with Engineer Shahid Haider, Chief Executive Officer of Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), the company's spokesman told media here Friday.

During the meeting, they discussed the measures related to ensuring the safety of customers and employees. The LESCO and K-Electric officers shared their experiences with each other to improve safety measures.

Chief Engineer (Material Management) Ramzan Butt, Chief Engineer (P&DO) Imran Mehmood, Chief Engineer (T&G) Zafar Iqbal, DG (Implementation) Raja Mehmood, Director (Credit Management Unit) Rai Masood Kharl were also present.

UAF inks MoU to professionalise urban horticulture in Pak

FAISALABAD (APP): PUM (Programma Uitzending Managers) Netherlands senior experts, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and Spurt International have entered into an agreement to professionalise urban horticulture in Pakistan and to contribute to sustainable and greener cities with a secure food supply as well as income and employment opportunities for the youth.

UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan, and PUM representative Pakistan Saleem Ahmad; Dr. Adnan Younis, Institute of Horticultural Sciences, University of Agriculture Faisalabad, Rolf Schrauwen, PUM country coordinator, and Mohsin Shahzad Malik (Spurt International) inked

the Memorandum of Understanding.

Under the program, unlocking the potential of urban horticulture in Pakistan, the partners agreed upon urban horticulture production systems for multiple commercial indoor and outdoor will be developed, tested and marketed on a pilot scale. It was also agreed that training curriculum for university/higher education students and for practitioners of urban horticulture will be developed and tested. The rolled out information, marketing and technical support for urban horticulture will be delivered by young entrepreneurs and start-up companies.

The partners will work together to develop a collaborative arrangement.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates 2-day Solar Expo Show.

Ukraine's military says Russia launched its largest drone attack since the start of the invasion

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the

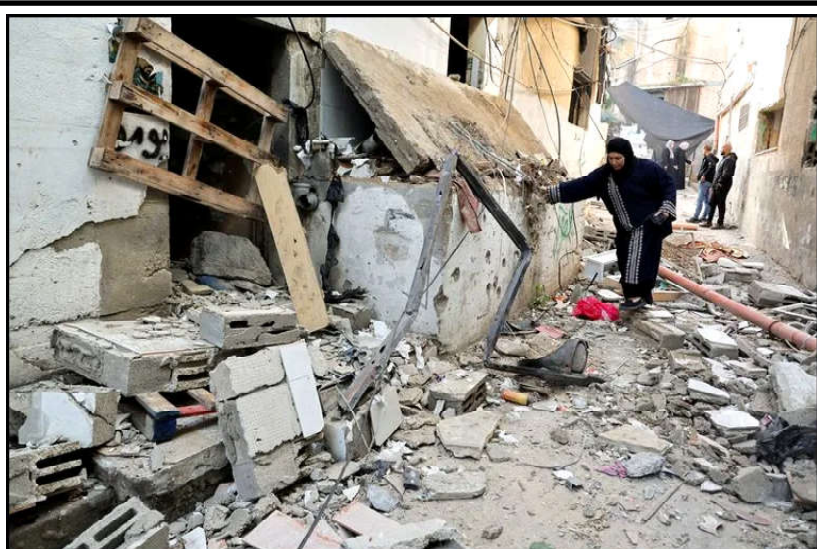
Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuri Ihnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hours-long assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown

out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m., local time, continuing in waves for more than six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko. Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged.



Palestinians check the damage in a street in the aftermath of an Israeli raid in Jenin.

WHO says Gaza's health system must be protected as disease spreads

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday called for Gaza's vulnerable health infrastructure to be safeguarded as the war-torn enclave faces an increased risk of epidemics and challenges in detecting infectious diseases.

A fragile truce agreement between Israel and Hamas last week has allowed WHO and aid organizations to increase their deliveries of essential supplies but these have been far from enough to meet the needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people.

Speaking at a press conference in Geneva,

World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said only 15 of Gaza's 36 hospitals were still functioning and were completely overwhelmed.

"Of the 25 hospitals north of the Wadi Gaza (river) before the conflict began, only three are functioning at the most basic level, but they lack fuel, water and food," Tedros said.

"The remaining health system capacity must be protected, supported and expanded."

WHO has sounded the alarm about the spread of infectious disease in Gaza, where the

internal displacement of the population has caused overcrowding in shelters and other temporary living facilities.

The agency has noted a staggering increase in cases of diarrhoea, especially among infants and children, and detected "very serious signals around acute jaundice syndrome" in the enclave.

"With severe overcrowding, the risks are increasing for epidemics of respiratory tract infections, acute watery diarrhoea, hepatitis, scabies, lice and other diseases," Tedros said.

Israeli forces kill seven Palestinians in West Bank, Palestinian officials say

Monitoring Desk

JENIN: Israeli forces killed seven Palestinians, including two minors and at least one gunman, in the occupied West Bank late on Saturday and early Sunday, medics and local sources said. The West Bank, among territories where Palestinians seek statehood, has experienced a surge in violence parallel to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, now in its eighth week.

Five of the overnight deaths occurred in the city of Jenin, which the Israeli military said it wanted to detain a Palestinian wanted for alleged involvement in a lethal West Bank ambush in August as well as 20 other

suspects. During the raid, Israeli forces "engaged with armed terrorists and killed five of them," the military said in a statement. The Jenin Brigades, a local armed group, said its fighters battled the Israeli troops. It did not immediately provide details on any casualties, but local witnesses said at least one of the Palestinians killed in Jenin was a known Brigades member.

The Wafa official Palestinian news agency said that Israeli forces stormed Jenin "from several directions, firing bullets and surrounding government hospitals and the headquarters of the Red Crescent Society".

Syria says an Israeli airstrike hit the Damascus airport and put it out of service

Monitoring Desk

BEIRUT: An Israeli airstrike Sunday hit the international airport in the Syrian capital of Damascus and put it out of commission, Syrian state media said.

Israel has struck Syria's Damascus and Aleppo international airports several times since the onset of the Hamas-Israel war in Gaza on Oct. 7. Israel has also struck parts of western Syria after rocket fire landed on the Israeli-occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

SANA, citing an unnamed military official, said Israel fired missiles from the direction of the Golan Heights, striking Damascus International Airport and other areas in the Damascus country-

side causing material damage. There was no mention of casualties.

Britain-based opposition war monitor, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said the strikes came just hours after the airport resumed flights after a monthlong hiatus following a previous Israeli strike.

Israel has carried out hundreds of strikes on targets inside government-controlled parts of war-torn Syria in recent years.

It does not usually acknowledge its airstrikes on Syria.

However when it does, it says it is targeting Iranian-backed groups there that have backed President Bashar Assad's government.

Britain's King Charles urges rapid environmental repair in COP28 speech

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Britain's King Charles said on Friday the world was "dreadfully far off track" on addressing climate change and that the global economy would be in peril unless the environment was rapidly repaired. In an opening address to the COP28 UN climate summit, King Charles told world leaders the dangers of climate change were no longer a distant risk, and urged them to take more action.

"I pray with all my heart that COP28 will be another critical turning point towards genuine transformational action," he said, in reference to the 2015 summit held in France. "We are seeing alarming tipping points being reached."

After a year of record temperatures, the pressure is on for this year's summit to accelerate action to limit climate change. Countries, however, are divided over the future of fossil fuel, the burning of which is the main cause of climate change. The summit, which runs until Dec 12,

clinched an early victory on Thursday, with delegates adopting a new fund to help poor nations cope with costly climate disasters.

The king, whose role is ceremonial but is attending the summit on behalf of the British government and after an invite from host nation the United Arab Emirates, did not single out any group in his speech, his first major climate address as Britain's monarch.

He instead spoke about how to involve multilateral organisations and the private sector, the role of the insurance sector and speeding up innovation in renewable energy.

Charles cited the impact of climate change globally, including floods in India and Pakistan and severe wildfires in the United States, Canada and Greece.

"Unless we rapidly repair and restore nature's unique economy, based on harmony and balance, which is our ultimate sustainer, our own economy and survivability will be imperilled," he said.

New York punished 2,000 prisoners over false positive drug tests, report finds

Monitoring Desk

ALBANY: New York's prison system unfairly punished more than 2,000 prisoners after tests of suspected contraband substances falsely tested positive for drugs, according to a report released Thursday.

In hundreds of cases, the prisoners had committed no offense, but the flawed results were used to put them in solitary confinement, halt family visits, or cancel parole hearings.

The report by Inspector General Lucy Lang found that state prison staff failed to confirm the test results with an outside lab. The manufacturer of the contraband screening drug tests, Sirchie Finger Print Laboratories, says in its instructions that the results from the drug tests should be treated as preliminary and unconfirmed.

The report also found that New York state prison staff failed to abide by protocols meant to prevent misidentifying contraband or cross-contaminating samples. The Sirchie NARK II contraband screening tests are used to detect synthetic cannabinoids and other types of drugs by putting substances into testing pouches. They sometimes cross-react with commonly



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators march across the Mandela Bridge downtown Johannesburg, South Africa.

Erdogan to visit Budapest next month as Turkey and Hungary hold up Sweden's membership in NATO

Monitoring Desk

BUDAPEST: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Hungary's capital in December, his second trip to Budapest this year at a time when both countries remain the only NATO members not to have ratified Sweden's accession into the trans-Atlantic military alliance.

During his visit on Dec. 18, Erdogan will take part in a meeting of the Hungarian-Turkish Strategic Cooperation Council, and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of diplomatic ties between the two countries, Bertalan Havasi, the press chief for Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, told local news outlet ATV in a report broadcast on Monday.

Havasi didn't immediately respond to further questions from The Associated Press on Tuesday about the trip.

It wasn't clear whether Erdogan and Orbán would discuss Sweden's NATO membership, which

has been delayed for more than a year by Hungary and Turkey. All 31 NATO allies must endorse the accession of a new member.

Erdogan's government has delayed Sweden's ratification over accusations that Stockholm is too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups Turkey considers to be security threats. But Hungary has expressed no such concrete concerns.

The delays have frustrated other NATO allies, who were swift in accepting Sweden and Finland into the alliance after the neighboring countries dropped their longstanding military neutrality following the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Finland became a NATO member in April after Turkey and Hungary were the last two members of the alliance to ratify the Nordic nation's accession.

The Turkish leader submitted a protocol to Turkey's parliament in October to approve Sweden's

UK gov't steps in to stop Telegraph deal

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: Britain's media minister said on Thursday she would intervene in the acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Abu Dhabi-backed RedBird IMI, on public interest grounds as it might impact the accurate presentation of news or free expression of opinion. The right-leaning Daily Telegraph broadsheet and Spectator magazine, favourites of politicians in the leading Conservative Party, are being sold after Lloyds Banking Group in June seized control following a long-running dispute with former owners, the Barclay family. But the government told RedBird in the letter that the minister was concerned about the potential for it to influence the Telegraph's operations.

"My Department has today written to the Barclay family and RedBird IMI, the current and proposed owners of Telegraph Media Group (TMG), to inform them that I will be issuing a Public Interest Intervention Notice (PIIN)" media minister Lucy Frazer said in a statement.

South Africa march demands a permanent Gaza cease-fire on day of solidarity with Palestinians

Monitoring Desk

JOHANNESBURG: Members of South African political parties, civil society organisations and other supporters marched through the streets of Johannesburg on Wednesday demanding a permanent cease-fire in Gaza as they marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Rival political parties including the ruling African National Congress and the leftist opposition Economic Freedom Fighters were among the scores of demonstrators who marched across the Nelson Mandela Bridge to protest

against Israel's military offensive in Gaza against Hamas.

Several other protests were planned around South Africa, where many including President Cyril Ramaphosa have compared Israel's policies in Gaza and the West Bank with South Africa's past apartheid regime of racial segregation.

Veteran anti-apartheid activist Ronnie Kasrils called for the boycott and isolation of Israel over the current war.

"All over the world, millions and millions are coming out and saying no, no, no."



Pro-Palestinian environmental activists participate in a sit-in demonstration at the Expo City in Dubai in support of a ceasefire in Gaza.

Brazil's Lula appoints his justice minister to Supreme Court

Monitoring Desk

BRASILIA: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Monday he will appoint his Justice Minister, Flavio Dino, to a Supreme Court seat that has been vacant since the retirement of Justice Rosa Weber in late September.

Lula also said he would nominate Paulo Gonet as the country's new prosecutor general.

Dino, 55, is Lula's second appointment for Brazil's top court since he took office in January for

his third non-consecutive term as president. Earlier in June, he tapped his former defense lawyer Cristiano Zanin for another Supreme Court seat. Previously, former President Michel Temer appointed his own justice minister, Alexandre de Moraes to the court while Lula's predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, picked Andre Mendonca for a seat.

Dino, whose nomination will now be voted on by the Senate, has been serving in Lula's cabinet since January.

Russia bans 'international LGBT movement'

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday banned the "international LGBT movement," claiming it was an extremist group in a move that cements a long crackdown on the community as the Kremlin pushes ultra-conservative social values.

The conservative turn promoted by President Vladimir Putin — often portrayed as an existential fight against Western liberal values — has accelerated since the offensive in Ukraine.

The supreme court handed down the ruling in Moscow on Thursday, journalists in court reported.

Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi arrested again

Monitoring Desk

DUBAI: Iranian rapper Toomaj Salehi, who had been previously detained for showing support to anti-government protests and was released on bail earlier this month, was arrested again, Iran's state media reported on Thursday. "Salehi has been arrested for publishing false information and disturbing public opinion, after being released upon an order by Iran's supreme court to revise his case," the judiciary news agency said.

Following the death in custody of 22-year-old Iranian-Kurdish woman Mahsa Amini in September 2022, Iran has seen months of nationwide protests that represented one

Myanmar's military is losing ground against coordinated nationwide attacks, buoying opposition hopes

Monitoring Desk

BANGKOK: About two weeks into a major offensive against Myanmar's military-run government by an alliance of three well-armed militias of ethnic minorities, an army captain, fighting in a jungle area near the northeastern border with China, lamented that he'd never seen such intense action.

His commander in Myanmar's 99th Light Infantry Division had been killed in fighting in Shan state the week before and the 35-year-old career soldier said army outposts were in disarray and being hit from all sides.

"I have never faced these kinds of battles before," the combat veteran told The Associated Press by phone. "This fighting in

Shan is unprecedented." Eight days later the captain was dead himself, killed defending an outpost and hastily buried near where he fell, according to his family.

The coordinated offensive in the northeast has inspired resistance forces around the country to attack, and Myanmar's military is falling back on almost every front. The army says it's regrouping and will regain the initiative, but hope is rising among opponents that this could be a turning point in the struggle to oust the army leaders who toppled democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi almost three years ago.

"The current operation is a great opportunity to change the political situation in Myanmar."

Russian man who traced 'No to War' in the snow gets 10 days in jail

Monitoring Desk

LONDON: A Russian court has ordered a man to be jailed for 10 days after he used his finger to write "No to War" on a snow-covered tumbstone at the entrance to an ice-skating rink at Moscow's Gorky Park. According to court papers, the incident happened on Nov. 23 and the man, named as Dmitry Fyodorov, was sentenced the following day after being detained by the police.

Police decided his actions could amount to a civil offence under a law which targets anyone deemed to have acted publicly to discredit Russia's armed forces, a crime which in his case was punishable by a fine. New laws cracking down on dissent were brought in soon after President Vladimir Putin sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine.



People wait for their rides outside a children's hospital in Beijing, China.

President directs MCB to investigate corrupt officials involved in scam

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB) to investigate and initiate criminal proceedings, including the registration of FIRs, against corrupt bank officials of Gojra Road Branch, Jhang.

They found a huge shortfall in their account balance and that 292 deposit slips totalling Rs 3,941,660/- were not credited to their account. They also held valid deposit slips duly signed and stamped by the bank officials for the deposits.

The president conducted a personal hearing of the case at Aiwan-e-Sadr and rejected the Bank's representation. In his decision, the president stated that the Bank's denial of the claims of the complainants on the ground that the deposit slip neither had the required "Cash Received" stamp nor was validated with any system entry was not tenable as the receipt was a bona fide document and admittedly issued under the signature of the bank's authorized Teller Services Officers (TSO) who had been penalized in terms of dismissal from Bank's service.



QUETTA: Office holders of Overseas Employment Promoters presenting a shield to Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki.

To solve electricity crisis Bilawal announces to introduce Green Energy Parks after victory in upcoming general elections

Independent Report QUETTA: The Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that his party's government will introduce the Green Energy Parks at the district level to solve the long-standing electricity crisis in the country after victory in the upcoming general elections, and the poor families will be provided free electricity up to 300 units monthly.

the people of Punjab also feel deprived. He once again categorically said that PPP believes in making local bodies administratively and financially independent. According to the press release issued by Media Cell Bilawal House, the PPP Chairman, while addressing the chairmen and mayors of local bodies across the province participating in the annual general meeting of the Local Council Association Balochistan chapter, urged that there is a need to focus more on local solutions to alleviate the problems faced by the people.

Sharif) had eliminated the problem of electricity load shedding in the country, and continued: "(on such claim) I wonder which Pakistan is this, where 18 hours of loadshedding is happening." He said that after winning the polls due on February 8, his government will implement the Green Energy Parks project under Public Private Partnership mode to solve the power crisis. "We will generate the electricity locally and supply it to the local population at subsidized rates," he added. Chairman PPP termed the local government representatives as truly grassroots representatives, and urged that both the federal and provincial governments must consult with the local government.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar visits Pakistan Pavilion at COP-28.

Would always welcome positive suggestions: Increase in wheat prices unavoidable for GB Govt owing to economic challenges: Chief Minister

Gulbar Khan demands of federation to increase GB's share in NFC Award on pattern of AJK; says we are endeavouring to increase revenue & resources

Independent Report GILGIT BALTISTAN: The Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan, Gulbar Khan has stated that we are well aware of the issues being faced by the people of Gilgit Baltistan, however, we increased the price of wheat because of the economic challenges being faced by the region. The Chief Minister GB also said that the GB is ours, and there is an elected government of the people. Gulbar Khan was speaking on occasion of the joint meeting of provincial ministers and Awami Action Committee the other day. He said that while we are aware of the public problems, still it is their right to make positive criticism on the government. While defending the

decision of increase in the wheat price, the Chief Minister GB said that it was unavoidable because of the economic challenges being faced by the government. It is the responsibility of the government to ensure supply of wheat to the masses, he said adding that we have abolished the quota allocated for different departments. However, the impression of withdrawing subsidy on the wheat price is not correct, he made it clear. He said that we would always welcome the positive suggestions from the people in view of the economic challenges facing the government besides the ground realities. He mentioned that we are facing challenges to resolve the economic issues

because of the existence of caretaker government in the center. This was the reason that we faced the deficit budget for the current financial year, he noted. Still the provincial government is taking serious steps to resolve the public issues, still we demand of the federation to allocate share of the Gilgit Baltistan in the National Finance Commission (NFC) award on pattern of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister stated. The Chief Minister said that the provincial government has formed Revenue Authority for increase in the resources and revenue of the province. He flayed the criticism on the decision of formation of Revenue Authority and described it unnecessary and unwarranted. He said that the government makes decision and takes initiatives in the larger interest of the area and its people, and of course, to run the system, and so we are doing. He believed that Gilgit Baltistan would progress and people would prosper with increase of revenue and its resources. He said that the increase in revenue and resources is unavoidable like other provinces, so we are making our utmost endeavours in this regard. DIG CTD Imran

Pak expresses serious concern over grim situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has expressed serious concern over the grim situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to Kashmir Media Service, the concern was raised by the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly news briefing in Islamabad today. She urged India to repeal its draconian laws and stop using the bogey of terrorism to suppress dissent in the occupied territory. The Spokesperson

also reiterated Pakistan's call for a durable and sustained ceasefire in Gaza to enable supply of extensive and robust humanitarian assistance, urgently needed medical aid to the injured and shelter to those displaced by the indiscriminate and in-humane bombing by Israeli occupation forces. She said the international community should take immediate and decisive steps to bring an end to the Israeli campaign of terrorism against Palestinians.

Loralai Medical College holds awareness walk on AIDS

QUETTA (APP): Loralai Medical College in collaboration with PPH and AIDS Control Program on Friday organized a seminar and walk to create awareness against the deadly disease. A large number of doctors, nurses, paramedical staff and scholars participated in the seminar and walk. Deputy Program Manager AIDS Control Program Balochistan Dr. Dawood Achakzai said that AIDS is a curable disease and timely diagnosis can help save the life of a patient. He said that partici-



Secretary Fisheries Imran Gichki, Secretary Livestock Tayyab Lehri and President Chamber Sardar Musa Kakar cutting cake during inaugural ceremony of FAO Gwadar, Lasbella Live hood Project-II.

CTD releases list of 51 female terrorists

PESHAWAR (APP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday released a list of female terrorists who were involved in different nature of terrorist activities in the province since 2014. According to the list issued here 30 females were involved in incidents of terrorism, 13 in kidnapping, two in extortion and three each in target killing, terror financing. DIG CTD Imran

Shahid said that the intelligence agency and the law enforcing agencies were facing difficulties in arrest of these female terrorists due to cultural and traditional values and also because there was almost no source linked with the female criminals or terrorists. He said that cases were registered in different police stations against these female terrorists and some cases were in process in different court.

Customs inspector among two arrested from Torkham

PESHAWAR (APP): The raiding team of FIA here on Friday arrested an organized gang involved in illegal clearance of US dollars during an intelligence-based operation at Torkham Border. The FIA spokesman said the action was taken on the directive of Deputy Director Anti-Corruption, Saad Ullah Khan during which two members of the gang including a Customs Inspector were arrested from Foreign Currency Declaration Point at Torkham.

Mushaal Mullick briefs UK Parliamentarians on human right violations in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick Friday attended a meeting of cross-party British Parliamentarians, convened by Member Parliament, Chairperson APPG on Jammu & Kashmir, Debbie Abrahams at a virtual platform from London. Besides British Parliamentarians, members of the civil society and human rights organisations also participated in the virtual debate, which circled around the state of human rights affairs in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

International community to uphold international human rights obligations and help implement the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir. She particularly raised the issue of gross violation of human rights against women and children in IIOJK. The special assistant urged the international community to take notice of the treatment of minorities, particularly the forced conversions of the Christian and other minorities under the RSS ideology, inside India. Mushaal said that Kashmiris were deeply concerned over attempts to alter the demographics of IIOJK. She urged the world for making suitable efforts to resolve longstanding issues of Kashmir according to UN resolutions and aspiration of people of the held valley. She called upon the international community to uphold international human rights obligations and help implement the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir.



QUETTA: Caretaker Advisor Mir Umair Muhammad Hassani meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai.

Public gathering proved Balochistan PPP's stronghold: Zehri

Independent Report QUETTA: The successful public gathering held on the occasion of the 56th Foundation Day of the Pakistan People's Party proved that the people of Balochistan considered PPP as their savior. In his statement issued here on Friday, District President Hub Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that Jalsa' on November 30 was the biggest gathering in the history of Balochistan, which was the beginning of a big change in politics in the province. He said that partici-

tion has dealt a big blow to Artificial, seasonal and self-interested politics. For those who thought that PPP's position in Balochistan was weak, yesterday's "JALSA" is a message that Pakistan PPP was the people's party. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that after yesterday's successful "JALSA", the zealous people of Balochistan, who loved former President Asif Ali Zardari and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, were going to create a new history of Balochistan together with the Pakistan People's Party.

Cipher case: Law ministry files notification in court about trial of Imran in jail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Notification on jail trial of chairman PTI Imran Khan in cipher case has been issued by law ministry. Special court established under official secret act has adjourned the hearing of cipher case till today (Saturday). Judge Abual Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain of special court heard cipher case against PTI chairman

Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in federal judicial complex Islamabad Friday. During the hearing of the case petition was filed by chairman PTI against jail trial and arguments were given. The court remarked "wait for notification of law ministry. If notification does not come then I will issue production order of the accused persons.



QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Finance and Revenue Amjad Rasheed along with Representative of Overseas Pakistani Association at Quetta Press Club.

Qambrani says AIDS patients increasing day by day due to lack of medical examination in Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Manager AIDS Control Program Balochistan Dr. Khalid-ur-Rehman Qambrani on Friday said that the number of AIDS patients was increasing day by day, which was an alarming process due to ignorance and lack of medical examination in Balochistan. He said that the Health Department as well as the people related to every school of thought had to play their role to control the spread of AIDS. He expressed these views while addressing the participants of the walk organized in connection with the World AIDS Day under the auspices of AIDS Control Program Balochistan, Soshoo-Pak, Quetta Foundation. Rozeena Khilji, CEO of Quetta Foundation, Mohammad Khan Zahri, Senior Officer of Balochistan AIDS Control Program, Watanyar Khilji,

Executive Director of Asas PK also addressed the participants of the walk. Dr. Khalid-ur-Rahman Qambrani said that AIDS was affecting more people with each passing day, worryingly, the number of AIDS patients was decreasing globally and here in Pakistan the situation was different. The main reason for the spread of the disease is lack of awareness and lack of medical examination, he said. He said that it was a misconception that only sexual intercourse was the main cause of this disease, transfusion of infected blood and use of used syringes also play an important role in the spread of the disease. He said that the provincial AIDS control program had provided free test facilities in the hospitals of all the districts of the province and screening kits were available in all these districts.

BTTN hosts Book ceremony titled "Security Imperative-Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence, Diplomacy"

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Think Tank Network (BTTN) hosted the Book Launch Ceremony of the book titled, "The Security Imperative-Pakistan's Nuclear Deterrence and Diplomacy" authored by Ambassador Zamir Akram, on Friday here, The Chief Guest of the event was Lieutenant General @ Khalid Ahmed Kidwai, Advisor National Command Authority. The event was graced by Vice Chancellors of different Universities across Balochistan. Ali Abbas, Research Officer at BTTN was the moderator of the Ceremony. In his welcome remarks, the Head of BTTN applauded Ambassador Zamir Akram for his valuable contribution to the field of nuclear diplomacy throughout his career of 38 years. He highlighted that di-

plomacy has always been the first line of defence, but the war between nuclear powers will be so suicidal that diplomacy acquired a far greater role than ever before in history. He said that this book addresses the perceptions of nuclear deterrence and diplomacy. Dr Beenish in her appraisal highlighted that this book unfolds the narrative of Pakistan's quest for security through credible nuclear deterrence in the light of diplomacy. She further added that for Pakistan to go nuclear, the journey was tedious, those opposed to the Pakistani program used all strategies including denial of technology, economic sanctions, military threats, political coercion, and a rabid vilification campaign to block Pakistan's inexorable advance. She said that Pakistani leadership refused to buckle

under pressure resulting in the persistence, faith, and belief that nuclear deterrence was essential for our National Security. Dr Zafar Khan added that this insightful book delves into Pakistan's Nuclear Diplomacy and highlights the doctrinal changes over the time in case of South Asia, and how Pakistan's full spectrum deterrence plays a vital role in ensuring strategic stability against India. He concluded his speech with the remarks that this book stands out to be the first that presents a diplomatic view of Pakistan's Nuclear Program and contributes to the discourse of deterrence and nuclear diplomacy by emphasizing Pakistan's position in the global nuclear order. Miss Hananah Zazar in her appraisal shed light on the one significant

agenda discussed in the book that is non-proliferation and arms control. She said that the book rationally projects Pakistan's stance amid global non-proliferation efforts and discriminatory policies as compared to India. She mentioned the Foreign Office's role in the nuclear journey of Pakistan and added that this book is a significant addition to the academic writings about the ideas of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, arms control, and nuclear diplomacy as well as it projects Pakistan's position in global nuclear order over the decades. She concluded that another aspect that gives this book a unique status is that it gives a diplomatic view of the nuclear weapon program and nuclear safety and security debate of Pakistan and would serve as a weightage to stress

Pakistan's stance, internationally. Presenting his book, Ambassador Zamir Akram discussed its focus and added that the book explores how political instability and economic weakness in a country can lead to security challenges, both domestically and internationally. Referring to its online availability, he highlighted that, this year the book was recently removed from online repositories. The point is that there is something in this book that certain people would not appreciate becoming public, he said. He further stressed that the domain of security is not limited to nuclear technology but rather extends to the domain of cyber security and Artificial Intelligence specifically considering Indian advancement in these fields.