

Independent

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. EC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No 111, Jamadi-ul-Awwal 26, 1445 AH Monday December 11, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

IT industry embarked upon for first time in Balochistan at public level: Governor

More than 3,000 candidates appear in entry test of Governor Balochistan IT Initiative for AI Web 3.0 & Metaverse free AI & other IT courses

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that by the grace of Allah Almighty, Information Technology industry has embarked upon for the first time at public level in the province, and it would pave the way for revolution in IT sector.

The Governor was speaking on occasion of the entry test conducted for Governor Balochistan IT Initiative for AI Web 3.0 & Metaverse free AI & other IT courses at the Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS), here on Sunday.

More than 3,000 male and female candidates appeared in the entry test.



QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Information Jan Achakzai and Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Minerals Umeer Muhammad Hosani distributing shields on the occasion of International Human Rights Day organized by Youth Forum Far Kashmir.

Intense political rhetoric testament to in-time elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said the intense political rhetoric in the country was a testament to the conduct of the election on a date announced by the electoral watchdog.

"With the will of the Almighty, the elections will take place on Thursday, February 8, 2024," said the minister while talking to a private media channel on a TV talk show.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would issue the general election schedule, he said, adding all political parties would be given 54 days

under the constitution and law for electioneering.

To a query, he said the courts were dispensing justice to everyone despite questions raised by a handful of people.

Accountability should be done across the board, the minister said. "The history suggests that some of the governments could not complete its democratic terms," he said, adding the case hearing for former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been scheduled after four decades.

He, to another query, said the caretaker government was bound to implement the orders of the apex court.



LAHORE: Participants take part in the Marathon to express their solidarity with Palestinians, at Jail road to Liberty Chowk in Provincial Capital.

GoB to establish solid waste energy plant in Quetta

QUETTA (APP): On the direction of Chief Minister Ali Mardan Khan Domki, the Balochistan government was making efforts to establish a solid waste energy plant on a public-private partnership basis in the provincial capital to generate electricity and bio-gas from domestic waste.

The Secretary of Local Government, Administrator of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation and District Administration have been working to establish a solid waste energy plant in the city and reviewed various proposals regarding the project.

A feasibility study will be conducted regarding the waste supply, recycling and other factors of the solid waste energy plant.

The Metropolitan Cor-

poration Quetta would conduct a survey and compile data to provide waste to the plant daily so that the plant could run smoothly.

Talking to APP, Commissioner Quetta Division Muhammad Hamza Shfaqat said that the city has produced thousands of tons of waste daily, which can be used to meet energy and other needs, and the city will also remain clean.

He said projects like solid waste management plants and energy plants will make the city clean and free from garbage and it will also generate substantial revenue for the government.

He said that a solid waste energy plant would enhance the energy production in Quetta as the city produces around 1.5 million tons of garbage annually.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar giving away laptop to a young candidate of Entry Test of IT Initiative Program at BUITEMS

Army Chief off to US on official visit

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir has left on Sunday for United States of America (USA) on his maiden official visit.

During his visit, General Syed Asim Munir is scheduled to meet the senior military and other government officials of USA, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

ECP refutes claims of issuing general elections' schedule

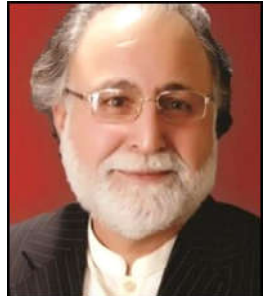
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has categorically denied the issuance of any schedule for the upcoming general elections. A spokesman of ECP, strongly denied a news item published in daily Jang is unfounded and having no basis.

The spokesperson clarified that the schedule circulating on social media is fraudulent. The Election Commission spokesperson noted that false information about the election is consistently appearing in both print and electronic media.

He said pay attention only to statements from the official spokesperson of the Election Commission, and disregard any others claiming to be from the Commission. Applications filed in the Commission underwent no consultations, clarified the spokesperson. Additionally, such statements should not be construed as policy declarations of the Election Commission, as per the spokesperson.

Rehmat Shah Afridi laid to rest

PESHAWAR (APP): Funeral prayer of Rehmat Shah Afridi, Editor-in-Chief of Frontier Post Peshawar was offered here on Sunday. Funeral prayer of the deceased was held at Hayatabad Peshawar and was attended by a large number of people, journalists,



ists, civil society members and well wishers.

Rehmat Shah Afridi was later laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard. He passed away last night due to a protected illness. The people are coming to his residence and offering Fateha.

Accuses Sharif family of trying to buy PIA Bilawal says his political rivals are contesting polls to save themselves from jail

Says neither any player nor anyone else can compete with me in politics; PPP contesting election to provide maximum relief to underprivileged: Bilawal

KOHAT (Agencies): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that he does not have any political rivals as "neither any player nor anyone else" can compete with him in politics.

Addressing the party's rally in Kohat district on Sunday, the PPP chief took a veiled jibe at his political opponents, saying that they

are contesting elections for their vested interests

On the other hand, the PPP chief said he is contesting polls against his rivals to resolve the issues of the masses.

"Someone is fighting elections to get out of jail while someone is fighting to escape from jail," Bilawal said at the rally.

He said the PPP does not represent the elite as it

is "representative of the workers and poor of the country".

"We will bury the traditional politics of division and initiate the politics that aims at serving the masses."

The PPP chief also expressed hope that his party would form the government after the upcoming general elections and ensure that

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KOHAT: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to workers convention at Captain Zahooral Islam Shaheed Football Stadium Babri Banda.

All projects to be completed by December 30: Pace of work expedited on ongoing development projects under QDP

Independent Report

QUETTA: The pace of work on the ongoing development projects has been expedited under Quetta Development Package thanks to the frequent visits paid by the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki.

The concerned authorities have given deadline of 30th December for completion of the projects.

The Chief Minister Delivery Unit has issued the review report of the progress of ongoing communication sectors continued under the Quetta Development Package, in light of the data provided by the

concerned authorities.

According to the report, 95 percent work has been completed on Sariab road while 92 percent work completed on Ansonb road.

Similarly, 92 percent has been completed on the link Badini road with 84 percent completed on Sabzal road and 84 percent completed on the Radio tower link road.

The Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shfaqat said that the opinion of Islamic Ideological Council has been taken about the mosques affected under the Quetta Development Package.

Syed Farooq Shah pays glowing tribute to Rehmat Shah Afridi

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Editor-in-Chief of Independent Group of Newspapers Syed Farooq Shah expressed his sorrow over the death of Rehmat Shah Afridi, founder and Editor-in-Chief of 'The Frontier Post' and paid a glowing tribute to him for his services in journalism.

He said that the services rendered by Rehmat Shah Afridi in the field of journalism will be remembered for long. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

General elections must for breaking status-quo in politics: Jam Kamal

Independent Report

QUETTA: The former Chief Minister Balochistan, Jam Kamal Khan has stated that holding general elections is very necessary to break the status-quo in country's politics and every party must have right to participate in them.

Jam Kamal Khan was speaking during his visit to Dhadhar, Bolan on Sunday. Upon reaching Dhadhar, the tribal and political elder Muhammad Waris Barda welcomed Jam Kamal Khan.

Speaking on the occasion, the former Chief Minister said that holding general elections are need of the hour to break the political status-quo.

He insisted that the general elections must be conducted in time.



GWADAR: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Sports and Culture Nawabzada Mir Jamal Khan Raisani presiding over a meeting regarding Gwadar Youth Festival

CTD SHO martyred, two injured in Khuzdar blast

Caretaker PM, Interior Minister strongly condemns blast

Independent Report
QUETTA: An official of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) was martyred while two others sustained injuries after their vehicle was hit by a magnetic improvised explosive device (IED) in Khuzdar on Sunday noon.

The police sources informed that, CTD Station House Officer Mohammad Murad embraced martyrdom in the blast after his car was targeted on the Sultan Ibrahim road in Khuzdar city. Two others also sustained injuries.

Meanwhile, the wounded were shifted to the Khuzdar Teaching Hospital.

The area police and local administration reached

has to fight the war against terrorism as it is becoming a great challenge.

APP adds: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday while strongly condemning a blast in Khuzdar, expressed his deep grief and sorrow over Shahadat of Counter-Terrorism Department, SHO Muhammad Murad.

The prime minister expressed his condolence with the bereaved family and prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The caretaker Federal Minister for Interior, Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, strongly condemned the explosion in Khuzdar on



the spot and cordoned off the area. Investigations have been started by the local police.

Following the incident, caretaker Federal Minister of Interior Sarfraz Bugti said that the whole nation

Sunday.

He expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of CTD SHO Muhammad Murad in the explosion while expressing his condolences to the martyr's family.

Caretaker CM condemns Khuzdar blast; seeks report from authorities

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has strongly condemned the incident of blast in Khuzdar on Sunday, which claimed life of a local police officer and left two others injured.

In an official condemnation issued here on Sunday, the Chief Minister sought report of the explosion from the concerned authorities and ordered an inquiry into it.

He said that it is a condemnable act to attack the

security forces deployed for protection of life and property of the masses and restoration of peace.

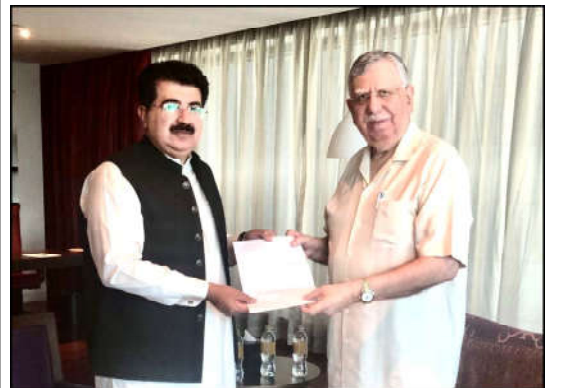
He directed the concerned authorities to present inquiry report of the explosion.

The Chief Minister also directed to take the culprits involved in the terrorism act to task.

Moreover, Mir Ali Mardan Domki also paid homage to the martyr police officer besides expressing sympathy and condolence with his bereaved family.

Senate Chairman accepts Shaukat Tarin's resignation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senate Chairman Muhammad Sadiq Sanjani has officially accepted the resignation of former Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen from his Senate membership.



The Senate Secretariat issued a statement confirming that Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjani, who had traveled to Dubai from Iraq, met with Shaukat Tareen during the visit. In this meeting, Shaukat Tareen tendered his resignation to the Chairman Senate, and after due consideration, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjani approved the resignation.

Elections can be postponed in areas under security threat, suggests Qadir Baloch

ISLAMABAD (INP): PPP leader and former federal minister Abdul Qadir Baloch has suggested postponing elections in areas that are under security threat instead of delaying polls entirely.

Last month, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and President Arif Alvi agreed on February 8, 2024 as the date for polls. The development stirred activities in the camps of most political parties.

However, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali recently said it was difficult to carry out political activities in parts

of KP and Balochistan due to the security situation. Similarly, JUI-F chief Fazlur Rehman also raised questions on the feasibility of holding elections amid a "deteriorating" security situation.

Earlier this week, caretaker Interior Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, while emphasising the government's readiness to ensure peaceful general elections, acknowledged the terrorist threats faced by political leaders in the run-up to the polls, highlighting a general threat to political figures, with a specific alert for the JUI-F chief.

ACC U19 Asia Cup

Azan Awais hammers century to help Pak U19 beat India U19 by eight wickets

ISLAMABAD (APP): The fifth game of the ACC U19 Asia Cup saw Pakistan U19 inflict an eight-wicket defeat on India U19 at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai on Sunday.

Azan Awais, following an undefeated half-century against Nepal, scored an unbeaten century to take the team over the line while chasing 260, according to information made available here by the Pakistan Cricket Board.

Pakistan won the toss and elected to field first. Indian opening batter Adarsh Singh hit a half-century (62, 81b, 4x4s, 1x6) to recoup the momentum for his side following the loss

of two wickets inside the first 12 overs.

A 93-run stand between the captain Uday Saharan (60, 98b, 5x4s) and Singh helped restore control in the innings.

However, when Singh fell to left-arm spinner Arafat Minhas in the 32nd over, the innings once again faltered. Pressure mounted on the Indian batting as successive wickets fell. A quick half-century by Sachin Dhas (58, 42b, 2x4s, 3x6s) took India U19 to a respectable total as they finished at 259-9 in 50 overs.

The Pakistan pace attack delivered well with right-arm quick Mohammad Zeeshan picking up four wickets, having

taken a six-wicket haul in the previous game. His fellow fast bowlers Amir Hassan and Ubaid Shah returned with two each as well.

Pakistan U19 cruised to the target with much ease, doing so in 47 overs and eight wickets in the bag. Despite losing opening batter Shamyul Hussain cheaply in just the fifth over, Pakistan U19 remained in control of the chase.

A 110-run partnership between Shahzaib Khan and Azan Awais ensured that Pakistan U19 dominated the Indian bowling after the first wicket fell. The partnership was broken in the 28th over when

Shahzaib was caught off Murugan Abhishek's bowling, after scoring a half-century (63, 88b, 4x4s, 3x6s).

Pakistan captain Saad Baig, replacing Shahzaib at the crease, produced a quality half-century (68 not out, 51b, 8x4s, 1x6). Azan and Saad put up an undefeated partnership of 125 runs to see Pakistan U19 through. Azan was the star of the match as his superb century (105 not out, 130b, 10x4s) ensured that Pakistan U19 remain in a commanding position throughout the chase. For his extraordinary batting display, he was awarded Player of the Match.



Pakistan U19 squad celebrating after winning their U-19 Asia Cup match against India at the ICC Cricket Academy Ground in Dubai, UAE



GILGIT: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulber Khan taking oath from the newly elected cabinet members of Professor and Lecturer association at CM Secretariat

PSL-9 to be held in four Pakistani cities

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced that the ninth edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) will be held in four cities across Pakistan: Lahore, Karachi, Rawalpindi, and Multan.

According to PCB on Sunday, the tournament is scheduled to begin on February 18, 2024, with the opening match taking place in Lahore. However, some franchises have expressed concerns about the timing, citing potential disruptions due to cold weather and fog.

Another point of contention is the final match, which is currently scheduled to be held in Karachi on March 19, 2024. Teams are worried that lower attendance during the holy month of Ramadan could negatively impact ticket revenues. Multan Sultans have proposed hosting the final in Multan instead, expressing

confidence in their ability to attract a large crowd.

Meanwhile, Peshawar Zalmi is lobbying hard to have matches hosted in Peshawar, claiming that the construction of their stadium will be completed within two months. The PCB has not yet made a final decision on whether to include Peshawar as a host city.

Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the scheduling of double headers during Ramadan. The PCB plans to finalize and release the official schedule on December 13, 2023, during the PSL 9 draft event.

It's important to note that there was an initial proposal to relocate the entire PSL 9 to the United Arab Emirates due to the upcoming general elections in Pakistan. However, the PCB ultimately decided to keep the tournament within the country.

Asif Ali leads to victory of New York Strikers in final of Abu Dhabi T10

ABU DHABI (INP): New York Strikers wiped away the pain of last edition's loss to Deccan Gladiators in the final and crowned themselves as the new champions of the Abu Dhabi T10 in the 7th edition at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium by recording a seven-wicket win.

Pakistan's Asif Ali, known for his power-hitting skills, and skipper Kieron Pollard, put on an unbeaten 56 runs partnership for the fourth wicket in 29 balls. Ali remained unbeaten on 48 off 25 balls with four sixes and two boundaries while Pollard scored an unconquered 21 off 13 balls with one boundary and a six to win the final with four balls to spare. They thus lifted the trophy and received the prize money of \$100,000.

It was a creditable show from New York Strikers that had become part of the Abu Dhabi T10 only in the last edition and have reached the final in both the editions and now won the title too.

Gladiators, who were hoping to record a hat-trick of title triumphs having won

the earlier two editions, received the runners-up prize money of \$50,000.

Their plans to post a big total was squashed by Sunil Narine who bagged two wickets for six runs from his two overs and restricted Deccan Gladiators to 91 for 5. It was the same total that New York Strikers were restricted to in the last edition's final that Gladiators won by 37 runs.

Brief scores: New York Strikers bt Deccan Gladiators by 7 wickets.

Deccan Gladiators 91 for 5 in 10 overs (Andre Russell 30, David Wiese 20n.o, Sunil Narine 2 for 6) New York Strikers 94 for 3 in 9.2 overs (Asif Ali 48n.o, Kieron Pollard 22n.o)

Player of the Match: Asif Ali

Player of the Tournament: Akeal Hosein

Bowler of the Tournament: Akeal Hosein

Batter of the Tournament: Tom Kohler-Cadmore

UAE Player of the Tournament: Mohammad Jawadullah

Fuel price likely to reduce in from Dec 16

ISLAMABAD (INP): Petrol and diesel prices are likely to decrease by 13 and 15 rupees per liter respectively, effective December 16th.

According to media reports, this potential price drop comes on the back of a 5.49 dollar per barrel decrease in the global petrol market. If the government finalizes the proposed reduction on December 15th, it will bring the price of petrol down from the current 281.34 rupees per liter to 268.34 rupees.

Similarly, diesel prices could drop from 289.79 rupees to 274.79 rupees per liter.

The final decision on the new prices will be announced by the government on December 15th, and the revised prices will be implemented the following day.

As many as 186 Afghan families returned to Kabul

ISLAMABAD (INP): "Thousands of Afghans are returning to their homeland on a daily basis through Chaman and Torkham borders, thanking Pakistan for its generosity," Radio Pakistan reported.

Apart from other measures for the dignified return of Afghans to their country, transit camps equipped with all facilities have been established in various districts for their temporary accommodation.

Earlier, the Supreme Court (SC) issued notices to the federation, apex committee, and foreign ministry on plea against the deportation of illegal Afghans residing in Pakistan.

The plaintiff stated that the caretaker government doesn't have the authority to evict illegal foreign nationals.

Solangi rebuts social media reports about GB, vows legal action against rumour mongers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday strongly rebuted different rumours circulating on social media regarding Gilgit-Baltistan. The rumours suggested that a proposal to hand over GB to another country for 50 years was under consideration.

In a post on X formerly Twitter, the minister said there was no truth in such rumours. He added that no such news was published by any newspaper. Those spreading this fake news to achieve their nefarious designs would face legal action, the minister vowed. Earlier, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting through its social media account also rejected the news as fake. "Disseminating fake news is not only unethical and illegal but it is also disservice to the nation. It is the responsibility of everyone to reject irresponsible behaviour. Reject #FakeNews," it wrote on X.

WHO Executive Board meeting held in Cairo

ISLAMABAD (APP): The meeting of the Executive Board of the World Health Organization (WHO) was held in Cairo.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan participated in the meeting on video link.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the destruction of health infrastructure in Gaza, denying access to treatment to the sick and wounded. Dr. Nadeem Jan fully supported and appreciated WHO's position on the matter.

He said that the health sector should be non-political.

He added there should be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

He said that innocent children, elderly women in Gaza are deprived of medical facilities.

He said that treatment and health facilities are the basic right of every human being. He said that doctors, paramedical staff and nurses should be given access to the treatment of children, women and the elderly. Dr. Nadeem asked the international community to ensure the access of doctors and nurses to provide treatment facilities to the sick and wounded.



KACHURA VALLEY: A stunning view of Lower Kachura Lake, also known as Shangrila Lake, is a lake located near the city of Skardu in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan. Situated at a height of 2,500 metres, it has had an operational resort on its bank since 1983.

Bilawal says his political rivals...

Continued from page 1

the masses would get their rights. The PPP chief said he was warned against holding party conventions in KP amid security threat alerts. "But [...] our workers say they are neither scared nor they would surrender before terrorism."

INP adds: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has accused the Sharif family of attempting to buy the national airline, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), instead of selling it.

Addressing a public meeting in Lower Dir on Sunday, Bilawal said, "I have come to know that they are trying to buy PIA instead of selling it. I want to tell that we will not let Mian Sahib (Shehbaz Sharif) to buy PIA."

He criticized the exclusion of Lower Dir from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, saying that it was initially intended to start from backward and terror-affected areas.

"President Asif Ali Zardari signed the CPEC agreement with the aim of starting this project from the backward and terror-affected areas, but unfortunately Lower Dir has been separated from this project," Bilawal said. "Inshallah, on February 8, you will once again elect Pakistan People's Party, then we will once again pass the route of CPEC through your path."

Youth is backbone of Kashmir struggle: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): She expressed deep concern over the restricted access of international human rights observers to IIOJK. She lamented the information and communication blockade imposed by India, stating that it has prevented the true extent of human rights abuses in IIOJK from reaching the international community. She said the on-ground situation in IIOJK is far more severe than what is being reported.

She further said that the land of IIOJK was filled with unmarked graves. India was killing the Kashmiri people with impunity and families were left waiting for the dead bodies of their loved ones. She also said that India is using rape as weapon against women, men and children with impunity.

Mushaal highlighted the shortcomings of the United Nations, an institution initially created to peacefully address global conflicts such as those of Kashmir and Palestine.

She expressed disappointment, asserting that the UN has not been successful in compelling India to adhere to its own passed resolutions and human rights conventions in IIOJK.

Jammu and Kashmir. She also demanded the representation of the people of IIOJK in the UN General Assembly, underscoring the importance of amplifying their voices on the international stage.

Mushaal underscored the pivotal role of youth in the success of any movement. She advocated for the creation of dedicated Kashmir cells within educational institutions to provide comprehensive education and awareness to the youth on the complex issues of Jammu and Kashmir.

Additionally, she proposed the establishment of a government-level legal body to advocate the just cause of Kashmir in international courts. Mushaal expressed that the ongoing journey of the Kashmir struggle requires collective ownership at every level.

Mushaal highlighted the teachings of Islam, emphasizing its core principles of upholding human rights regardless of creed and colour. She pointed out that Islam strictly prohibits the killing of non-combatant civilians and the destruction of crops, plants, and properties, even amid a battle.

PHF women's hockey league to kick off on Dec 20th in Gojra

GOJRA (INP) : Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Women's Hockey League is set to take off on December 20th at the International Hockey Stadium in Gujra.

According to the chief organizer Khawar Javed, the preparations are in full swing for this event. He confirmed the participation of six teams who will compete for the coveted championship title. The league will run through December 24th, offering fans a thrilling five days of hockey.

While the names of the participating teams and the league format are yet to be announced, this historic event marks a significant milestone for women's hockey in Pakistan. It provides a much-needed platform for talented female athletes to showcase their skills and compete at a national level.

[2:34 pm, 10/12/2023] Saeed Ch: PSL-9 to be held in four Pakistani cities

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QUETTA: People gather on railway track to warm themselves from scorching sun on the arrival of winter season, that situation may cause any life risk for people and may cause any serious accident, showing negligence of concerned authorities



ABBOTTABAD: People hold a protest against increase Fares of local transports at a road in the city.

Mushaal Mullick hails AAPP establishment, underscores significance of aesthetic medicine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Human Rights Mushaal Mullick on Sunday hailed the establishment of the first Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan (AAPP) here and underscored the significance of aesthetic medicine on the occasion.

She was the chief guest at the inauguration of the first Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan (AAPP) which was marked as a significant milestone in Pakistan's medical sector.

Mullick, in her address, highlighted the importance of this historic moment, expressing pride in the establishment of the association in Rawalpindi.

She emphasized the alignment of this achieve-

ment with the belief in Allah's appreciation of beauty, as seen in the colorful and beautiful universe He created.

Her speech underscored the significance of aesthetic medicine, a field she described as both challenging and rewarding.

The event also saw the participation of notable figures such as Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice Chancellor of Health University, and Dr Anees Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of Riphah International University.

Dr Samina Mohsin, President of the association, and Dr. Shamaila A. Khan, the General Secretary, were present as well, along with esteemed estheticians from across the country.

Dr Mohsin, in her

welcome speech, introduced the guests and presented a documentary on aesthetic medicine. She spoke about the growing global interest in this field, emphasizing its distinction from traditional beauty practices and highlighting recent academic advancements in aesthetic medicine.

The event concluded with Mullick and other dignitaries presenting commemorative shields to the guests, symbolizing the promising start of the Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan.

Mullick's presence and words at the event underscored the government's support for this emerging field and its potential impact on the medical landscape in Pakistan and beyond.



ISLAMABAD: President Association of Aesthetic Physician Dr Nafisa Mohsin and General Secretary Dr Shumaila presenting a shield to special advisor to the prime minister of Pakistan on human rights and women empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick during a ceremony at a local hotel in the city.

Speakers for inter-agency data sharing to ensure climate resilient cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at a panel discussion on data sharing for climate resilient cities have demanded the government to ensure inter-agency data sharing, use of cutting edge technology and accessible information platforms to ensure climate resilient cities in Pakistan.

"An inter-agency data sharing governance system would be established that will involve creating a new centralized entity with the mandate to acquire, store or stream all available data from relevant agencies or empowering existing agencies by hazard type within their jurisdiction mandate to manage data acquisition and dissemination efficiently, with a focus on scalability, cybersecurity and privacy", Awais M. Sumra, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiative at a session on "Using data to build climate resilient cities in Pakistan", organized at Conference of Parties (COP28), Dubai in Pakistan Pavilion, a news release said.

"The first generation multi hazard early warning system focused on communicating flood forecast or drought forecast either to the government agencies or to the people, but they

didn't include the information of early action or anticipatory action. Early warning actions can be made more effective if we include early action information into that", Dr Asim Zia who is a Professor of Public Policy and Computer Science in the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics and the Director of the Institute of Environmental Diplomacy and Security (IEDS) at the University of Vermont. It is critical to include early warning and early action in short term planning as well as long-term planning, he added. We need to have advisories at household level that will save the lives of many people.

Crowdsourcing technologies and citizen/community science approaches by deploying sensors can provide critical data for model calibration and validation to forecast air quality and water quality. Operational agencies, e.g., EPA, can also deploy sensor networks to collect real-time air quality and water quality data.

He said that there is need to establish an inter-agency data sharing governance system. Currently, there are some good examples of data sharing (e.g., PMD with WAPDA, IRSA

and Indus Commission to generate short to medium term flood forecasts) that can serve as successful examples. Data flows in many cases are, however, either non-existent or non-operational.

Flows of data between NDMA and operational forecasting agencies (PMD, FFC, SUPARCO, GCISC) need to be improved both ways, i.e. NDMA monitoring data of hazards can be used through "active learning" to improve the forecast skill of these models, while improved forecast skill of these models can be used to beef up the communication capacity of NDMA to its downstream agencies (e.g. PDMA, district government etc.), e.g. through improved visualizations of hazards and their impacts.

There are some opportunities to improve resource efficiency by reducing the redundancies among different agencies for data collection, and clear enunciation of "operational" agency mandates. Currently, there is some overlap among SUPARCO, PMD and NDMA that could be reduced by clear enunciation of operational goals of each of these agencies.

SSP commended officials for effective steps in crime combating

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) presided over a crime meeting. The meeting was attended by all Zonal DPOs, SDPOs and all incharge police stations.

SSP Operations reviewed the performance of the all police stations in detail and commended the

performance of the police officials for effective measures in crime combating.

SSP Operations also emphasized the need for continued vigilance and proactive measures. He directed all Zone DPOs to boost the campaign against drug peddlers in different areas of the city adding that a special crackdown against proclaimed offenders and absconders should be started immediately.



He further directed the officials to ensure the arrest of the suspects elements involved in vehicle and motorcycle theft especially murder cases adding that the ratio of challan of the cases and recoveries should be increased.

Tourists throng recreational sites, scenic valleys to enjoy winter

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tourists were flocking to various recreational sites across the country, especially Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to enjoy the mountainous areas and scenic valleys, where snowfall attracts an unprecedented number of tourists.

Talking to APP, Rafique Ahmed, a resident of G-10 who visited Swat along with his family, said that rains in the Malam Jabba and Kalam valleys were attracting a substantial number of tourists to enjoy games and skiing.

He said the pleasant weather and peaceful ambience have made their day

joyful and exciting by forcing them to come out of home not only to relish their memories but also to enjoy great fun.

He further urged foreign and local tourists to visit the scenic valleys in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to observe nature and get fresh air. Sajid Ali, a resident of Peshawar, said that Malam Jabba's lush green mountainous beauty and features take tourists to a new level of adventure, amusement, and excitement. He said modern facilities should be provided to tourists to attract a larger number of them during the winter.

Foolproof security being ensured at High Security zone

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: Following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCCPO), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police is ceaselessly dedicated to preserving law and order within the federal capital, a public relations officer said.

He said that, to fortify the security of the high security zone, personnel stationed at different security checkpoints diligently executing their responsibilities, meticulously verifying

documenting vehicle information.

The high security zone encompasses pivotal government and private establishments, diplomatic missions, and other vital assets, necessitating an unwavering focus on their safeguarding. Government personnel entering the high security zone are now mandated to display their departmental identification cards. Additionally, individuals with private business within the high security zone are urged to carry their requisite



the particulars of individuals accessing the high security zone and meticulously

documentation and extend their full cooperation to on-duty personnel.



ISLAMABAD: Women take part in a cycle and motorcycle rally at Fatima Jinnah Park in Federal Capital, titled "Run or Walk to Support Campaign Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls."

Sanjrani commemorates Intl Day of human rights with a call for global unity

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: In observance of the International Day of Human Rights, the Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has released a message, emphasizing the significance of upholding universal human rights principles to build a just and equitable world.

The Chairman applauded the efforts marking the 75th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the theme for 2023, "Freedom, Equality, and Justice for All." The theme resonates deeply in a world facing unprecedented challenges, emphasizing the crucial role human rights play as a guiding compass through complex global issues.

The message underscored the importance of recognizing both progress made and challenges ahead.

It addressed the ongoing inhumane campaigns, particularly the collective punishment by Israeli occupation forces in Gaza and the wave of Indian atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir following illegal actions of 2019. The Chairman stressed the urgent need for collective international action to protect human rights in the face of such blatant violations. The Chairman Senate emphasized the profound and multifaceted impacts of human rights violations on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015. Human rights, the Chairman asserted, are not only intrinsic to the SDGs but also essential for their effective implementation, positioning the protection of human rights as both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity for sustainable development worldwide.

Human Rights Day has no meaning for IIOJK's oppressed people: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has said that Human Rights Day has no meaning for the oppressed people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), as they have been deprived of all their basic rights and freedoms enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The APHC incarcerated leaders, Shabbir Ahmed Shah and Nayeem Ahmed Khan, in their separate messages from New Delhi's infamous Tihar jail said, "Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is the only region of the world where the entire population has been deprived of all human rights."

They said, "The worst situation in IIOJK demands the attention of all international bodies, including the United Nations and the

powerful countries of the world." Jailed APHC leaders Molvi Bashir Ahmad Irfani and Bilal Siddiqi in their separate messages from the IIOJK jails, saying, "Celebrating Human Rights Day is like rubbing salt on the bleeding wounds of Kashmiris, as the United Nations has made no sincere effort to restore their rights and they continue to suffer under tyranny and subjugation." They deplored that over one million trigger-happy troops were committing heinous crimes against humanity in IIOJK to intimidate the Kashmiris into submission, according to KMS, APHC leaders, including Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Abdul Ahad, Yasmeen Raja, Ms. Hafza Bano, Syed Bashir Andrabi, Khawaja Firdous, Fayaz Jafari, Syed Sibte Shabbir Qumi.



ISLAMABAD: Children's are enjoying Sunday Holiday at Japanese Park in the Federal Capital.

IRSA releases 84,900 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 84,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 38,200 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1487.30 feet and was 87.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 19,500 cusecs and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1167.70 feet, which was 117.70 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 4,800 cusecs and 26,000 cusecs respectively.

AIOU to host Int'l moot on Modern trends in Arabic Novel

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Department of Arabic (Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies) of the Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is organizing a two-day international conference on "Modern Trends in the Arabic Novel" on December 13-14 as a part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations. According to Chairman, Department of Arabic, Dr Abdul Majeed Baghdadi, the conference will feature 13 scholars from countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Thailand, Malaysia, Oman, Algeria, Nigeria, and Syria who will be physically present, while 15 international scholars will participate online. In addition, faculty members, experts, researchers, and intellectuals from all over the country will also be participating in this conference.

The Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, along with the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia,



ISLAMABAD: Women are busy buying Christmas decorating items on a stall during Christmas Bazaar in Federal Capital.

DG Human Rights emphasizes the importance for academic institutes

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director Federal Ministry of Human Rights Abdul Sattar, through a written communication with the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Higher Education Commission, and Provincial Education Departments, has emphasized the importance for academic institutions to prepare the youth against the threat of cybercrimes, said a press release issued here.

While referring to MOHR's mandate under the Rules of Business 1973, he also shared that the Ministry has been conducting seminars on human rights education, awareness, and sensitization in collaboration with various educational institutions across Pakistan on specific themes.

He has conveyed that preparing our youth against the threat of cybercrimes, as a global challenge, is a need of the hour for which all stakeholders need to join hands with each other. Keeping in view their important role in sensitization on cyber security and cybercrimes, educational institutions have been requested to channelize their efforts to promote the positive use of information and communication technology, besides preparing youth against cybercrime-related threats.

Open burning of waste in Pakistan causing smog; threat to air quality, public health

ISLAMABAD (APP): The opening burning of agricultural, industrial and municipal waste in Pakistan is posing a serious risk to air quality and public health as it was causing smog in the region. Hazardous emissions, including particulate matter, dioxins, and Volatile Organic Compounds, contribute to smog, leading to respiratory issues and cardiovascular problems.

Recognizing the urgency, the Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAE) jointly organized an X (formerly Twitter) Space to highlight the impact of open waste burning on smog and its threats to health and the environment. With 48.5 million tons of annual municipal waste, cities like Islamabad face challenges in sustainable waste management.

Inefficient waste collection strategies result in waste accumulation and open burning, especially in areas lacking proper services. The open burning of waste is a prevalent practice in numerous cities across Pakistan.

However, there is a scarcity of documented data pinpointing the areas where this practice poses the most significant issues or the underlying reasons for burning municipal waste.

A recent survey conducted by IoU in Islamabad and Lahore revealed that a majority of respondents were uninformed about any existing laws against this practice, as well as the environmental or health hazards associated with it, said Ayesha Majid, Senior Program Coordinator at IoU, in her introductory remarks.

Waste burning, a major source of toxic gases and black carbon, occurs in diverse settings, posing health and safety risks. Often hidden and seasonal, it lacks clear regulations and enforcement. The Royal Academy of Engineering addresses this with 19 global projects, focusing on vulnerable groups and promoting improved waste management, citizen reporting, and regulatory enforcement.

Dr. Mansoor Ali, RAE's Theme Lead, further stated that RAE's programs aim at various levels, including national policies, city frameworks, and grassroots practices, recognizing the link between waste burning and livelihoods, especially for waste pickers. Once known as the "city of gardens," Lahore has transformed into a "gas chamber." Over the past decade, the city has witnessed

an alarming 75% reduction in greenery, accompanied by a significant 10-degree rise in temperature. 60% of diseases in Lahore are linked to air pollution.

The roots of Lahore Bachao Tehreek can be traced back to a case 16 years ago when a Motorway construction project proposed cutting 30,000 trees and converting 23,000 acres of green land into a road near the Lahore canal.

The Supreme Court's historic judgment led to the introduction of the Canal Urban Heritage Path Act, which was passed through Parliament, recognizing the environment as a vital heritage and public trust for the first time. Inmrana Tiwana, Environmental Activist, highlights how she started the Lahore Bachao Tehreek, a movement aimed at ad-

ressing the escalating issue of smog in Lahore. Exposure to pollutants from open waste burning, especially during the smog season, poses serious health risks, including respiratory and cardiovascular issues, skin and eye irritation, increased cancer risk, and compromised immune systems.

Vulnerabilities vary across demographics, with children, the elderly, and low-income communities facing higher risks. Urban areas witness frequent hospital admissions for respiratory diseases, while rural regions may face occupational exposure.

In daily practice, doctors observe how toxic air exacerbates existing health conditions, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular complications across diverse demographic groups.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent
 Monday December 11, 2023

Liberties lost

As Pakistan marks Human Rights Day today, it confronts a troubling panorama of human rights violations. Rights bodies, local and international, have consistently drawn attention to the country's abysmal record but to no avail. Despite constitutional guarantees, the reality for many Pakistanis is a pervasive sense of insecurity. The use of enforced disappearances as a tool against dissent is particularly alarming. With at least 2,210 unresolved cases, the state's role in these disappearances paints a picture of repression.

The failure to enact legislation criminalising enforced disappearances, despite repeated attempts, suggests a lack of political will at the highest levels. The cases of journalists Nafees Naeem, Arsalan Khan, Imran Riaz and Baloch student Bebagr Imdad, who were all abducted — some for months — and later released, highlight a disturbing trend of targeting critical voices.

Some progress was made, with safety laws for journalists passed first by the Sindh Assembly followed by the National Assembly in late 2021, but their implementation remains a distant dream. The curtailing of freedom of assembly and expression is another area of grave concern. The authorities' use of force to disperse peaceful protests, and the intimidation and arbitrary detention of protesters, all indicate shrinking space for civil liberties.

Religious intolerance continues to ignite violence, with blasphemy allegations leading to the lynching of both minorities and Muslims. The Supreme Court's warnings against the misuse of blasphemy laws are welcome, yet much more is needed to protect the vulnerable from societal prejudices.

Violence against women remains a pervasive issue. While the conviction of Zahir Jaffer for the murder of Noor Mukadam is a significant step, systemic changes are crucial for addressing the broader issue of gender-based violence. The lack of enactment of the Domestic Violence Bill speaks volumes about the state's failure to uphold women's rights. The rights of transgender individuals, despite legal recognition, continue to be ignored. The challenge to the Transgender Rights Act and the continued violence against this community reveal deep-seated societal and institutional biases. Torture and custodial deaths remain unchecked, and the passage of the Torture and Custodial Death Act, while a positive development, requires rigorous enforcement.

This bleak landscape of human rights is reflective of a deeper malaise affecting the country's democratic fabric. The manipulation of democratic processes, the establishment's shadow over political life, and the selective application of justice all contribute to an environment where human rights are easily trampled upon. As Pakistan prepares for national elections, it is imperative that these issues are brought to the forefront. The protection of human rights is not just a moral obligation but a prerequisite for a stable and functioning democracy. On this Human Rights Day, let Pakistan recommit itself to these ideals, not just in rhetoric but in concrete actions.

“Will Nawaz’s hopes die down soon?”

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Nawaz Sharif was an outcast in Pakistan—branded a convict, an absconder, and a proclaimed offender, marred by allegations of deep-seated corruption. He had been disqualified for life and ousted from the country. Sharif's persistent defiance in challenging the establishment had resulted in multiple confrontations, leading to repeated punishments. The prevailing, widely accepted perception was that the establishment, through extensive efforts, state resources, and manipulation of the judicial, administrative, and civil systems, had imprisoned him and orchestrated his exile. It seemed inconceivable that they would, in their right mind, reinstate him to a position of power.

Contrary to all expectations, Nawaz Sharif returned in a blaze of glory, defying every perception, estimate, and logic. He, once a convicted figure whose mere mention in the media was deemed a grave offense, transformed overnight into the media's darling—a remarkable shift akin to a magical transformation. Even the Interior Minister, who initially asserted Sharif's imminent arrest upon his return due to his convict status, hastily retracted, showering him with praise, acknowledging his eminence, and granting him VVIP treatment upon arrival.

In an astonishing turn of events, the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) swiftly withdrew corruption charges against him, while the courts remarkably absolved him of allegations regarding

ill-gotten wealth in London—all seemingly within the blink of an eye. The sudden about-face in treatment and legal proceedings surrounding Sharif's return left an indelible impact, defying previous norms and expectations in a manner that resonated deeply.

However, a lingering unease persisted despite these developments. The intelligentsia, thinkers, analysts, and the general public found themselves deeply unsettled by the apparent manipulation of the country's systems, initially against Nawaz Sharif and then abruptly in his favor. Individuals with analytical minds grappled with this abrupt turn of events, finding it deeply disquieting, illogical, and difficult to comprehend. As they pondered various scenarios, ironically, many did not envision Mr. Nawaz Sharif reclaiming the position of Prime Minister for the fourth time.

The political analysts were assuming that the army as an institution has deep memories. It follows a cyclical process to ensure that armed forces remain adaptable, well-prepared, and continuously evolved to meet the challenges of dynamic and diverse conflict scenarios. The process began with the clear definition of objectives and parameters. Develop scenarios by creating a realistic setting that encompassed geopolitical factors, terrain details, and enemy capabilities. The war game unfolded through real-time decision-making. Data is meticulously collected on decisions, outcomes, and resource utilization during the war game. Insights gleaned from the war game guided the refinement of strategies, tactics, and operational

planning, feeding back into future simulations and real-world military operations.

As an analyst with past experiences closely working with both civil and military establishments, I have no doubt that before absolving Nawaz Sharif of all allegations and attempting to reinstate him as Prime Minister for the fourth time, the army would have followed specific procedures. They would have developed various scenarios focusing on questions like (a) What if Nawaz Sharif returns as Prime Minister for the fourth time? (b) Why should he not receive support for a comeback, and (c) what if an alternative nominee representing Nawaz Sharif is appointed as Prime Minister?

Scenario A: Given the PTI's popularity, there's a need for a prominent leader with public appeal and experience to counter Mr. Khan. Nawaz Sharif, with his extensive experience and stature, could emerge as a unifying figure across varying political factions. His ability to initiate dialogue and focus on economic stability and governance reforms makes him a strong counterweight to Mr. Khan.

Mr. Sharif's past accomplishments in economic development and public infrastructure can be highlighted through a strategic public relations campaign. He could reach out to disenchanted segments of society, pledging accountability and reforms to address previous concerns. Civil society, recognizing his experience and the call for stability, might lend support. The establishment could opt for a working relationship based on mutual respect and commitment to national interests, reinstalling

him as Prime Minister for the fourth time.

To maintain control over his ambitions, ensuring he holds a slim majority or no majority in Parliament, he might need to form a coalition government with members favored by the establishment. This would keep his government reliant on their support, keeping his authority in check.

Scenario B: Opposition factions and certain elements within the military consistently highlight Nawaz Sharif's past dismissals and allegations of corruption. They argue that his return to power could jeopardize national interests and financial integrity, reigniting past controversies and instability.

Nawaz Sharif, during his tenure as Prime Minister of Pakistan, had several notable confrontations with the military establishment. His political career was marked by moments of strained relations and power struggles with the military leadership. These confrontations often stemmed from differing approaches to governance, control over key policy decisions, and the exercise of authority. Sharif's attempts to assert civilian supremacy and consolidate power occasionally clashed with the military's influence and perceived interests, leading to tense standoffs and moments of significant political instability in Pakistan.

A substantial portion of the public remains skeptical of Sharif's leadership due to lingering allegations and a perception of political opportunism. His reinstatement as Prime Minister might spark protests and deepen social divisions, leading to increased unrest.

Given Imran Khan's popularity, the establishment might need to manipulate elections in

favor of Nawaz Sharif, undermining the credibility of the electoral process. Such interference could lead to widespread rejection of the resulting government. If allegations of election rigging gain traction, international financial institutions like the IMF might withhold support, worsening the country's already fragile economic condition.

This could plunge the nation into further instability and turmoil. International partners are expected to express concerns about Sharif's potential return, fearing its impact on diplomatic relations and regional stability. This skepticism complicates efforts to secure international support for his administration.

Scenario C: To navigate resistance and controversies surrounding Nawaz Sharif's leadership, the Establishment might orchestrate conditions where Nawaz Sharif presents his brother, Shahbaz Sharif, as a compromise candidate for the prime ministerial role. In this scenario, Nawaz Sharif could retain substantial influence behind the scenes, effectively guiding the party and Shahbaz in governance matters allowing him to maintain control while projecting a cooperative image to subdue opposition.

Unlike Nawaz, Shahbaz is perceived as less likely to challenge military authority. He has a history of cooperative dealings with the military, avoiding direct confrontations—something favored by the military in civilian leadership.

Shahbaz boasts a reputation as a competent administrator with a proven track record in delivering economic projects. He is expected to prioritize economic development, aligning with the military's desire for a stable and prosper-

ous Pakistan. Maintaining a favorable relationship with the military gives Shahbaz more flexibility, a crucial factor for the military to retain a semblance of civilian control. His appointment ensures continuity, minimizing disruptions and safeguarding the military's interests.

Seen as a pragmatic politician willing to collaborate with different parties, Shahbaz's approach is valued by the military. They prefer leaders capable of navigating Pakistan's intricate political landscape without unnecessary conflicts.

Among the three scenarios, Scenario C emerges as the most promising compromise. By nominating Shahbaz Sharif as Prime Minister while retaining Nawaz Sharif's influence behind the scenes, it offers stability, continuity, and a leader perceived as more cooperative towards the military. This compromise could address concerns raised in other scenarios, providing a pathway to navigate the controversies surrounding Nawaz Sharif's leadership. It presents a strategic balance, potentially satisfying the military's preferences for a less confrontational leader while maintaining a sense of stability within the government. Reflecting on the abrupt ousting and subsequent return to power of both Benazir Bhutto Shaheed and Nawaz Sharif, orchestrated by the establishment, it becomes apparent that history might repeat itself. In a few years, we could find ourselves recalculating and envisioning various scenarios for Khan's potential return to the power equation. The pattern of leaders being removed from office and later reinstated seems to be a recurring theme, hinting at a possible similar trajectory for Khan in the future.

Pakistan's image



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

The world around us is changing at a rapid pace. So is our region South Asia. Global and regional geopolitics are profoundly impacting Pakistan's relevance to today's world. Domestic political, economic and societal changes have also affected Pakistan's global standing. Critically, the country has a serious image problem, which makes the world view it with deep concern.

The world is worried that Pakistan continues to suffer from political instability, and lives beyond its means even when its economy is in a shambles. Foreign and domestic investors are nervous about the weakening rule of law and inconsistent policies in Pakistan. All this can change by mustering sufficient political will. However, for now, our economic future remains uncertain.

What surprises our friends is that the country was once a rising star in the developing world. In the 1960s, we were building dams, vitalising our agriculture, and creating development plans that were the envy of emerging economies. Sadly, those days are gone. However, we can certainly take inspiration from the fact that we created an economic miracle once, and should be able to recreate it.

Another lens through which the world views Pakistan is terrorism and extremism. Since 9/11, when the US launched its 'war on terror', and Pakistan got dragged into it, we have lost thousands of lives and suf-

fered huge financial losses. But we bravely confronted the menace of terrorism and recovered the ground lost to terrorists. Regrettably, despite these successes and sacrifices, the threat of terrorism continues to hover over us, most recently in the form of TTP, which is using Afghan soil to attack targets in Pakistan.

To make matters worse, India has launched a relentless campaign to isolate Pakistan, using the mantra of cross-border terrorism. This is ironic. A country that has suffered from terrorism and has spent all its energies fighting it is being accused of cross-border terrorism by a country which is in the news lately for targeted killing on foreign soil.

The world also views Pakistan as a country that has not sufficiently focused on its human resource development. Our population is growing at a much faster pace than the economic resources required to sustain them. We are lagging behind in education, health and other development indices, and rank embarrassingly low on the UN Human Development Index.

Pakistan is situated in a tough neighbourhood with unresolved conflicts and low intra-regional connectivity. The Kashmir dispute continues to bedevil our ties with India, which is seeking to transform itself into a Hindu state. On the western frontier, peace in Afghanistan remains tentative.

If we want the world to view us differently, the top priority is to put our political and economic house in order. Some experts have argued that resources are not an issue as enough savings can accrue by curbing wasteful expenses, subsidies, and exemptions, and by broadening the tax net, and adopting home-grown solutions. It has been argued that capacity, too, is not a hindrance, provided incentives are aligned with national

priorities.

Second, Pakistan has a young population. The youth bulge can be an advantage at a time when several leading economies have ageing populations. However, if the youth are not equipped with education and the appropriate skills, this advantage could turn into a liability.

Third, Pakistan has formidable military and nuclear deterrence that can keep it secure against outside aggression. That provides ample space for the leadership to focus its energies on development.

Fourth, our rich cultural heritage and tourism potential must be accorded high priority. Pakistan has an en-viable archaeological heritage in Mehrgarh, Mohen-jodaro, Harappa, and Gandhara. We are a bastion of several faiths — Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Sufi Islam. And we are home to mighty mountains that attract international mountaineers. If we build our tourism around these treasures, Pakistan's international image will be associated with tourism rather than extremism.

Fifth, Pakistan can also be a hub of connectivity between three vast regions: Indo-Pacific, Central Asia, and West Asia. To optimally utilise this economic geography, Pakistan would need to develop infrastructure and trade connectivity, both north-south and east-west.

Finally, a word about the battle of narratives. Pakistan's detractors have run campaigns on media and social media spreading negativity. Our academia, think tanks and media houses should be co-opted by the government as its partners to project an image of Pakistan that blunts the stereotypes being created deliberately to distort the reality of this country and its people. -- Courtesy Dawn

The big picture



Muna Khan

Have you watched a show, movie, press conference and then heard someone talk about it and wondered whether you both saw the same thing? It is not about having different opinions as much as it is about different realities. Or, as I like to ask, what did I miss?

I witnessed it play out recently after watching a two-episode town hall-style TV show hosted by Talat Hussain wherein he invited students and politicians from various parties. Young people asked questions of the politicians in one episode and then shared their views in the other. I was especially interested to hear perspectives from students across a spectrum in Punjab, ie, not just my Karachi-based liberal arts students.

I enjoyed the show because of the interaction between students — a large voting demographic — and the men (always men!) aspiring for their votes. Election coverage in the media doesn't go beyond covering jalsas so this town hall format made for a refreshing change from the screamfest that often masquerades as analysis on prime time. Here, you heard directly from students as opposed to hearing about them. I am sure it provided many teaching moments to political leadership who, I'm convinced, are disconnected from young voters.

Students asked questions about job security, their mental health, suicide, about what to do after getting a degree, who they should vote for, why

minorities are treated badly, about the media, and also about the elections.

I was surprised then to see the PTI and its leaders tweet clips from that show and package it as an endorsement for Imran Khan. While there were PTI supporters and questions about Khan as well as the absence of PTI leaders on stage (Hussain clarified the new chairman was invited but did not attend) by no means were either of the sessions a ringing endorsement of any one political group. If anything I saw disenchantment and frustration at the state of affairs — one young man came on stage to ask how many of the participants wanted to leave the country and lots of folks raised their hands.

For once, the media is not at fault for any partiality or lack of context in its attempt to portray what this small sample size of students was thinking. But the out-of-context clips on X did not tell the whole story.

Many on social media lauded students for their 'bold' comments but not how some of the questions showed their lack of understanding of history. The onus of blame for this falls on schools, parents, community elders, the media and policymakers who benefit from keeping young people in the dark. I ask my students to reflect on why they're so willing to swallow their family or political party or teacher's narrative whole without questioning or investigating further for themselves. I'm yet to be convinced by their answers.

This campaign on social media isn't the only one duping people. Someone used AI and voice software to create a doctored video of journalist Javed Chaudhry saying Bushra Bibi's sons were stripped and beaten by the security

establishment into giving evidence against their mother. This is dangerous territory with damaging consequences that go beyond elections. The media must raise awareness on how to spot 'fake news' and not spread it. All political parties are guilty of playing dirty games and stooping to new lows in a quest to grab power.

We're all too familiar with this picture.

This is one of the reasons I'm adding my name to a petition asking for the inclusion of 'None of the Above' (NOTA) on the ballot papers. Just like you have the right to elect a candidate, you should have the right to reject all candidates and have that count. This is different to spoiling a vote or abstaining.

Since writing about NOTA in January on these pages, I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of people across the political divide who have said they will come out to vote NOTA. Of course, I'm not naive enough to think NOTA is a sizeable vote bank but I believe many Pakistanis are frustrated, if not fed up, with the political engineering, manipulation and electoral alliances with extremists. And, of course, keeping one political party out. There are no good choices at the time of vote.

I believe NOTA will provide a wake-up call for political parties and their handlers who only see constituents when it's time for elections where they make promises which they never make good on.

Some voters are fine being governed by dynasties and some want to refuse being governed by any of the names on the ballot box. Give everyone a right to choose and then respect that right. This too is democracy and NOTA can play a role in strengthening the democratic process. -- Courtesy Dawn

SC, HCs should allocate benches in consultation with senior judges: CM Baqar

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Chief Minister Justice (ret) Maqbool Baqar has said that being judges we may not have lived up to the expectations of the people and the colleagues and unfortunately, in recent years, relations between the bar and the bench have been strained.

"We must accept that the bar and the bench are both key stakeholders in the attainment of justice and democracy. Lack of coordination between the two not only affects them but also the entire system,

therefore, we must work together to improve our relations and face all challenges together."

This he said while speaking at the annual dinner of the Karachi Bar Association. The program was attended by Chief Justice Sindh High Court Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi, Amir Saleem President Karachi Bar Association, Mumtaz Ali Mehdi Vice President, Waqar Alam General Secretary, Sabeeh Mahmood Joint Secretary, and others.

At the outset, the interim CM congratulated Justice Aqeel Ahmed Abbasi on assuming the position of Chief Justice of the Sindh High Court. He hoped that during his tenure [Justice Aqeel Abbasi], both the bar and the bench would work together for the cause of justice and face all challenges together.

Going into nostalgia, Justice Baqar said that his association with the Karachi Bar Association spanned over four decades. "I became a member of the

KBA as a young lawyer almost 40 years ago, and this bond remained intact even after I became a judge," he said and added in 2007, during the emergency, lawyers and the KBA played an integral role in the restoration of democracy and the judiciary and their struggle bore fruit in 2009 when judges were restored.

Justice Baqar also mentioned the lawyers' movement of 2007. He said, "Even today, the independence of the judiciary is under threat."

and constructive role in the development of the country while leaders and followers of all religions played a key role in communal harmony in Pakistan.

Dr. Jamal congratulated the Christian community on the coming Christmas and also cut the cake. A large number of Christian communities including Pastor Justin Javed, Pastor Frank Al-Aziz, Pastor Saber Khurshid, Pastor Manwar, Pastor Ilyas, and Pastor Arif Bhatti were also present on the occasion.

The minister said that the minority communities were playing an important



PESHAWAR: A delegation of teachers and students from Balochistan Residential College Zhob in a group photo with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali during their study tour.



KARACHI: Workers of Jamaat-e-Islami hold a protest rally against Israel aggression on the people of Palestine.

Punjab CM orders effective measures to prevent canal water theft

LAHORE (INP): On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, desilting of 1,112 canals of the province will be launched from December 26 which will last until January 20.

In this regard all the divisional commissioners have been assigned the task of monitoring the desilting of canals which is being conducted after a gap of ten years. The Chief Minister while chairing a meeting on Sunday in Lahore directed that the commissioners will

remain in the field during the desilting and will supervise all other matters.

He instructed that attention should also be paid to the repair of canals along with desilting.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi ordered to take effective measures to check canal water theft.

The CM directed that administrative officers should take effective action in their respective districts to address water theft.

In the meeting, measures to prevent water

theft and desilting programs were reviewed.

Additional Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretaries Agriculture, Irrigation, Food, Information, Commissioner Lahore and concerned officers of Agriculture Department attended the meeting.

Provincial Agriculture Minister SM Tanveer and all Divisional Commissioners participated in the meeting through video link.

PPP mulls seat adjustment with ANP in Karachi, KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leadership have contacted Awami National Party (ANP) on forming an electoral alliance and seat adjustment in Karachi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) for the upcoming general elections.

Sources said that PPP has discussed seat adjustment with ANP on Karachi's two National Assembly (NA) seats.

Moreover, the two parties also discussed forming an electoral alliance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the upcoming elections.

PPP and ANP are likely to make a seat adjustment in Peshawar, Swabi, Charsadda, Malakand, Mardan, Karak,

Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan (DI Khan), say sources.

The latest development comes a day after ANP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) President Aimal Wali Khan met PPP Parliamentarians President Asif Ali Zardari and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari at the Zardari House Islamabad.

They discussed on electoral alliance and seat adjustment in KP province for the forthcoming general elections. They discussed that both parties have strong vote bank in 20 constituencies in KP.

They agreed on holding more meetings to mull over electoral alliance, sources said.

Punjab Transport dept provides relief to rickshaws

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Transport department has provided relief to ensure fitness of rickshaws till January 2.

Official sources said on Sunday that it was a golden opportunity for rickshaw owners to get fitness of their rickshaws done and get immunity from fine.

Immunity from fine had been given till January 2 and fine would be applicable once the relaxation date would end.

Sources said that fitness of three wheelers should be obtained from vehicle inspection and certification system station. Punjab Transport Secretary Ahmad Javed Qazi said that the measure would help in controlling environmental pollution and smog.

Justice (R) Sohail Nasir on the occasion announced to bear the expenses for the complete education of two children

in the Jinnah Iqbal Education System and said that "we should do a lot of work for the promotion of education."

He paid tribute to the chairman of the forum, Rana Abdul Baqi, who every year distributes warm quilts and monthly rations to deserving families. Forum Chairman Rana Abdul Baqi, referring to the speeches of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah in April 1943 and November 1944, said that the Quaid-e-Azam had declared that the new state of Pakistan would be a true welfare state with equal rights for all citizens.

"The new state will be based on the principles of Islamic social justice", he quoted the Quaid, adding that following the vision of the father of the nation, JISAF distribute warm blankets in winter and one month's ration in the holy month of Ramadan to deserving families.

Minorities play a vital role in the development of the country; Dr Jamal

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Health and Population Welfare Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir on Sunday said that minorities played a vital role in the development and progress of the country and were an integral part of the society.

He expressed these views while addressing a function organized in connection with Christmas celebrations at the IFGF Church.

The minister said that the minority communities were playing an important



LAHORE: People visit and enjoying flower show at Race Course Jilani Park.

Wealthy work together to reduce poverty; DG NAB

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Chairman of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice @ Sohail Nasir on Sunday emphasized that all the wealthy people needed to work together to reduce poverty.

While addressing the seminar on "Jinnah's Vision for Eradication of Poverty" organized by Jinnah Iqbal South Asian Forum (JISAF) at Anjum Faiz-Ul-Islam complex, he said that there was a lack of self-accountability in our society, adding every poor person who has health and safety should consider why he is poor.

"Working hard can change the financial position so we all should work tirelessly to overcome our shorts", he added.

Justice (R) Sohail Nasir on the occasion announced to bear the expenses for the complete education of two children

No seat adjustment or alliance with anyone in Punjab: Javed

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Javed Latif – a diehard PML-N leader – on Sunday said they had neither formed any alliance nor would go for seat adjustment with any other party in Punjab – a statement which follows reports of the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) finalising a long list of constituencies to get three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif's endorsement.

Addressing a ceremony in his hometown, Latif said the PML-N hadn't enjoyed a level-playing field – a term which is part of political debate nowadays because of the PTT's narrative – so far and added that the party supremo was getting justice at a snail's pace.

Anyone creating

doubts about general elections wasn't sincere to Pakistan, he remarked and stressed that Nawaz was the last ray of hope for the people of Pakistan.

He said every party deserved level-playing field, but not the one attacking sensitive installations. "The party targeting sensitive installations is a terrorist [group], not political [entity]."

"We do not take the assertions made by Bilawal [Bhutto Zardari] seriously," said Latif, who is considered a close aide of Nawaz and believed to be regularly explaining his viewpoint on different issues.

Why they should take Bilawal's statements when even his father [Asif

Ali Zardari] didn't do so, he remarked – a reference to the interview in which the former president had told a private TV channel that his son [the PPP chairman] was inexperienced.

These remarks were in complete contrast to the speeches delivered by Bilawal who has been presenting himself as a prime minister material.

"We will reply when Mr Zardari speaks up," he told the gathering, adding that Zardari was used to refute Bilawal regularly.

He also advised the PPP to contest elections on the basis of its performance and said it destroyed Sindh during the 15-year-long rule in the province.

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company has started implementing a plan to make the provincial capital dust free as per the direction of caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. According to LWMC sources here on Sunday, mechanical washing and sweeping of roads have been started during night shift in the supervision of Chief Executive Officer Babar.

LWMC working on plan for dust free Lahore

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Waste Management Company has started implementing a plan to make the provincial capital dust free as per the direction of caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. According to LWMC sources here on Sunday, mechanical washing and sweeping of roads have been started during night shift in the supervision of Chief Executive Officer Babar.

Minister stresses healthy lifestyle for stroke prevention

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Professor Dr. Javed Akram emphasized the crucial role of adopting a balanced and healthy lifestyle for preventing strokes, citing depression as the leading cause. He urged individuals to incorporate daily exercise into their routines, noting that regular exercise plays a key role in preventing strokes and heart attacks.

In a special address at the 23rd International Workshop on Stroke Prevention, held at a local hotel, the minister congratulated the

organisers for addressing the vital health concern. Dr. Javed Akram underscored the significance of guidelines and case studies in the prevention of strokes, citing depression as the leading cause. He urged individuals to incorporate daily exercise into their routines, noting that regular exercise plays a key role in preventing strokes and heart attacks.

Bilawal pledges to continue struggle for human rights

KARACHI (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that protection and promotion of Human Rights are among the top priorities of his Party and the same will manifest in the Party's manifesto for the upcoming general elections.

In his message on the occasion of International Human Rights Day on Sunday, the PPP Chairman said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto ensured the protection of human rights through constitutional

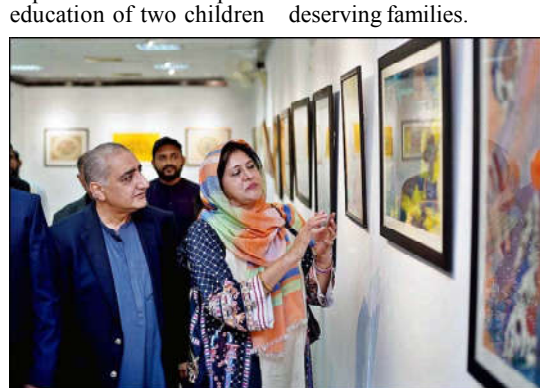
means as the unanimous constitution, he gifted to the nation, prescribed equal rights to every citizen together with giving freedoms to every citizen whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

He said that the People's government in Sindh had passed a comprehensive Human Rights Policy to ensure that every segment of the provincial government plays its role in promoting and protecting the human rights of all citizens. Likewise, the People's government in Sindh.

PFA discards 1,000kg substandard meat

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) enforcement teams raided a meat processing unit in Shamkay Bhattian and discarded 1,000kg substandard and stinky meat, and lodged an FIR against the unit owner with the police station concerned.

The raid was conducted under the supervision of PFA Director General Muhammad Asim Javed on Sunday.



MULTAN: Visitors are taking a keen interest in the calligraphy exhibition on the second day at Punjab Council of Arts.

Health fair on Dec 12

RAWALPINDI (APP): Head of District Local Hepatitis Elimination and Prevention (LHEAP) Dr Ansar Ishaq has said that District Health Authority in collaboration with Red Crescent and LHEAP will organize a health fair on December 12 at Divisional Public School and College.

Talking to APP Dr Ansar said that a free medical camp would be organized for all private and government school students, where they will be screened for their eyes,

Amir Mir pays glowing tribute to Rehmat Shah Afridi

LAHORE (APP): Provincial caretaker Minister for Information Amir Mir expressed his sorrow over the death of Rehmat Shah Afridi, founder and Editor-in-Chief of 'The Frontier Post' and paid a glowing tribute to him for his services in journalism.

Amir Mir remarked that Rehmat Shah Afridi was an owner of an

independent and undaunting newspaper. "Rehmat Shah Afridi, by displaying audacity during the martial law regime, opposed dictatorship from the platform of his newspaper and also paid its price. Afridi launched the publication of the first and only national English language newspaper 'The Frontier Post' in the history of KP.

Despite efforts, smog continues to haunt authorities

LAHORE (APP): Unbridled growth, ill planned development projects and poor time management by the city authorities had led Lahore to endure another smoggy winter, once again maintaining its unfortunate position as the most polluted city during last week of November.

Even a smart lockdown for three days a week and ban on vehicular traffic on the Mall road on Sunday could not change the situation exposing millions of historic city residents to different pollution related diseases.

Environmentalists and common people believe that untimely initiation of projects like Controlled

Access Corridor on Bund Road, Shahdara, Akbar Colony flyover and other construction work contributed to already injurious airborne dust particles. The instances of lack of coordination among the city management is another dilemma aggravating the situation and resulting in futility of various measures taken by the caretaker government to effectively combat smog and worsening environmental conditions.

During this recent week, the air quality of the provincial metropolis was very unhealthy as the residents still await desired results from various police and civic authorities.

Although different agencies like Punjab Environment Protection Agency (EPA), Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC), Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA), Traffic Police, Horticulture department and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) are on toes to combat this situation, yet the desired visible results were still awaited.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) claims to visit 6,297 industrial units finding most of them violating laws, sealing 1,011 units, lodging 469 FIRs and imposed over Rs 100 million fine collectively, yet the situation remains

out of control.

"Besides this, the department also checked 16,815 vehicles in the city, of which 6,798 were issued challans besides impounding 706 for emitting excessive smoke," informed Director General (DG-EPA) Zaheer Abbas Malik. "We have also established smog cell and smog control room, pre-smog and anti-smog squads, developed Eco-Watch App, established anti-smog committees in all districts, formed 12 special squads in Lahore district, converted brick-kilns to zigzag technology, installed emission control devices (ECD) and much more to combat smog," he stated.

Meanwhile, Lahore Waste Management Company's (LWMC) enforcement wing has also lodged 550 FIRs against individuals for violations in nine housing societies as part of last month's crackdown on offenses.

"For burning waste in open, over 1,200 fines exceeding Rs. 2.2 million were issued," disclosed LWMC Chief Executive Officer Babar Sahib Din.

"Our action is in line with the Local Government Act and Section 188 implemented for smog prevention. We have impounded more than 50 vehicles for illegal waste besides issuing over 1,453 warning notices on minor violations."



MULTAN: Participants are holding awareness walk against corruption organized by National Accountability Bureau Department in connection of the International Anti-Corruption Day, held in Multan on Sunday.

Incentives to overseas Pakistanis to multiply remittances: LCCI

LAHORE (APP): Trust building, encouragement and the lucrative incentives to the overseas Pakistanis can multiply the foreign remittances which are the major part of the country's economy.

Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here Sunday that the overseas Pakistanis are playing a great role in the economy of Pakistan through their remittances.

They said that the remittances in 2022-23 dropped by around four billion dollars to USD 27.3 billion. It is worth mentioning that in 2021-22,

the remittances stood at USD 31.3 billion. One of the main reasons of drop in remittances in 2022-23 was the difference between the inter-bank and open market dollar rate.

Since this issue is resolved now, it is expected that remittance will pose a sound growth in 2023-24. In the first three months of the financial year (July-September 2023-24), the remittances stood at USD 6.3 billion.

They said that the government should take measures to ensure that these remittances are invested in productive sectors. They said that foreign remittances could easily reach USD 50 billion in the next few years if the government announces

incentives on the investment made by expatriate Pakistanis. They said that the government should encourage the expats to invest in energy, agriculture, telecommunication and Information Technology. They said that a large number of overseas Pakistanis are keen to invest in Pakistan. They said that the government would have to discourage the Hawala system as annually billions of dollars are being sent through this illegal way.

The LCCI office-bearers said that at a time when the country is experiencing various economic challenges, rise in home remittances would provide much-needed support.



HYDERABAD: An elderly worker busy in making shawl at his work place.

ICCI and EOI forge partnership to promote SMEs and Start-Ups

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the Entrepreneurs Organization Islamabad (EOI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to forge a partnership for promoting SMEs and start-ups with joint efforts.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Taimur Adil, President, Entrepreneurs Organization Islamabad, signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. Faad Waheed, Senior Vice President, Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, Vice President ICCI, Ahmed Jalal, Global Student Entrepreneurs Awards Chair at the EO Islamabad Chapter, and others were present on the occasion.

COP28 pledges meet only 30% of needed energy emission cuts

DUBAI (AFP/APP): Pledges made so far at the COP28 climate summit will only reduce energy-related greenhouse gas emissions by 30 percent of what is needed by 2030, the International Energy Agency said Sunday.

"While the pledges are positive steps forward in tackling the energy sector's greenhouse gas emissions, they would not be nearly enough to move the world onto a path to reaching international climate targets, in particular the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius," it said in a report.

The agency released an assessment of non-binding promises made in Dubai by governments and the oil and gas industry—tripling renewable energy and doubling energy

efficiency by 2030, as well as sharp cuts in methane emissions. According to the UN climate body, 130 countries have signed on to the pledge on renewables and energy efficiency.

Not signing are China, the world's largest greenhouse gas emitter, as well as fellow developing giant India and major energy exporters Saudi Arabia and Russia.

China, however, committed less formally to the goal of tripling renewables in a joint statement with the United States—which did sign the pledge—after talks in California to prepare for COP28. Beijing historically has been hesitant to make commitments in such statements that are not officially through the UN framework.

Railways collect Rs 67.3 million from ticketless passengers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has collected over Rs 67.3 million from ticketless passengers during a crackdown during the last two months with the help of railway police and train staffs.

"Around 51,347 passengers found traveling without tickets in different trains and collected the said amount from them, which is deposited in the official bank account of the department," sources in the Ministry told APP.

They said that it was not the first time that action was taken on a large scale against ticketless passengers, adding that these types of crackdowns had taken place daily.

The sources said that ticketless traveling was illegal, and those who were caught without a ticket were charged a ticket price for the whole journey of the train besides the penalty. Those who do not pay are handed over to the railway police.

LESCO recovers over Rs 10m from 504 defaulters in 24 hours

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), in collaboration with Tehsildars (Recovery), has recovered Rs 10 million from 504 chronic defaulters in all the five districts—Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara—on the 87th day of its recovery campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told the media here Sunday that on the 87th day, Chief Engineer O&M (T&G) Zafar Iqbal with the support of Tehsildar City Mujahid Zia and Tehsildar Shalimar Noreez Humayun recovered outstanding dues of Rs 1.59 million.



SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) delegation led by its President Muhammad Jashim Uddin, along with businessmen from South Asia called on H.E Secretary General, SAARC, Ambassador Golan Sarwar on SAARC Charter Day at Kathmandu, Nepal.

Disbursement of quarterly tranche (Oct-Dec) of Benazir Kafaalat continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The disbursement of the quarterly tranche (October-December) of Benazir Kafaalat cash assistance to beneficiaries is continuing smoothly across the country.

According to an official source, the payment process has already commenced across the country, including Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan simultaneously.

The payment of Rs 8,500 per household is being disbursed among around nine million registered beneficiary families. The beneficiaries, in case of any complaint, can approach the nearest BISP Tehsil offices or call the toll-free helpline

number 080026477 of the Benazir Income Support Program.

The special control room has been activated in the BISP headquarters to address the complaints of the beneficiaries promptly.

However, the beneficiaries can also contact them on WhatsApp numbers including 0305-917-1917 (Sindh), 0325-5365520 (Punjab), 0325-5365469 (Balochistan), 0325-5365476 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit Baltistan.

The messages from the Benazir Income Support Program are sent only from 8171, and messages from any other number should not be trusted.

Chairperson, BISP,

Dr Muhammad Amjad Saqib, has directed the official to ensure the smooth disbursement of Kafaalat payments to the women respectfully without any deductions.

During his visits to various BISP offices in Peshawar, Sukkur, Sargodha, Abbottabad, Chakwal, Okara, etc., the chairman has reaffirmed the program's commitment to the timely and transparent payment of Kafaalat stipends through a constructive dialogue with POS agents.

Dr Amjad Saqib also instructed the staff to monitor the process of payment disbursement and directed the officials to take immediate action against the agents responsible for deductions from the beneficiary's payments.

PCMEA calls for continuity in long-term export policy

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) has welcomed the proposed roadmap of USD 100 billion exports under Vision Pakistan and called for continuity in such long-term export policies to ensure their success.

"After final preparation, it should be declared a national policy and its draft should be protected so that any political situation and change of governments cannot affect it," these views were expressed in a joint media statement by the PCMEA Senior Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, Carpet Training Institute (CTI) Chairperson Ijazur Rahman and senior members here on Sunday.

They were of the view that for the successful implementation of such policies, proper representation should be given to the stakeholders

and whatever final policy is prepared, it should be presented to the stakeholders for consultation. Focal persons should be appointed to remove the obstacles created by various departments so that there is no hurdle in achieving the export target.

They added that the government should chalk out a programme to take those who are interested in export sector. All over the world, relief is given to exporters in various terms, so Pakistan should emulate it, especially looking at its competitor countries. They suggested that single country exhibitions should be organized as such as possible and participation of manufacturers and exporters in global exhibitions should be ensured, besides providing financial support to exporters interested in participating in international exhibitions.

Punctuality of trains reached 93 pc in last three months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overall punctuality ratio of trains has improved from 76 to 93 percent in three months owing to close monitoring and stern measures taken by Pakistan Railways at the divisional and ministry levels.

"With the punctuality of trains and concrete measures taken by the department in last three months, the number of passengers has increased by over 20 million, which is ample proof of the department's achievement," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He said, "Pakistan Railways is also set to introduce the 'Train Driver Assistant System' (TDAS) to help train drivers a clear view of the railway tracks up to 700 meters."

"The technology aims to enhance the safety, punctuality and efficiency of train operations during adverse weather.



FAISALABAD: Workers are busy in making agriculture tools in a local factory in the city.

Time to regulate real estate for common man's benefit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Having one's own house is dream of every citizen. But in a society plagued with exploitation and weaker regulations, this dream often lands these citizens in real trouble when they fall prey to property tycoons.

Playing with their emotion of having a house, the housing societies' owners first trap them by showing pleasant dreams and then exploit them fleecing their hard earned money.

In a desire of having their own abode, some invest their pension or gratuity money and others sell their ornaments or household. But, after sometime they come to

know that either the society was illegal or the owner had invested the collected money elsewhere delaying development and possession of plots.

The investors are charged repeatedly either in the name of development charges or other expenditures other than the specified plots price as recently surfaced in the case of a society in the suburbs of Rawalpindi.

Social media is seen flooded with hue and cry by investors against owners of this society, the heirs of a big gun in real estate business, for massively charging development expenses.

"They have become a mafia. Weaker regulations

encouraged them to act without fear. Under the garb of specific laws, they freely fleece the people," said an investor Rashid Mahmood. "It is very rare that there is any compatibility in actual land price and the price charged by buyers."

There is dire need to transparently maintain the data of files or property selling by housing societies by the government departments not leaving the developers to play as per their will. Moreover, strict laws must be enacted to ensure that both the developer and the investor or end user could equally benefit from these projects.

In many cases the

Buying dry fruits becomes a distant dream for common buyers amid soaring prices

ISLAMABAD (APP): Dry fruits as the most popular and consumed delight of the winter season have turned into a lavish commodity for a common man to buy due to the exorbitant rates amid the prevailing price hike situation.

The majority of the citizens especially those belonging to the low- and middle-income groups are finding it hard to buy their daily eatables like vegetables, fruits, wheat flour etc. due to the price hike situation so buying dry fruits is no more a priority for many.

The nutritional benefits of dry fruits cannot be ignored in terms of increasing the immunity level to fight diseases due to the cold weather in the ongoing Winter season.

Sajid Khan, a dry fruits seller at Karachi Company, said the price of

dry fruits has increased along with inflation. "Selling dry fruits is the only source of income for me and it would be difficult to feed my children and run household expenditures if I didn't earn maximum profit", he said.

"The trend of offering discounts on special occasions is no longer limited to the clothes, food items and other accessories of daily life but also being adopted by sellers like me to attract buyers due to its high price", Sajid Khan added.

He said that he sells almonds (without shell) at Rs. 2800 per kg, Walnut (without shell) at Rs. 2200, Pistachio for Rs. 3600, apricot for Rs. 1200, dried figs for Rs. 3200 and Raisin for Rs. 1700, dates Rs. 1200, Afghani Rewari for Rs. 1200 and Cashews for Rs. 3600.



QURTTA: A women buying seasonal fruit Pomegranate from a roadside vendor.

Urea's disappearance from the market is unfortunate

ISLAMABAD (INP): FPCCI's presidential candidate, Atif Ikram Sheikh, said on Sunday it is regrettable that urea has vanished from the marketplace. The artificial scarcity of urea will affect millions of farmers and agricultural and industrial production.

He said those pushing the nation toward a food security crisis for quick profit should be held accountable as they play with the country's future.

Atif Ikram Sheikh, who has also served as VP FPCCI, Chairman PVMA, and President ICCI, said that the hoarders are increasing the problems of millions of farmers for profit.

He demanded that

immediate action should be taken against the hoarders and profiteers to save millions of farmers.

The business leader informed that every year, as soon as the wheat cultivation season begins, urea fertilizer disappears from the market, and the farmers have to buy it from the black market at high prices.

He said that due to the high cost of urea, its use is reduced, which affects production, and the government has to spend a lot of foreign exchange to import wheat.

Now, he warned that farmers are protesting all over the country, and the food security situation is feared to be affected.



HYDERABAD: Labourer women busy in sorting the good quality green chili at vegetables market.

Potential existing to reaching \$100 billion exports target: PFC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday emphasized the tremendous potential Pakistan possesses to significantly boost its exports, potentially reaching a remarkable target of 100 billion dollars.

Talking to a delegation of exporters led by Ch Araib Arain here today he said the key to realizing this potential lies in unleashing the power of the private sector, which undoubtedly plays a pivotal role in economic

growth and trade development. He said one of the critical steps in achieving this goal is the implementation and continuation of a comprehensive set of incentives for exporters. He said these incentives should be consolidated under a unified umbrella, streamlining the process and making it more accessible to exporters.

He said a clear and coherent framework unveiled by Federal Commerce Minister Gohar Ejaz hopefully will encourage exporters.



KARACHI: Women are busy in buying warm clothes in a Landa bazaar at Ranchore Line area in Provincial Capital.

UN chief says he will not give up appeals for ceasefire in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Sunday he will not give up appealing for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza, adding that the war undermined the credibility and authority of the Security Council.

Guterres was speaking at the Doha Forum conference as Washington vetoed on Friday a proposed UN Security Council demand for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire in the war between Israel and Palestinian militant group Hamas.

"I urged the Security Council to press to avert a humanitarian catastrophe and I reiterated my appeal for a humanitarian ceasefire to be declared," Guterres said.

"Regrettably, the Security Council failed to do it, but that does not make it less necessary," he said. "I will not give up," Guterres added.

Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the gathering that Doha will continue to pressure Israel and Hamas for a truce despite "narrow-

ing" chances. Qatar, where several political leaders of Hamas are based, has been leading negotiations between the group and Israel.

Sheikh Mohammed said hostages were released from Gaza because of negotiations and not because of Israel's military actions. The head of UNRWA, the UN aid agency for Palestinians, said the dehumanization of Palestinians has allowed the international community to tolerate Israel's continued attacks on Gaza.



Norway's King Harald and Queen Sonja receive Ali and Kiana Rahmani, the children of this year's winner of the Nobel Peace Prize 2023, Narges Mohammadi, an imprisoned Iranian human rights activist, at an audience at the Palace in Oslo, Norway.

Canada, US linking drone-camera exports to Sweden NATO membership

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said Canada and the United States were insisting that Ankara ratify Sweden's NATO membership bid before Canada resumes the export of drone cameras to Turkey, the text of an interview with media showed on Friday.

Speaking with reporters on a flight from Athens late on Thursday, Erdogan said the United States agreed with Canada on the

issue, but that Sweden's NATO bid was to be decided by Turkey's parliament after he sent the bill there for consideration in late October.

When Erdogan signalled at a NATO conference in July that Sweden would eventually get the green light, NATO member Canada quietly agreed to reopen talks with Turkey on lifting export controls on drone parts, including optical equipment, Reuters reported.

About 400 Rohingya land in Indonesia, adds to surge of recent arrivals

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Dilapidated boats carrying an estimated 400 ethnic Rohingya arrived in Indonesia's Aceh province on Sunday, chief of a provincial fishing community has confirmed, adding to a recent surge of Myanmar's Muslim minority arriving in the country. Prior to Sunday's arrivals, the United Nations' refugee agency (UNHCR) said that 1,200 Rohingya people, a persecuted minority from Myanmar, had landed ashore in Indonesia since November.

Miftah Cut Ade, chief

of the fishing community in Aceh, said that two boats landed in the province early on Sunday morning, one each in the districts of Pidie and Aceh Besar. Each boat was carrying an estimated 200 Rohingya, he said. Andi Susanto, a local military official, said about 180 Rohingya had landed in Pidie at 4 a.m. (2100 GMT), and that officers were coordinating in the field to collect data.

Susanto confirmed the military was aware of a second boat but did not have information of where it had landed or how many were on board.

South Asian families irked by new UK migration rules

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: The British government's announcement of new rules to slash migration numbers have triggered panic within South Asian families, who are now forced to change their plans before the new regulations are implemented in spring 2024.

A 25-year-old British Pakistani law professional based in the UK told Dawn on condition of anonymity "we are all panicking" as the new threshold set by the government for a UK-based individual to earn in order

to sponsor family has gone up from £18,600 to £38,700.

"Starting salaries here in the UK are between £22,000 and £26,000 a year," he said. "I am making around £21,000 which was just over the previous threshold [£18,600]. Now, all of a sudden it has jumped. I cannot earn £38,600 overnight. I was planning on getting married to a Pakistani girl in the summer of 2024 and all my family's tickets, venues, etc. are booked."



Rohingya Muslim men are inspected by an Indonesian military officer, following their arrival in Blang Raya, Pidie, Aceh province, Indonesia.

King Charles selects coronation photo for Christmas card

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: A photograph of Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla newly crowned in Buckingham Palace after their coronation has been chosen for the royal couple's Christmas card, Buckingham Palace said.

Charles was crowned king in May, eight months after he ascended to the throne, in a majestic ceremony at London's Westminster Abbey that traces its history back more than 1,000 years. Camilla, Charles' second wife, was crowned queen.

Charles is pictured wearing the Imperial State Crown, Robe of Estate and Coronation Tunic, while Camilla wears Queen Mary's Crown, Robe of Estate and a dress designed by Bruce Oldfield.

The photograph was taken by Hugo Burnand in the Throne Room, the palace said.

Top US university president quits after anti-Semitism uproar

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The president of an Ivy League university stepped down on Saturday in the wake of a firestorm of criticism after a congressional hearing on the rise of anti-Semitism on US campuses.

University of Pennsylvania President Elizabeth Magill "voluntarily tendered her resignation," the chair of the university's board of trustees Scott Bok announced. Bok also stepped down himself, a university spokesman confirmed to AFP. Magill was among three presidents of elite universities who faced withering criticism following their testimony on Tuesday during a congressional hearing on campus anti-Semitism.

The trio gave long, legalistic and seemingly evasive answers at the hearing when asked whether students who call for the "genocide of Jews."



Demonstrators wave flags and carry placards while calling for a ceasefire in Gaza during the 'National March for Palestine' in central London.

China, Japan trade blame over confrontation near disputed islands

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Japan accused each other of maritime incursions after a confrontation between their coast guards in waters around disputed islands in the East China Sea.

China's coast guard said on Sunday that a Japanese fishing boat and several patrol vessels intruded the previous day into waters around the tiny islands, called Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan. The uninhabited islands are controlled by Japan but also claimed by China.

China's coast guard said in a statement it had taken necessary measures in accordance with the law to warn away the Japanese vessels.

Japan's coast guard said on Saturday that two Chinese maritime patrol boats left Japan's territorial waters around the islands after receiving warnings. It said its patrol vessels were protecting a Japanese fishing boat that had been approached by the Chinese ships.

Similar incidents occurred in November and October. Asian maritime disputes involving China have been escalating. China and the Philippines traded accusations on Sunday over a collision between their vessels in a part of the South China Sea each nation claims.

Iran says reviving nuclear deal 'useless'

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran said on Saturday that attempting to revive its landmark nuclear deal with world powers that was effectively scrapped by former US president Donald Trump was increasingly "useless".

"Today, the more we advance, the more the JCPOA becomes useless," Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said in a speech to students at the University of Tehran, using the initials of the official name of the nuclear deal.

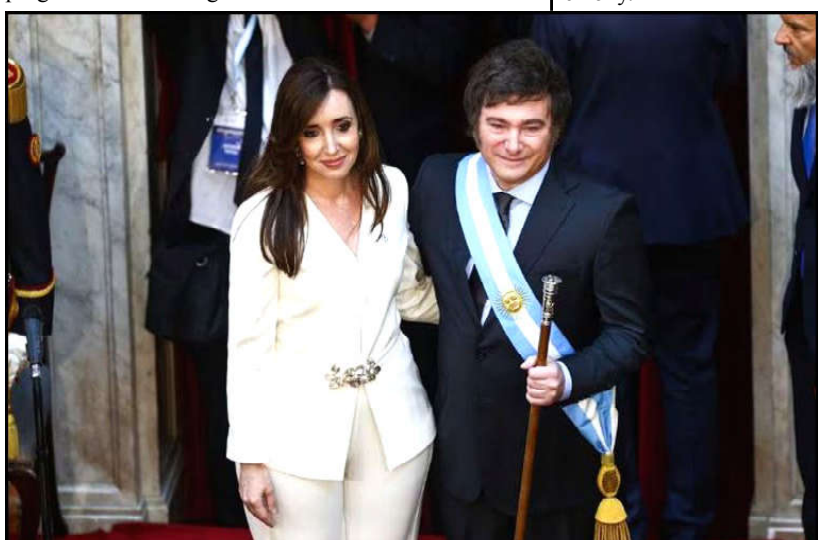
In 2015, Iran agreed to curbs on its nuclear programme in exchange for

a lifting of sanctions.

But while the deal was signed with several world powers — including China, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany — it was rendered effectively useless when the United States unilaterally withdrew under Trump in 2018.

With the US reimposing sanctions, international banks and businesses have stayed away from Iran for fear of falling foul of US regulators.

Tentative efforts to revive the deal by Trump's successor, Joe Biden, have been at a standstill since mid-2022.



Argentina's new Vice President Victoria Villarruel and President Javier Milei embrace during their swearing-in ceremony at the National Congress, in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Azerbaijan tipped to host COP29 climate talks

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Azerbaijan is tipped to host next year's UN climate summit, after striking a late deal with longtime adversary Armenia over its bid.

While some diplomats said other countries including Russia — which has blocked other host candidates — were expected to back Baku's bid, there was no official confirmation from Moscow on Friday. The issue is still being negotiated at the COP28 climate summit in Dubai.

The decision over

who will take over from current COP28 host, the United Arab Emirates, has been in an unprecedented geopolitical deadlock, after Russia said it would veto any European Union country's bid to host. The EU has sanctioned Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine. Azerbaijan is not an EU member.

Azerbaijan confirmed late on Thursday it had struck a deal with Armenia that allows Baku to bid to host the COP29 talks without the threat of an Armenian veto.

Iran accuses jailed Swedish EU diplomat of conspiring with Israel

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iranian authorities have accused a Swedish EU diplomat, held in a Tehran prison for more than 600 days, of conspiring with Iran's arch-enemy Israel, the judiciary said Sunday.

"Johan Floderus is accused of extensive measures against the security of the country, extensive intelligence cooperation with the Zionist regime and corruption on earth," the judiciary's Mizan Online news agency said.

Corruption on earth is one of Iran's most serious offences and carries a maximum penalty of death.

Floderus, 33, was arrested on April 17, 2022, at Tehran airport as he was returning to Iran from a trip with friends.

The Swede, who works for the European Union diplomatic service, is being held in Tehran's Evin prison.

His arrest came while an Iranian national, Hamid Noury, was being tried in Sweden over the mass executions of dissidents in Tehran in 1988 — ultimately receiving a life sentence in July 2022.

At least 11 dead after violent clash in central Mexican town

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: A violent confrontation between suspected criminals has left at least 11 people dead in the town of Texcaltitlan in central Mexico, state security officials said on Friday.

Eight of the deceased were suspected to be tied to criminal activities, the security ministry for the state of Mexico said in a statement, adding that three victims were members of the community.

State police were working with the National Guard and other authorities to provide more details on the incident, the statement added.

Iranian Nobel winner to strike hunger strike in prison

Monitoring Desk
OSLO: Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi will begin a new hunger strike from her prison cell in Iran as the prize is awarded in Oslo on Sunday, her family said on Saturday.

Mohammadi, who has campaigned against the compulsory wearing of the hijab and the death penalty in Iran, will go on hunger strike "in solidarity" with a religious minority, her brother and husband told a press conference in the Norwegian capital on the eve of the Nobel award ceremony.

Washington, allies to 'stand up' for stability in Taiwan's periphery

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said on Saturday Washington and its Asia allies would "stand up" for stability across the Taiwan Strait, and reiterated their commitment to freedom of navigation in the disputed South China Sea.

His comments came during a joint briefing with his Tokyo and Seoul counterparts, after a trilateral meeting in South Korea. Late last month the top diplomats of South Korea, Japan and China — North Korea's key ally and Washington's rival — reaffirmed the need to hold a trilateral summit at the "earliest" possible time.

The United States and its Western allies have increased "freedom of navigation" crossings by naval vessels in both the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea, to reinforce that both are international waters, angering Beijing.

"We will continue to stand up for peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and freedom of navigation in the east and South China Seas," Sullivan told reporters in Seoul, alongside South Korea's Cho Tae-yong and Japan's Takeo Akiba. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol has moved to strengthen ties between Seoul and long-standing ally Washington to counter rising threats from nuclear-armed North Korea.

Navalny camp sets strategy to disrupt Putin's path to new term

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: With his hands on all the levers of power in Russia, Vladimir Putin appears unbeatable in a presidential election but opposition activists see a chance to show he is vulnerable. Putin declared his candidacy for another six-year term on Friday and there is no serious rival to challenge him, with opposition leader Alexei Navalny serving more than 30 years in prison and other critics also jailed or in exile.

State police were working with the National Guard and other authorities to provide more details on the incident, the statement added.

With the Kremlin in full control of state media and able to decide who can and cannot run, the Navalny camp says this is not a real election. But it sees the 100-day campaign window as a rare opportunity to draw Russians into a political conversation and convince

them that the Ukraine war and the economic strains it has brought are problems of Putin's making.

"Of course it's impossible to beat Putin in the 'elections'," top Navalny aide Leonid Volkov told Reuters. "The aim of our campaign is to change the political agenda in Russia."

The Kremlin says Putin will win another six-year term because he commands overwhelming support across Russian society, with opinion poll ratings of around 80%. So far only three people have declared their intention to run against him. Two are low-profile figures, Boris Nadezhdin and Yekaterina Duntsova, who may struggle to gather the 300,000 signatures required to support their candidacies.

China sees progress at climate talks as Opec fights for fossil fuel

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China said on Saturday it saw progress in reaching a climate deal at a key United Nations summit in Dubai, despite a last-minute push by the Opec oil cartel to resist a phase-out of fossil fuels.

Opec drew outrage from green-minded countries and activists when it joined Saudi Arabia and called on members to block an emerging declaration that would seek to wind down extraction of the oil, coal, and gas that

are fuelling the climate emergency.

But China, the world's largest oil importer, played down the row and said it was working to find a solution that was "acceptable to all parties".

"I think we've already had some progress on this issue and I believe we will have more progress in resolving this very soon in the coming few days," China's climate negotiator Xie Zhenhua told reporters at the COP28 climate conference.

Hong Kong activists arrested in city's 'birdcage' election

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Three Hong Kong pro-democracy activists were arrested on Sunday, just before voting began in a "patriots only" district election that has marginalised formerly popular opposition figures in the city amid a national security clampdown.

The pro-China government has been seeking to boost turnout, as some observers see large numbers spurning the polls, in contrast to the last council elections in 2019, during Hong

Kong's mass pro-democracy protests, which drew a record 71% turnout and a landslide victory for the democratic camp.

Police arrested three members of the "League of Social Democrats" in the Central business district, the group said. It had planned to protest against the "birdcage election" that it said lacked any democratic scope, given vetting requirements by authorities that have effectively barred all democrats from running.

Fight fire with fire: Controlled burns stem California blazes

Monitoring Desk
SANTA CRUZ: In a forest in northern California, a line of people spread out through the trees, setting fire to shrubs and fallen branches in an act of intentional arson aimed at making the woodland better able to cope with future conflagrations.

The operation near Santa Cruz is part of a growing number of prescribed burns intended to reduce the amount of fuel that can feed natural wildfires in an era when human-caused climate change is increasing the likelihood of devastating blazes.

"The best way to fight fire is with fire," says Portia Halbert, senior environmental scientist with California State Parks, who is supervising the burn.

Before the undergrowth is ignited, the earth is turned with shovels to create a containment line. Branches and shrubs too close to fully grown trees are removed, and hoses are deployed to stop flames from getting out of

control. The idea is to encourage the fire to consume only the forest floor, without spreading to the oaks and redwoods that loom over it.

When wildfire breaks out in the future — as it certainly will — it will have less fuel and will burn cooler and slower, without spreading to the tree tops.

After around 20 years of drought and in a climate that is slowly aridifying, California has seen an alarming number of megafires over the last decade.

These blazes have destroyed millions of acres (hectares) of forest, killed over 200 people and wrought hundreds of millions of dollars of damage.

The scale and cost of these blazes has brought about an understanding that California's long-established policy of stamping out wildfires as soon as they break out is wrongheaded and counterproductive.

AJK PM says Kashmiris' to continue struggle till achievement of their cherished goal of freedom

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that India was committing serious violations of human rights in Occupied Jammu & Kashmir State.

Prime Minister Haq expressed these views while addressing a seminar, which was organised by Kashmir Policy Research Institute to mark world human rights day in the federal metropolis on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion,

the PM said that India can not suppress Kashmiris' legitimate struggle by the dint of force.

He said that the Kashmiris' ongoing struggle for right to self determination would continue till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from the Indian occupation. Referring to the Kashmiris' unwavering commitment to the noble cause, he said, "The torch of freedom shall remain alight as long as a single Kashmiri is alive".

He said that

Kashmiris can go to any extent to get their motherland freed from Indian occupation. He said that the price of freedom has to be paid with blood. "The freedom is something that cannot be achieved through any intellectual debate", he said.

Citing to rising ties of xenophobia, religious extremism and persecution of religious minorities in the Indian society and utter disregard for human rights, the PM said, "Human rights and values flourish in soci-

eties where humanity is alive".

While condemning induction of a regime of new laws in Kashmir by the Indian government, he said that these laws were meant to change the region's demography and to convert Muslim majority into a minority in Kashmir.

He said that India must realize that it cannot hold the Kashmiri nation hostage for a long on the basis of oppression.

India, he said, was trying to mislead the world.



MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat shouting slogans, to express their solidarity with Palestinians and Kashmir's during a protest rally on the eve of Human Rights Day, at Azadi Chowk.



QUETTA: Former MNA Agha Hassan Baloch addressing on the occasion of International Day of Human Rights organized by Voice for Baloch Missing Persons.

SA assessing advancements in FTA to enhance trade with Pakistan: Commercial Attache

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Commercial Attaché in Pakistan, Mubasher bin Abdullah Al-Shohri on Sunday said the Kingdom's officials were currently assessing advancements in the initial Free Trade Agreement (FTA) aimed at enhancing trade with Pakistan, with the anticipated commencement of the third phase in the near future.

Talking to media, he said following the initial trade agreement reached in Riyadh on September 28, involving Gulf Cooperation Council member countries and Pakistan, the pertinent legal committee was meticulously scrutinizing progress on various issues.

Mubasher said upon

the completion of this review, the legal committee would formulate a comprehensive action plan, paving the way for the initiation of the third phase. This phase would specifically address legal matters, ensuring their organization and subsequent implementation, he added.

He highlighted the presence of specialized institutions facilitating trade exchanges between the two fraternal nations, adding that these entities meticulously were assessing the opportunities and facilities offered by both countries, strategically leveraging them to augment the volume of bilateral trade.

The Saudi commercial attaché stated that the trade

volume between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan had surged to 61 billion riyals (\$16.3 billion) from September 2020 to 2023, underscoring the trust and co-operation between the two brotherly nations.

He said both sides were actively engaged in concerted efforts to double this figure, aiming to elevate trade further. "There is optimism that we will successfully attain our goals in this regard," he maintained.

Mubasher said the commercial department at the Saudi Embassy worked together with the cooperation of the relevant institutions in order to identify significant opportunities and promote bilateral trade with Pakistan.

Reviews river diversion system Chairman WAPDA visits Diامر Basha Dam

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Water and Development Authority (WAPDA) Engr Lt Gen Sajjad Ghani (Retd) on Sunday visited Diامر Basha Dam Project to review the river diversion system, which is operational since last week after partial diversion of River Indus at Diامر Basha Dam Project site.

The diversion system consists of about one Kilometer (Km) - long diversion tunnel, 0.857 Km-long diversion canal and two coffer (starter) dams - one at the upstream and other at the downstream of the main dam site, said a press release.

WAPDA succeeded in diverting River Indus par-

tially last week through the diversion system constructed for the purpose. Now-a-days, mighty River Indus is flowing mainly through diversion tunnel and diversion canal, while partly through its natural course.

Chairman WAPDA also reviewed construction progress on different sites of the project. CEO, GM/ Project Director Diامر Basha Dam and representatives of the Consultants and the Contractors were also present during the Chairman's visit.

The Chairman was briefed about the test-run of the diversion system. The diversion tunnel and diversion canal both are functioning satisfactorily.

Governor Balochistan meets Sindh counterpart; discusses various issues

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar met the Governor Sindh, Kamran Khan Ressori at Governor House, Karachi the other day.

During the course of meeting, the matters about enhancing inter-province cooperation as well as the exchange of delegations in different sectors and other

mutual interests were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Sindh said that both provinces would benefit from mutual cooperation in education, health and other sectors. Governor Balochistan on the occasion appreciated the initiatives taken by the Governor Sindh saying that the general public are benefiting from the exemplary initiatives.

Founder's legacy upheld: Pakistani govt, nation stands firm on Palestine issue: Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in the Middle East and Islamic Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Sunday asserted that the government of Pakistan and the nation had remained steadfastly united on the issue of Palestine since day one.

Speaking at a press conference held at the Press Information Department, he emphasized that on this International Human Rights Day, he aimed to spotlight Israeli atrocities in Gaza at the global stage.

Ashrafi who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council underlined that both Palestine and

Kashmir were not only issues of humanity but also vital concerns for the Muslim Ummah. He stated that Pakistan had consistently shown unwavering support for Palestine throughout its history.

He emphasized the significance of acknowledging the vision of Pakistan's founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who advocated for an independent and sovereign Palestine state with Al-Quds as its capital.

Ashrafi said Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar reaffirmed this position at the recent Arab-Islamic Summit in Riyadh, aligning with Pakistan's consistent support for the two-state solution expressed in OIC meetings

from 2004, 2006, and preceding years. Following the Gaza events on October 7, Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar, Foreign Affairs Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani, and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir had actively engaged in unwavering efforts for peace-building and voicing their concerns against Israeli aggression in Palestine at all the relevant forums globally.

Emphasizing Pakistan's stance in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations, he said Pakistan highlighted the nation's call for the establishment of a tribunal to address Israeli crimes in Gaza.

APNS expresses profound grief over sad demise of Afridi

KARACHI (PR) The APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of Mr Rehmat Shah Afridi, a senior journalist and founder of Daily Frontier Post.

Mrs Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani President and Sarmad Ali Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society in a joint statement have appreciated the contribution of Mr Afridi in the promotion of English Journalism in the Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa province. They stated that under his leadership daily Frontier Post played a prominent role to safeguard the freedom of press in the country.

The APNS office bearers offered their condolence to the bereaved family and colleagues and prayed that Allah may rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

Fawad's 1-day physical remand accepted

RAWALPINDI (INP): Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry's one-day physical remand in a corruption case has been accepted.

After the decision, he was handed over to the Anti-Corruption Establishment and would be now presented before an anti-corruption court on Monday, December 11.

Fawad was presented before the duty judge Ghulam Mustafa at the judicial complex Rawalpindi.

The judge asked the authorities to present the accused in the relevant court after approving the plea for the physical remand.

IPP prepares lists for seat-sharing deal with PML-N

LAHORE (INP): The Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) has meticulously crafted a list of constituencies and potential candidates for a strategic seat adjustment with the Muslim League-N (PML-N).

The committee representing the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party, comprising Ishaq Khakwani, Aoun Chaudhry, and Nauman Langriyal, collaborated closely with the party's leadership to compile the comprehensive list. The IPP leadership is scheduled to present the seat adjustment roster to the committee designated by the PML-N later tonight.

Sources reveal that the Isteqdam-e-Pakistan Party aims to propose seat adjustments for 20 seats in the National Assembly, with 19 of them located in Punjab and one in Karachi.



PESHAWAR: Jamal-e-Islami (JI) Chief, Siraj-ul-Haq addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting held in Peshawar.

Balochistan Education Board sports trials start on Dec 13

QUETTA (INP): In preparation for the selection of teams representing the Balochistan Education Board, trials for various sports are set to kick off on December 13. Organized by the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, the trials will be conducted to scout talented individuals for participation in the upcoming All Pakistan Inter Board Sports Gala, scheduled to take place from December 20 to December 28.

Mohammad Bakhsh Marri, Director of Sports at the Balochistan Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, outlined the schedule for the trials. The athletics trials for both boys and girls are slated for December 13 at Ayub Stadium. Following this, table tennis trials for boys and girls will take place on December 14 at Yazdan Khan School. The girls' badminton trials are scheduled for December 15.

The selected teams will have the opportunity to compete in the All Pakistan Inter Board Sports Gala, where girls' competitions will unfold from December 20 to 23, and boys' competitions will be held from December 25 to 28. The gala will witness the participation of teams from various boards across the country, engaging in a range of sports events including athletics, table tennis, badminton, hockey, volleyball, and kabaddi.

The culmination of the event will see the distribution of prizes among the victorious players, adding a competitive edge and celebratory spirit to the conclusion of this sporting extravaganza.

JI chief vows ethical social media engagement for a brighter Pakistan

PESHAWAR (INP): Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq, while emphasizing the significance of social media during the party's social media convention on Sunday, asserted that his workers would utilize social media for campaigning, but would not engage in false propaganda against anyone.

Siraj stated that the purpose of JI's social media efforts was to identify the leadership of the new generation. "Our goal is to light the candle of hope for the people of Pakistan."

The JI chief mentioned that the Islamabad High Court had examined the social media departments of all parties and found that the JI's social media wing was free of lies

and propaganda. Siraj said that his party would use social media for the sake of Allah's religion. "We will also employ the power of social media against corruption."

Siraj emphasized that until February 8, the power of social media should be harnessed for the bright future of the country. He added that the future government would be formed with the power of people's votes.

The JI chief held the view that only with the power of social media could an effective response be given to those who supported Israel.

He expressed that the people of Pakistan were standing by the oppressed Muslims of Gaza.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar addressing candidates of Entry Test regarding IT Initiative Program at BUITEMS

Nadeem Afzal Chan refuses to testify against ex-PM in £190 mln case

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former special assistant to the ex-prime minister on parliamentary coordination Nadeem Afzal Chan has refused to testify against Khan in court.

According to details, Nadeem Afzal Chan has denied becoming a witness against the PTI founding chief in the £190 mln settlement case. He stated that NAB had inquired into the case and he shared whatever information he had and added not to testify against the former prime minister in the court. Nadeem Afzal Chan mentioned that since the PTI founder is in jail, he will not testify against him in court.

"When he [Khan] was in power, I used to tell him these things. However, he is in jail now and my school of thought is not that of talking against someone who is oppressed or incarcerated," he stated.

Meanwhile, National Accountability Bureau has

compiled the list of witnesses in NCA £190 million scandal which includes former defense minister Pervaiz Khattak, Zubaida Jalal, Nadeem Afzal Chan and Azam Khan.

The witnesses list also includes Asset Recovery Unit, Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) and cabinet division officer.

Earlier, former PTI Minister Zubaida Jalal made startling revelations before National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the National Crime Agency (NCA) £190 million scandal.

Zubaida Jalal told NAB in her statement that she urged the cabinet for investigation into this matter but former prime minister Imran Khan didn't listen to her.

She further revealed that the NCA £190 million was approved despite objections from cabinet members and the minutes of the meeting were kept secret.

Govt likely to extend Hajj application deadline

ISLAMABAD (INP): Government is considering extending the deadline for submitting Hajj applications under the government scheme as so far, only 28,782 applications have been received. The low turnout of applicants prompted authorities to explore alternative options to encourage more participation. As per data, only 24,446 applications were collected under the official regular scheme on Saturday. The sponsorship scheme, aimed at facilitating pilgrims, received a modest 174 applications on the last day. Ministry of Religious Affairs is considering extending the submission period by 7 to 10 days to boost the number of applications and ensure wider participation in the Hajj pilgrimage. Despite slashing Hajj expenses and introducing short-term Hajj facilities, the number of applications has dropped this year too.

Future of aesthetic physicians bright: Murtaza Solangi

RAWALPINDI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday said that the future of aesthetic physicians was bright, everyone wants to look good. Addressing a function organized by the Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan here, the minister congratulated the management for organizing the event.

He said that aesthetic physicians and their businesses had a prominent position in the health sciences because looking good

was everyone's desire. He said that the expansion of the scope of the Association of Aesthetic Physicians of Pakistan will significantly improve the aesthetic health scenario in Pakistan and it will also benefit the people at the grassroots level.

He said that the mandate and duration of the caretaker government were limited, but it would try to address the complaints of the Aesthetic Physicians Association of Pakistan and provide it with all possible facilities within the legal framework.

Senator Samina says: Vetoing the cease-fire resolution in Gaza is hostile to inhumanity

Independent Report QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has expressed her disappointment over the United Nations' disappointing performance regarding Palestine and America's once again vetoing the cease-fire resolution. She said that rejecting the cease-fire resolution in Gaza in the United Nations Security Council is tantamount to enmity against humanity.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said in her statement that the role of the United Nations is getting weaker and Israel and the United States seem to be dominating the United Nations, while the silence of the Muslim countries, including children, elderly and women, are fighting for survival in hunger and thirst.

ians in the recent attacks on Gaza and Khan Yunis is a moment of concern for international human rights organizations and a blot on the name of humanity.

Despite invoking Article 99 to stop the ongoing human tragedy in Palestine, the UN Security Council has failed miserably in fulfilling its responsibility.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri further said that most of the population in Gaza and Khan Yunis have been displaced and there has been a severe shortage of food, fuel, water and medicines.

Life in the holy land of Palestine is dying and the unwashed Palestinians, including children, elderly and women, are fighting for survival in hunger and thirst.



QUETTA: People purchase used goods due to price hiking, at makeshift weekly market located on Benazir Flyover Joint road.