

# Independent

Member APNS &amp; CPNE

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www.dailyindependent.com.pk Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vdt XXV No. 118, Jamadi-us-Sani 04, 1445 AH Monday December 18, 2023 Pages 12, Price Rs.15

## Interim govt's marvelous job; completes road project of Quetta Dev. Package in four months

Caretaker CM Balochistan inaugurates Link Badini road extension project; vows to complete remaining projects of Quetta Development Package as well

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The interim Balochistan Government did a marvelous job by completing a road project under the Quetta Development Package in short span of four months, which otherwise pending for last seven years.

The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki formally inaugurated the Link Badini Road extension project.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister re-

gretfully pointed out that the pace of projects of Quetta Development Package was very slow, however, provision of necessary funds was ensured for the road project by the interim government.

In addition to this, the hurdles were also removed in way of execution of the projects by extending complete administrative support.

Moreover, all available resources were also mobilized for providing benefits of the projects, he mentioned adding that the foun-

ation stone of the Sabzal road to link road Samungli cross via Shabo to Airport road has also been laid.

He also said that the pending project of Link Badini road has been completed during the period of caretaker government.

Mr. Domki said that it is our utmost endeavour to complete the public projects of collective important nature at the earliest.

He also said that the welfare of masses is included in priorities of the

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai along with members of Christian Community holding a candle light vigil for the victims of suicide bomb explosion at Bethel Memorial Methodist Church of Quetta, during demonstration in Quetta.

## Jan Achakzai expresses solidarity: Victims of Methodist Church tragedy remembered on 6th anniversary

QUETTA: The anniversary of Methodist Church Quetta tragedy was observed here in the metropolis on Sunday.

A special memorial service was held at the Methodist Church in which the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai especially participated.

The religious personalities of the Christian community including priest Simon Bashir and others also participated in the event.

Moreover, the men, women and children belonging to the Christian

community including the heirs of those lost lives in the tragedy also participated.

The special prayers were offered for the victims and affectees of the terrorism incident occurred on December 17, 2017.

The caretaker Minister Information expressed solidarity with the victims of the Methodist Church tragedy. He said that Islam and other religions of the world condemn the terrorism acts.

It may be mentioned here that some nine persons had lost lives while over 50 injured in the suicide blast hit the Methodist Church.



QUETTA: National Party (NP) Central President, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch along with others addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## Changez Hayee Baloch joins National Party: Let masses elect their representatives in elections, pleads Dr. Malik Baloch

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The son of late senior Baloch nationalist politician, Changez Hayee Baloch joined the National Party (NP) here on Sunday.

Changez Hayee Baloch announced his joining in the NP in presence of the party leadership including President, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, secretary General, Jan Buledi, Kabir Muhammad Shahi and others.

Addressing the presser, Changez Hayee Baloch said that National Party is a voice of oppressed nationalities as it has proved it through its constant struggle.

He pledged to wage struggle for rights of the people of province together

with the party's leadership. He said that the excellent political history of the province is being tainted.

Speaking on the occasion, NP President Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch welcomed Changez Hayee Baloch in the party.

He stressed that free and fair elections must be conducted in the country, as if it was not the case, then the differences and gaps would be increased between the people of Balochistan and the federation.

He pleaded that the masses may be given right to elect their representatives.

He also vowed to continue the process of dialogue in the province from where it was abandoned in the past.

## PPP won't make alliance with PTI: Zardari

PESHAWAR (INP) - Former President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday said that the PPP would not make an alliance with the embattled Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He expressed these views during a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali and party leaders at the Governor House. The discussion also touched upon matters concerning the allocation of tickets.

The former president asked a prompt resolution of internal party differences.

## Judges, their spouses exempt from searches at airports

KARACHI (Online): Judges and their spouses have been exempted from airport searches at airports across the country.

According to the order of the Airport Security Force on the instructions of the Aviation Secretary, the chief justice and his wife will not be searched at the airports across the country.

According to the order, the serving judges and their spouses will not be searched at the airports.

The order on immunity from search by judges was issued on October 12 by the ASF on the direction of the aviation secretary.

Secretary Aviation issues immunity from search order on Supreme Court directive.



ISLAMABAD: Former Caretaker Provincial Minister Nawabzada Jamal Khan Raisani meeting with PPP President Asif Ali Zardari.

## Pakistan to observe day of mourning on demise of Amir of Kuwait

PM Kakar to travel to Kuwait to convey condolences on death of Amir Sheikh Nawaf

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has declared Monday, December 18 as a day of mourning in Pakistan as an expression of fraternal solidarity on behalf of the people and government of Pakistan, with the royal family, the

government, and people of Kuwait on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

The national flag shall fly at half mast throughout the coun-

try on the day.

Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday will undertake a one-day visit to Kuwait.

He will convey to the Royal Family, the government and the people of Kuwait the sympathies and condolences

of the Government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah, Foreign Office Spokesperson said on X on Sunday.



Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi talking with media men during his visit to Uthal

## PEC vows to play wholehearted role for ensuring free, fair and peaceful general elections

Ejaz Anwar Chohan says all political parties and candidates to be treated equally; Pak army to be called if needed so

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The Provincial Election Commissioner, Ejaz Anwar Chohan has pledged to play wholehearted role for ensuring free, fair and peaceful general elections in the province. He assured that all the political parties would be provided level playing field. Moreover, the political parties and their candidates would also be equally treated.

The PEC said that we would call Pak army if needed, in addition to the Police, Levies and Frontier Corps (FC).

The newly appointed PEC was speaking to the media after addressing the returning officers at their training session conducted

at a local hotel on Sunday.

The PEC maintained that he has met the Inspector General of Police, who has informed that the situation happens to be quite difference in Balochistan as compared to other parts of the country.

He said that the distances are more between the areas in Balochistan, however, we would perform our responsibilities well despite all the challenges.

The PEC said that women are important part of our society, as such we would urge the masses to ensure casting of their votes in the upcoming elections.

Referring the training of ROs and DROs, the PEC said that the basic objective behind the training session

Continued on page 2

## Evidence of foreign weapons use against Pakistan by terrorists expose

RAWALPINDI (Online): Evidence of the use of foreign weapons brought from Afghanistan in terrorist attacks in Pakistan again came to light.

According to security sources, the Pakistani army has been fighting the war of terrorism against the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP) for the past two decades. Weapons are also available.

The supply of arms to TTP has caused significant damage to the security of the region, especially as terrorism has increased in Pakistan.

The Baloch Liberation Army also attacked FC camps in Nushki and Panjgur districts in February 2022, using the same weapons. TTP also used American weapons in the July 12, 2023 attack on

Zhob Garrison. On September 2023, TTP terrorists armed with the latest American weapons attacked two army check posts in Chitral. In the Mianwali Air Base attack on November 4, the weapons recovered from the terrorists were foreign-made, including RPG-7, AK-74, M-4 and M-16/A4 were used on December 12 in Dera Ismail Khan. Night vision goggles and American rifles were also used by the terrorists in the terrorist attack in Daraban area. In the terrorist incident in Tank on December 15, modern American weapons were found with the terrorists.

In the attack, 3 policemen were martyred and 5 Terrorists went to hell, terrorists used M16/A2, HE Grenades, AK-47.

On December 13, customs and security forces recovered modern American weapons from a vehicle coming from Afghanistan to Pakistan. Arms were covered in sacks of onions. The weapons included modern American made M4, American rifle, grenades.

Pakistan's smuggling of advanced American weapons from Afghanistan and the TTP's use of American weapons against the security forces and the Pakistani people are a big question mark on the claims of the Afghan Transitional Government not to use them against its own land, Pakistan.

According to Eurasian Times, US-made weapons are also being used in the operations of TTP terrorists in Pakistan.

## FM urges UN to ensure implementation of resolutions on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (INP): Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Foreign Minister also called on the international organizations to urge India to end the grave and systematic human rights violations in IIOJK and to reverse all its illegal and unilateral actions undertaken since 5 August 2019. In these letters, the Foreign Minister underscored that under international law, domestic legislation and judicial verdicts cannot be invoked to determine the final status of an internationally-recognized disputed territory.

According to a press release of the Foreign Office, the Foreign Minister in his letters to the leadership of the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the European Union has invited their attention to the illegality of the recent judgment by the Supreme Court of India on the status of Indian Illegally

## Our freedom, politics, economy is at stake: Fazlur Rehman

MARDAN (Online): Jamat Ulema E Islam-Fazl (JUIF) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that our freedom is at stake, our politics and economy are under pressure.

Foreign agents are guilty of blasphemy: Fazlur Rehman

We will thwart every conspiracy against Madrasah, JUIF chief said the world is watching the genocide of Palestine, Pakistan has an atomic bomb, but we do not have the power to do so, we are the guarantors of the protection of human rights.

## CM condoles over demise of Amir of Kuwait

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has expressed his deep sorrow and grief over the death of Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

The Caretaker Chief Minister prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and courage for the bereaved family.

"People of Pakistan are equally grieved and share their grief with the Kuwaiti Royal Family and the people of Kuwait at this moment of sorrow, the CM said.

The Amir of Kuwait, late Sheikh Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah would always be remembered for playing his pivotal role in strengthening Pak-Kuwait relations and helping people of Pakistan at crucial times.



QUETTA: Central leaders of Pakhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party Abdul Rahim Zariatwal, Dr. Hamid Achakzai and others addressing a press conference

## PkMAP leaders call for meeting demands of Chaman dharna

Abdul Rahim Zariatwal says PkMAP ready for general elections; Chaman protest to be on election agenda

### Independent Report

QUETTA: The leaders of Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP) have demanded of the government to meet the demands of participants of dharna being staged in Chaman.

If the demands of participants of dharna were not met, then protest demonstrations and dharnas would be staged in the southern districts of Balochistan.

The senior leader of PkMAP Abdul Rahim Zariatwal was addressing press conference along with Dr. Hamid Khan Achakzai, Kabir Afghan and others here at the Quetta press club on Sunday.

Abdul Rahim Zariatwal said that the people of

Chaman live on one side of the border while they do business on the other side of border. Under the given circumstances, it is not possible to enforce passport in the border area, Mr. Zariatwal asserted.

The senior leader of PkMAP said that we don't want to increase hardships of Pakistan, rather want to decrease them.

But, we are being punished for speaking of democracy.

He regretfully pointed out that the people are forced to lead miserable in Chaman life just because they are deprived of the livelihood. It has become hard for them to make their both ends meet, he added.

Continued on page 2

## Lyon celebrates 500 wickets as Australia thrash Pakistan by 360 runs

PERTH, Australia (AFP/APP): Nathan Lyon took his 500th Test wicket Sunday as Australia dismissed a rattled Pakistan for just 89 to post a thumping 360-run win in the opening Test at Perth.

Pakistan's unlikely bid to win their first Test in Australia since 1995 was left in tatters by the spinning and the home side's formidable pace attack, who wrapped up the game inside four days.

Chasing 450 for victory, the visitors succumbed meekly with Lyon taking 2-14. Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood both grabbed three wickets each.

"Great start to the summer, everything fell into place. We've played a lot of cricket, so the build-up was very chilled and relaxed," said Australia captain Pat Cummins. "No hiccups this week, it's all gone to plan."

"500 Test wickets around the world is huge,"

he added of Lyon. "Couldn't be happier for him."

After being left stranded on 499 after Pakistan's first innings, Lyon finally reached the milestone when he trapped Faheem Ashraf lbw but there was an agonising wait as it went to review.

He then bowled Aamer Jamal in the same over, joining an elite club of just seven others, including fellow spinners Muttiah Muralitharan of Sri Lanka and Australia's Shane Warne.

"Great feeling to take 500 wickets," said Lyon. "I have not taken anything for granted, especially playing for Australia, and appreciate every moment of my career."

Australia declared on day four at 233-5 after Pakistan were dismissed for 271 in their first innings, in reply to the hosts' 487.

Cummins made the call after opener Usman

Khawaja was out for a gutsy 90 on a deteriorating pitch after a 126-run partnership with Mitchell Marsh.

Marsh remained unbeaten on 63 after Pakistan had removed Steve Smith and Travis Head early in the day to give themselves hope.

Facing a daunting chase, they got off to a horror start with Abdullah Shafique out for two in the first over, nicking an unplayable Starc ball to Alex Carey behind the stumps.

Captain Shan Masood, in his first Test in charge, did not last much longer, edging to Carey off Hazlewood to leave his team in dire straits at 17-2.

Starc also accounted for Imam-ul-Haq before Babar Azam and Saud Shakeel put up some resistance.

But that crumbled when Azam got an edge to Cummins on 14, with Carey again collecting.

When they returned

from tea, Sarfaraz Ahmed lasted just six balls before he was caught at gully off Starc, and Agha Salman was run out.

Lyon then worked his magic before Hazlewood cleaned up.

"We could have batted a bit quicker, missed on 60-70 runs," said Masood.

"Bowling-wise, I thought we did a lot of good things. Not as disciplined as we wanted to be, that's the lesson from the Australian attack."

Australia had resumed at 84-2, with Khawaja on 34 and Smith 43, but it was hard going at the start with cracks appearing on the pitch.

Impressive debutant Khurram Shahzad got a breakthrough in the fourth over of the day, trapping Smith lbw for 45.

Enter the aggressive Travis Head, who stroked a boundary off the second ball.

But he lived danger-

ously and after a misjudged drive off Aamer Jamal went straight to Haq at cover, out for 14.

Both Marsh and Khawaja survived reviews in the same eventful Jamal over as Pakistan ratcheted up the pressure.

Marsh hit two sixes to keep the scoreboard moving, before a huge escape on 23 when Masood dropped a sitter at mid-off.

Khawaja kept grinding away at the other end to make a 25th Test half-century off 151 balls.

Marsh cracked a thunderous drive to bring up his second 50 of the match as both men attacked the bowling after lunch.

Khawaja raced to 90 with some audacious boundaries before his luck ran out going for another big shot, caught by Azam off Shaheen Shah Afridi, which brought about the declaration. They now head to Melbourne for the Boxing Day Test.



QUETTA: Project Director Quetta Development Project Rafiq Baloch presenting souvenir to caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki

## Dr. Reheemullah lauds step taken by BAA for arranging socio-psycho support session

Independent Report

QUETTA: Dr. Raheemullah Rahi, Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacology, Bolan Medical College, Quetta, has said that it was inevitable to divert the attention of drug addicts towards positive activities, including outdoor and indoor sports activities.

These views were expressed by him while addressing a function held at Rightway Drug and Rehabilitation Centre, Subzal Road Quetta in connection with "Socio-Psycho Support Session" session held under the auspices of Balochistan Archery Association (BAA).

Psychological cognition improvement, consultation improvement and brain chemi-



cal improvement, including dopamine serotonin and endorphins help remove stress, negative thoughts, anxiety, depression and low self esteem, said he, adding that it was the need of time to arrange indoor and outdoor events of sports for drug addicts admitted in different rehabilitation centres of the provincial capital.

He said, "Medical science says that one hour exercise is the treatment of anxiety", adding, "One hour exercise gets rid of stress and anxiety".

Appreciating the step taken by Balochistan Archery Association to have arranged "socio-psycho support" through archery and darts games session for the drug addicted patients of Rightway Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre, Quetta", he said that the said drug addicts needed counselling. Faiz Kakar, General Secretary, Balochistan Archery Association imparted basic archery on drug addicts of Rightway Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre as to how to hit a target at small and long range using a bow and arrow.

On the occasion, Ishtiaq Ahmed, Chairman, Balochistan Archery Association, Muhammad Amin Badini, President, BAA, Rehmatullah Khan Nurzai, President, Balochistan Mix Martial Arts Association, Muhammad Asif Shahyan, President, Honour Debating Society Balochistan, Naimat Achakzai Advocate and others were also present. Several drug addicts hit the target after acquiring training.



QUETTA: President Muslim League (N) Balochistan Sheikh Jafar Khan Mundukhel and PML-N women workers cutting the cake on the occasion of the leader of PML(N) Mian Nawaz Sharif's birthday.

## Acting CJP to hear important cases today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Sardar Tariq Masood will hear the most recent cases in the chamber today (Monday).

These cases include appeals filed on the return of petitions filed on contempt of court and other matters.

In these appeals, Muhammad Khan Rand against Pakistan People Party's Agha Siraj Khan Durrani. Abdul Razaq's appeal against government are included. Informational notices were issued to the parties in the cases. An objection was raised by the Supreme Court Office on the Muhammad Khan Randwali constitutional petition, on which an appeal was filed against the decision of the Registrar, which will be heard in the Chamber.

This application will be heard with reference to the Supreme Court Rules. Informational notices have also been issued to the parties.

## Young hits century as New Zealand see off Bangladesh in first ODI

Dunedin, New Zealand (AFP/APP): Opener Will Young cracked a rapid century as New Zealand recovered from a dreadful start to beat Bangladesh by 44 runs on Sunday in the rain-affected first one-day international.

The match was shortened to 30 overs each after three rain delays to New Zealand's innings in Dunedin.

The home side burst into life in the final stages to post an imposing 239-7.

Needing an adjusted target of 245 to win the first ODI of the three-match series, Bangladesh were restricted to 200-9 in a chase that lost momentum.

New Zealand bounced back after losing two wickets in the game's opening over when seamer Shoriful Islam had Rachin Ravindra and Henry Nicholls both caught without scoring.

A brilliant 171-run stand for the third wicket between Young, who hit 105 off 84 balls, and captain Tom Latham, who finished with 92 runs, handed the advantage back to the hosts in a match played in overcast conditions throughout.

Their stand straddled two stoppages, which reduced the innings from 46 overs to 40 and then to 30.

The pair hit out in brutal fashion over the last 10.4 overs, when the hosts chalked up a remarkable 131 runs. Latham fell short of his eighth ODI century, bowled by off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz, but Young forged on to reach three figures for the third time in the 50-over format before being

run out in the final over.

Young said his first priority was to steady the innings after its disastrous start.

"Tommy and I set up a nice partnership although it was on and off with the rain," Young said.

"We came back on with 10 overs to go and we thought why not have a crack? And it came off today. It was nice to get a few out of the middle at the end and it's the icing on the cake to finish with a win."

Shoriful was comfortably Bangladesh's best bowler, taking 2-28 off six overs.

The chase began brightly, with opener Anamul Haque reaching 43, supported by Towhid Hridoy (33) and Liton Das (22), who all scored at better than a run a ball.

However, the pursuit tailed off when Afif Hossain fell for a hard-hit 38 in the 24th over, with his team still needing 80 runs.

Visiting captain Najmul Hossain Shanto said the result was "very disappointing" after Islam's early fireworks. "If we'd taken a third wicket, it could have been a different ball game," said Shanto, before singling out the expensive spin bowling of Mehidy and Afif as a weak point. "I think our fast bowlers bowled really well but our spinners need to learn quickly before the next match."

New Zealand's best bowling figures of 2-24 were recorded by allrounder Josh Clarkson, who made his debut along with seamer William O'Rourke.



Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem inaugurates 7th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Shooting Championship 2023.

## 7th CNS open shooting championship commences at Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The Opening Ceremony of 7th CNS Open Shooting Championship 2023 held at Pakistan Navy Shooting Range, Karachi.

Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem graced the event as chief guest.

"About 400 shooters from Pakistan Navy, Pakistan Air Force, FRA, SRA, PRA, BRA, HEC, WAPDA, Pakistan Police, SSU, RSS Club, KGSSR Club, and PNSR Members Club are participating in the competition," a Pakistan Navy news release said.

During the Champion-

ship, 24 events will be contested in Pistol, Rifle and Shotgun categories. Event matches are being contested under the umbrella of National Rifle Association of Pakistan (NAP) as per International Sports Shooting Federation (ISSF) latest rules and regulations.

Four events of Big Bore Pistol, 50M and 0.22 Open Sight Categories are included in schedule of events as festival matches. Furthermore, apart from 10 events in men category, 05 events for women and 04 for youth in Pistol and Rifle categories are also part of Championship.

## Interim gov't marvelous job....

Continued from page 1

pledged. He also assured to extend wholehearted assistance to the important initiative of public nature and importance.

Earlier, the caretaker CM inaugurated the Link Badini road extension project. He also performed groundbreaking of another road project.

Also present on the occasion were additional Chief secretary planning and development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Project Director Quetta Package, Rafiq Baloch, commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat besides others.



QUETTA: Grand Alliance Balochistan Chairman Syed Altaf Shah Bukhari along with others addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

## PkMAP leaders call for....

Continued from page 1

ous. He mentioned that the chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai had given time of Friday last in his address to the dharna, but no steps were taken by the government to accept the demands of protesters.

He said that we support the demands of dharna participants and as such demand of the government to accept them without further delay.

He said that the border trade is being done with Iran and India through their respective borders, but it has been restricted only in Chaman. e said that the issue should be resolved mutually by the state and protesters finding out a middle way.

Mr. Ziaratwal said that the matters about the electoral alliance or seat adjustment would be decided in coming days.

He also referred to the protest dharna saying that it is continued for last two months, but the government is not taking it seri-

## Arshdeep, Avesh on fire as India crush Proteas in 1st ODI

JOHANNESBURG (AFP/APP): Pace bowlers Arshdeep Singh and Avesh Khan set up a convincing eight-wicket win for India in the first one-day international against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium on Sunday.

Left-arm Arshdeep took five for 37 and Avesh claimed four for 27 as South Africa crashed to 116 all out.

New cap Sai Sudharsan and Shreyas Iyer hit half-centuries as India needed just 16.4 overs to reach the target. Indian captain KL Rahul said he had expected India's spinners to play a prominent role on the same pitch on which spin had prevailed in a Twenty20 international on Thursday.

"It was completely different to what we expected," Rahul said at the post-match presentation. "There was a lot of help in the wicket and the boys bowled really well."

Kuldeep Yadav was the only spinner used, taking the last wicket at a cost of three runs in 2.3 overs.

South African captain Aiden Markram said there had been more help for the seam bowlers than he anticipated when he won the toss and decided to bat.

## Kashmiris laud Alison for raising Kashmir dispute at UK parliament

LONDON (INP): Kashmiri and Pakistani Diaspora groups in the UK have lauded the Scottish National Party (SNP) leader and parliamentarian Alison Thewliss for raising Kashmir question in the British parliament.

Alison Thewliss, MP, asked the British government for its assessment over the Indian kangaroo court, the so-called supreme court decision which backed ending the special status of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The British government replied that it was aware of the Indian top court's decision.

"We continue to discuss with both parties... they need both to resolve that continuing situation and have constructive dialogue with Kashmiris," Anne-Marie Trevelyan told the parliament in response to Thewliss.

The Kashmir question during the debate in the British parliament came when MP Paul Bristow just

chaired a timely conference on the long-pending Kashmir dispute at the British parliament.

According to Fahim Kayani, President of Tehreek-e-Kashmir, UK, the continuation of debate by British lawmakers is a "must for Kashmir cause of right to self-determination."

"Kashmiris appreciate MPs Paul Bristow and Alison Thewliss for their conscious advocacy of Kashmir at the parliament," said Kayani, adding that holding conferences on Kashmir was important to press the British government to "use its influence over India to end illegal occupation in Kashmir."

The Kashmiri Diaspora leader pointed out that advocacy and lobbying with the British and European lawmakers was an important responsibility of the overseas Kashmiris.

"Our cause and case is genuine and no power on earth can challenge the birth right of Kashmiris," he added.

## PEC vows to play wholehearted...

Continued from page 1

is to get acquainted to them about making the elections process transparent.

He said that it is responsibility of the ROs and DROs to implement the rules and laws about conducting elections in their respective areas of jurisdictions.

He asserted that no negligence would be tolerated in the upcoming general elections.

He said that the training sessions are being conducted in Quetta, Loralai,

Khuzdar and Sibi. In all 67 ROs are attending training for the national and provincial assemblies' constituencies.

Meanwhile, the training session would also remain continued today (Monday). After completion of ROs' training, the training of DROs would be held on December 19, 2023.

During the training session, the ROs and DROs would also be administered oath about their responsibilities.



QUETTA: People buy warm clothes from a roadside vendor in the freezing weather in the Provincial Capital.

## Mushaal Mullick says: 'Special Kashmir advisory body' to be formed soon for peaceful solution of Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Husseain Mullick Sunday announced that a special Kashmir advisory committee would be constituted soon on every district level to mobilize and for peaceful solution of Kashmir cause.

Talking to PTV news channel, she said that a multi-faceted board comprising top national and international diplomatic experts would play their active role for this advisory committee on Kashmir issue, adding, the committee would offer comprehensive recommendations to the Government in response to the Indian Supreme Court's decision.

She also urged youth to tap modern tools of IT to help influence the world against war crimes and human right violation of Kashmiris, adding, youth should devote their time and energies for the promotion of Kashmir cause and raise their voice for the oppressed and subjugated

people of Indian Illegally Occupied & Kashmir (IIOJK).

She said the innocent people of Kashmir had been made alien in their own homeland where occupation forces were killing, torturing and maiming the youth, while the women were being dishonored.

She asked students to intensify their political, diplomatic and moral support to their brothers and sisters in IIOJK, who were struggling for their inherent right to self-determination, adding, overseas youth should send online petitions against Indian government who are busy in demographic changes in Kashmir.

She also demanded international organization to pay attention and demilitarize Kashmir under UN's resolution, adding,

"Human rights violations and demographic changes will not disappear if a government blocks access to international observers and then invests in a public relations campaign to offset any unwanted

publicity." She further said, "The present Secretary General of the UN is very active, therefore, he will play his due role in solving the Kashmir dispute."

"Jammu & Kashmir is the core dispute between Pakistan and India and to ensure peace and stability in South Asia the international community must play its due role in the peaceful resolution of the dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions," she urged.

"The government of India only aim to change the demographic character of Muslim majority in IIOJK and disempower its residents," she said.

"Indian administration was only pursuing a policy by splitting the population of Kashmir to secure their political future," she added. She asked people not to lose hope but stay vigilant and alert, and safeguard the Kashmiri rights and write online e-mails to UN and highlight the sufferings of Kashmiris.



ISLAMABAD: Counsellor of the Media Section, Embassy of China to Pakistan, Bao Zhong, speaking to the journalists of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during a training session "How BRI and CPEC is being reported in Pakistan: An outlook of 10 years of CPEC" organized by the Center for Democracy and Climate Studies, in collaboration with the Chinese Embassy.

## IRM, SIF, SPIR hold post-COP-28 consultative session at QAU

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Rural Management (IRM) in collaboration with Secours Islamique France (SIF) and the School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad organized the first ever Post COP 28 Consultative session, here the other day.

The purpose of the session themed 'Loss and Damage Fund: A way forward for Pakistan' was to raise the awareness and informing about decisions made at COP 28 and the stakeholder's representation and in securing compensation for recovery from the deleterious effects of climate change in Pakistan.

Notable panelists include Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of IRM, Chairperson of International

Union for Conservation of Nature and Pakistan National Committee (IUCN-PNC) Dr Roomi S. Hayat, Head of Mission in Secours Islamique France (SIF) Dr Altaf Abro, Director and Professor of School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR) in Quaid-e-Azam University Dr Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Ambassador and Chairperson of Board of Governors of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) Shafiqat Kakakhel, Head of Climate Change and National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) Fawad Hayat, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Resilient Future International (RFI) Aftab Alam, Professor in Islamic International University Dr Noor Fatima (IIU) and a young delegate from COP 28 Jiya Jaggi.

They gave thought-

provoking discussion and deliberation on insights from COP-28 and apprised the audience.

Dr Altaf Abro said that he recently visited Dubai for attending Cop-28 conference, where everyone was talking about phasing-out fossil fuels as it was the possible solution to deal with global warming.

Jaya Jaggi said, "It is high time to investigate deep down root causes of global warming."

She seconded Dr Altaf Abro's comment on the subject.

"Phasing out fossil fuel is a gateway to deal with the climate crisis. We need to shift on clean and Eco-Friendly Renewable energy resources like solar and wind. By next year, we will also ensure maximum participation of youth in Cop-29," she added.

## Funeral prayer of Shaheed Head Constable Ashraf and son offered

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayer of the valiant martyr Head Constable of Islamabad Capital Police, Muhammad Ashraf and his son was offered at Police Lines Headquarters Islamabad with utmost respect and honor.

The funeral ceremony

sonnel, and citizens.

A smart contingent unit of the police force presented a guard of honor to the martyr, and ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and senior police officials draped the coffins with flower wreaths, before transporting their mortal remains to

the elevation of the martyrs' ranks.

The Shaheed Head Constable valiantly sacrificed his life, along with his son, in safeguarding the lives and property of the citizens. Their commitment to protecting the community will not be forgotten, he added.



was attended by Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, senior police officials, administration, officers from various law enforcement departments, a large number of police per-

sonnel, and citizens. A smart contingent unit of the police force presented a guard of honor to the martyr, and ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan met with the bereaved families, expressing heartfelt condolences on behalf of the entire police force and recited fatiha for

Islamabad Capital Police Head Constable Muhammad Ashraf along with his son tried to apprehend two motorcyclists committing robbery in broad daylight in the vicinity of Ramna police station.

## Activism against Gender-based Violence Aawaz II Holds Provincial Consultation to Mark 16 Days

ISLAMABAD (APP): Aawaz II Programme organised a provincial consultation to mark the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through its provincial partners in Punjab, Peace & Justice Network (PJN). The consultation, titled "Unite! Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women & Girls in Punjab," brought together over 60 government officials, civil society representatives, and Aawaz II forum members to discuss mechanisms for preventing and addressing GBV in the province.

Ms Nabila Hakim Ali Khan, Ombudsperson for Protection of Women against Harassment at the Workplace said: "The office of the Ombudsperson has notified a Rapid Action Task Force to create awareness of the legal framework to prevent sexual harassment at the workplace and expedite the reporting of cases of sexual harassment. Ms. Sumaira Samad, Secretary of Women Development Punjab said: "We must work together to establish comprehensive safety and inclusion mechanisms that empower all women, girls, transgender persons,

women with disabilities, and women from religious minorities." Dr Yasmin Zaidi, Aawaz II Team Lead, during her opening remarks said: "Leveraging its network of 40,000 volunteers within local communities across 37 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, Aawaz II address the critical issue of gender-based violence, child marriage and intolerance.

These dedicated community leaders actively work to empower their communities towards positive change." Mr Sheikh Muzaffar Akram, representing the Crime & Monitoring Unit of Punjab Police, presented a comprehensive overview of the initiatives undertaken to ensure the safety and security of citizens, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. Ms. Zaib Wasim, Director, of Social Welfare & Baitul Maal Punjab emphasized that these investments demonstrate the government's commitment to creating a more just and equitable society for all.

Mr. James Hampson, County Director, British Council Pakistan said: Gender-based violence is a serious issue requiring action from all stakeholders.

## AIOU announces schedule for online workshops

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced a workshop schedule for postgraduate programs, BS and B.Ed. (ODL programs), offered in the autumn semester of 2023.

According to details, the workshops for the first batch will be held from December 18 to January 1. Each course workshop will be held for six days. It should be noted that workshops will be conducted online on Microsoft Teams through AIOU's Aaghi Learning Management System (LMS) portal.

According to the Director General of Regional Services, Dr Malik Tauqir Ahmed Khan, log-in information (user name and password) has been shared with the students, and they are instructed to participate in these workshops through the Aaghi portal.

All those students who have not received their username and password are instructed to contact their nearest AIOU regional office. As per the instructions of the Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the workshops for the remaining batches of these programs will be announced soon.

## Commuters demand extension in Blue Bus plying route

ISLAMABAD (APP): A number of daily commuters residing in different housing societies located near the Islamabad Expressway on Sunday demanded an extension in the route covered by Blue Metro Bus Service up to the PWD interchange as a huge chunk of road widening and construction work had been completed on one of the busiest arteries of the twin cities. The residents of Korang, Pakistan, Jinnah Garden, PWD, Sohan, and other adjacent societies told APP that the authorities had unveiled the blue bus service route plan from Rawat but deferred it due to the condition of the road and the subsequent construction and expansion work from Korang Bridge to Rawat.

But now that the road widening work has been completed in this area, a considerable number of daily commuters should also be facilitated by the bus service. The mass transport facility should also reach the periphery of outer areas located within 30 km of the main downtown, they opined.

Their demand coincides with the Capital Development Authority's de-

cision to roll out 160 electric buses on 13 different routes in the capital city.

Haji Abdul Qadoos, a trader in PWD, said that the introduction of blue bus service on the Expressway was a significant initiative to provide much-needed transport facilities to the masses, but after the completion of hassle-free traffic movement on the newly constructed multi-lane road from Korang Bridge to Naval Anchorage Housing Society, its route should be immediately expanded to PWD interchange.

As the extensive work on the laying of new road lanes has been completed up to PWD interchange with smooth and rapid vehicular traffic, the route of Blue Bus service should be extended to PWD interchange to facilitate a large number of commuters, students, and office-going people, Raziq Ali Shah, a senior journalist and resident of Jinnah Garden, asserted. Shaheena Jabeen and Humaira, two working women and residents of Korang town, opined that they conveniently moved to their workplaces located in the Blue Area regularly by boarding the Blue buses.



ISLAMABAD: A view of illuminated with colorful lights of S.T Thomas Church in connection with to celebrate Christmas ceremony on 25th December in Federal Capital.

## ECP to resume Akbar Babar's plea on PTI's intra-party polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is scheduled to resume the hearing of the plea filed by PTI founding member Akbar S. Babar against intra-party elections on December 18 (Monday).

The Commission revealed the cause list for the PTI intra-party case, setting the hearing for December 18. A five-member ECP bench will examine objections and issues raised against PTI's intra-party elections with key applicants such as Akbar S. Babar, Raja Tahir Nawaz, and Naureen Farooq. Barrister Ali Zafar, representing PTI, is expected to present the concluding arguments before the bench.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Gohar Ali Khan and several other party members, including Chief Election Commissioner Niazullah Niazi, Umar

Ayub, Haleem Adil Sheikh, Yasmin Rashid, Ali Amin Gandapur, and RO Central Secretariat Sardar Masroof, in the intra-party election case. The notice highlighted that the PTI intra-party elections did not seem to align with the party's constitution, Rules 2020, and the Election Act 2017. It emphasized that the ECP issues a certificate only when all the legal prerequisites for conducting intra-party elections under the Election Rules 2017 are met.

On December 2, following the ECP's instructions, PTI conducted its intra-party elections, resulting in the election of Barrister Gohar Khan as the party's new chairman.

PTI's founding member, Akbar S. Babar, referred to the intra-party polls as a drama. In a video statement, he expressed concern that the PTI has jeopardized the party and its election symbol, the 'bat.'



ISLAMABAD: People visiting stalls during 3rd Pakistan International Property Housing and Construction EXPO 2023 organized by Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry (PAEL) at Pak China Friendship Centre.

## Actor Kamal Ahmed remembered on his 8th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The eighth death anniversary of a renowned PTV, theater and playwright actor Kamal Ahmed Rizvi is being observed on Sunday.

Born on this day in 1930 in the Indian state of Bihar, Kamal Ahmed Rizvi's legacy transcends borders and his contributions continue to resonate in the hearts of fans. His family migrated to Karachi after the creation of Pakistan in 1947.

Kamal Ahmed Rizvi, celebrated for his multifaceted talents as a director, actor, translator and playwright, rose to prominence through his iconic portrayal of 'Alif Noon' in the Pakistan Television (PTV)

drama series. His journey in the performing arts began in 1958, with an early focus on theater, eventually leading to his pivotal role in establishing the Lahore Studio of PTV in 1965.

The groundbreaking 'Alif Noon' series, where Rizvi played the unforgettable character 'Allan,' became a cultural phenomenon from 1965 to 1986. Audiences eagerly awaited each episode and the show's impact was palpable, with streets seemingly deserted during its broadcast.

In addition to 'Alif Noon,' Rizvi lent his talent to numerous other TV and theater productions.



ISLAMABAD: Renowned Journalists Mujeeb ur Rehmani and Former Prime Minister Azad Jammu Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas participating in the ceremony organized in honour of Senior Journalists.

## Ombudsman Office receive 190,000 complaints during current year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib (Federal Ombudsman), Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi has directed the investigation officers and the heads of federal agencies to ensure timely implementation of Wafaqi Mohtasib decisions since no slackness would be tolerated on this count.

He said that 178000 complaints have so far been decided since January 2023 and the number of complaints may touch an all-time high figure of 190000 by the year-end.

Wafaqi Mohtasib was presiding over a high-level meeting of WM Regional Officers from Lahore, Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Gujranwala on Wednesday. Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, speak-

ing to the media in Lahore, for the first time after having been elected as President of the Asian Ombudsman Association (AOA) said that it was a great honor and recognition of Pakistan's valuable contribution. Commending the performance of the Regional Offices, he reiterated his firm commitment to resolving the issues faced by the poor masses. He said that the Wafaqi Mohtasib was a "poor man's court" and its main purpose was to redress the grievance of oppressed and marginalized members of the community.

All out efforts would be undertaken by the government officials to resolve the complaints so that relief was provided to poor

strata, he added. He said without the allocation of additional budget and manpower, the officers of Wafaqi Mohtasib had put in their best to reach out to the public to resolve their complaints through Khullai Katchehries and IRD. He said several complaints, filed with Wafaqi Mohtasib, were increasing every year and only in 2022 WM received 164174 complaints out of which 154770 complaints were resolved.

This year WMS has received 183000 complaints till now and it is expected that this number may reach 190000 by the end of the year, he added. He said his increase in the number of complaints showed the trust of the people.

## Campaign for registration of house servants and tenants data in full swing

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special orders of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police "Knock the Door" campaign for the registration of employees and tenants is in full swing, a public relations officer said.

He said that, during this campaign various teams of Islamabad Capital Police are going to the streets and door-to-door to ensure the registration of tenants and domestic workers as well as to inquire about the problems faced by the citizens.

In this regard, the

Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Islamabad has registered a data of 229 house servants of 551 houses from Secretariat Police Station jurisdiction.

The purpose of this campaign is to avoid any untoward incident by maintaining law and order in the federal capital adding that the registration of tenants and domestic workers could not only keep a close watch on miscreants but also prevent the elements involved in any kind of suspicious activity. He said citizens are also requested that they can ask for the identity of a person if someone dressed in civil clothes.

## AC City swooped down on alms seekers, 16 netted

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a swift operation, the Assistant Commissioner City swooped down on professional beggars plaguing Islamabad's posh sectors F-6 and F-7 neighborhoods on Sunday.

Sixteen individuals were apprehended and whisked away to Kohsar Police Station, leaving the swanky streets temporarily beggar-free, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said. He said that this action wasn't just about cleaning up the cityscape from professional beggars. While adult beggars faced legal proceedings,



ISLAMABAD: Visitors are looks animals Skeleton in Pakistan Museum of Natural History, in Federal Capital. Pakistan museum of natural history, established in 1976, is a public natural history museum situated in Islamabad, the federal capital of Pakistan.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Monday December 18, 2023

## Effective CT plan

The state has failed to evolve an effective counterterrorism strategy to deal with the resurgent militant threat, with the result that the outgoing year has seen an alarming rise in terrorist attacks, and an unacceptable loss of life, particularly among security personnel.

Just days after at least 23 army men were martyred in Dera Ismail Khan in the highest casualty attack this year, five more security personnel fell in the line of duty on Friday in separate attacks in KP's Tank and Khyber districts.

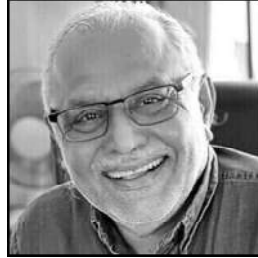
In the Tank attack, three policemen were martyred after militants stormed the local police headquarters. In Khyber, two FC men were martyred when terrorists struck a checkpoint. The fact that these attacks took place so soon after a major act of terrorism reflects a considerable security and intelligence lapse.

The area in focus — the southern part of KP and neighbouring districts in Balochistan and Punjab — has become a new hotbed of militancy, particularly after the Afghan Taliban returned to power in Kabul in 2021, though it should be remembered that this region was amongst the locations from where the banned TTP initially sprang. A new actor has emerged from the nebulous world of militancy in the form of Tehreek-i-Jihad Pakistan, believed to be a TTP front. This outfit has been involved in some of the deadliest attacks this year.

While it is true that militant groups often take on new monikers, their leadership, networks and goals remain largely the same. Therefore, CT efforts should not be distracted by names, and focus on the leaderships of these groups, their sources of funding and supplies.

The state has directed much of its wrath at the Afghan Taliban government for failing to rein in anti-Pakistan terrorists believed to be active across the Durand Line. While Kabul's rulers certainly cannot be absolved of their duty to prevent militants from jeopardising Pakistan's security, the responsibility for securing our territory is ours alone, and we cannot blame others for our lapses.

By all means, Kabul must be told that Afghan soil cannot be used to harbour terrorists, and diplomatic pressure should continue if the Taliban fail to deliver. But implementing an effective CT strategy is the government's duty. It should not be forgotten that many of those involved in acts of terrorism are locals, while the socio-economic marginalisation of the vulnerable geographic area has also fuelled radicalisation. Therefore, a rejuvenated NAP is required to quell the violence, while longer-term efforts are needed to address the deprivation of the affected areas. Pakistan can ill afford a new full-blown militant insurgency. Unless steps are taken now to address the threat, that is exactly what stares us in the face. The caretaker set-up and the incoming government must deal with this threat resolutely.



Abbas Nasir

Now that the Election Commission has announced the schedule for the Feb 8 elections, after the Supreme Court on Friday brushed aside a challenge to hold polls on that date, what strategies are political parties in the fray likely to use to maximise their chances in the electoral exercise?

With the overturning of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif's two lower court sentences by the Islamabad High Court earlier, the former prime minister appears set to lead his party's campaign in the face of very tough odds: as observers with their finger on the pulse of the electorate in Punjab say, the PTI remains a formidable contender. Mr Sharif will need to up the tempo of his mass contact

tours to motivate his support base.

As we speak, the PML-N appears content to let the establishment deal with the PTI, whether through brutal administrative means or judicial manoeuvring, because Nawaz Sharif believes it is incumbent on the establishment to 'atone for its sins' and do what it takes for the 'reset to 2016'.

But things are not that simple in politics. Of all parties, the PML-N should know well that once the genie is out of the bottle it is nearly impossible to push it back in. The party's own evolution is an example of this.

It was propped up as a 'viable' alternative to the Benazir Bhutto-led PPP, but within a few years of coming into being, it sank its roots in the all-important Punjab and soon started to question the establishment's primacy and claim the province as its own.

The establishment's pushback may have appeared effective for a while, buoyed as it was by the US 'war on terror' and the use of Pakistan as a pawn in the war. How-

ever, it weakened as soon as the global environment changed. The down and out PML-N, helped by (its new ally) PPP's deft negotiations, was back with a bang.

Unless the 2023 electoral exercise mirrors the 'blatantly managed' 2018 elections, it is easy to see that the PML-N will be hard-pressed to form a comfortable government on its own. Far from it. In the best of times, it will be at the head of a coalition. A coalition where, to add to its own central Punjab tally and south Punjab 'electables', some seats will be managed from Sindh and most from the systematically engineered and largely disenfranchised Balochistan. The election over, the harsh rhetoric will be too, and the PPP could well be a part of this grouping, having a majority, in all likelihood, in Sindh.

Given the passions Imran Khan arouses in KP in particular, it does not seem likely that anyone else can take very many seats. And this is where any attempt to ride roughshod could backfire as there appears a degree

of PTI mobilisation in this powder keg of a province not witnessed elsewhere in the country. This is why the JUL-F appears tentative in facing the electorate.

If this were to be the emerging scenario, what options would the PTI have before it? The most lethal arrow in its quiver is its unmatched dominance of social media platforms. Without doubt, it is the only party that has understood and exploited social media's potential to the full.

With 21 million new voters added to the electoral lists since 2018, how much of an edge will the PTI have in 2024? One need only look at the penetration of smartphones, especially of affordable Chinese make, in Pakistan and the likelihood of social media use by this demographic to appreciate the impact PTI could have.

On the downside for the party is the imprisonment of dozens of its leaders, most notably Imran Khan who may also be sentenced before the election, just as Nawaz Sharif was, ahead of the 2018

polls. Those who are not in jail on largely spurious charges, are either in hiding or have gone abroad and are unable to campaign.

The rejection of the PTI's intra-party election earlier this month by the Election Commission may mean the party is unable to use its 'bat' symbol. But then, the PPP demonstrated in 1988 (the pre-social media and 24x7 news channels era) that its teal (arrow) proved to be just as effective as its traditional sword symbol that was denied to the party.

The PTI's options may appear limited but it isn't out of them. It could throw a spanner in the works by asking its supporters to turn out in big numbers to vote for even little known 'independent' candidates it encourages to run against the PML-N particularly in Punjab. Big numbers are crucial for this. If the party commands the kind of support it claims, and many observers concur it does, this tactic, especially if timed cleverly, ie, last-minute via social media messages, could cause problems for

the PML-N in Punjab and for the MQM-P-PML-N in Karachi particularly.

For this to work, party morale and its structure will have had to survive the crackdown it has faced since May 9 this year. Mass support means little if it can't be mobilised. Only the PTI can tell whether it can. The last time it tried to 'mobilise' its support base, it was with disastrous consequences. It appeared to have fallen into a trap set for it.

Patience has never been the PTI's strong suit but it could sit back, weather the storm and wait for the change of command, which will be some 21 months after the elections. It could regroup and start to pile street pressure for a fresh election after that. A new chief always represents new thinking. Two years into civilian 'rule', the 'change' itch may start again, with the PTI being the beneficiary on that occasion. The only certainty at this point is about who will remain the chief decision-maker. The rest we can make up as we go along. - Courtesy Dawn

## Polls and beyond

## The roadmap to growth

### Kamila Hyat

As we move towards a possible election early next year, the political discourse continues to hover around the old issue of corruption, overwhelmed by debates on who is more corrupt than the other.

And while there are legitimate reasons for this focus, the real issues of the country lie elsewhere. They lie in the fact that almost 50 per cent of our children are stunted and many will not develop sufficient IQs to make any kind of mark in their academic or social life. There are other harrowing figures: one out of 20 children and 63 out of every 1,000 children born in the country will die before they attain the age of five.

The maternal mortality rate is as shocking as are other figures indicating the state of the people in the country. If we think in terms of the lives our citizens lead, these issues are of greater significance than the illegal actions of politicians. Yes, corruption should be punished under the law; but it should not be the sole political agenda on which we base our ideas.

The PTI has played a major role in labelling all its opponents as corrupt, and during its tenure in power it focused more on bringing cases against them. While some corruption cases may be genuine, others were based on insufficient evidence or a simple error in the management of business. And now this is true for the PTI which has multiple cases against it. Again, some of these may be genuine while the rest lacks sufficient evidence to back the claims made against the party.

We need to expand the scope of dialogue and think about how we can rescue people from the perpetual misery in which they live. Anyone who has visited a government hospital will understand at least some of this misery. The issue needs to be discussed far more openly and intensely in political circles. This is critical as we have a youth bulge which will add more young people into the 220 million that make up Pakistan. For these young people, as they reach their teens and beyond, we need to find education, employment, and opportunity.

At the moment, we can offer them very little, and

this is why we see the figures which prove that in 2022, more Pakistanis left the country legally than ever before. Of course, more would go if the option was open to them.

This is sad. Pakistan has resources and talent. Pakistanis who have reached top positions as academics, scientists, doctors or in other fields around the world prove that this is true. We must ask why this excellence cannot be delivered at home to the people of the country. Some of these persons have attempted to return to their home country and work within it, but for many this has proved impossible.

We saw in the past how highly qualified professors were dismissed from public- and private-sector universities on a whim, sometimes based on the views that they put forward. In other cases, the lack of stability in businesses has driven investors away.

We need to bring more of our accomplished Pakistanis back to the country. Many would say this is an impossible task. The reality also is that many younger Pakistanis in particular do choose to return

and serve their country as best they can. We also feel that from within the country, some excellent work has been achieved by bureaucrats who have set up model schools in their districts or other persons who have achieved similar feats in other areas. Even now, there are graduates from top universities who voluntarily run soup kitchens or make other collective efforts to help their less privileged compatriots. But it is also true that a vast majority of the rich live in a bubble of luxury and are either oblivious or indifferent to the state of their fellow citizens. There are still those who deny poverty exists in the country. Yet, these same people willingly spend around Rs5,000 on a single meal at a posh restaurant, not recognizing that this sum equals the monthly earnings of a typical labourer. The minimum wage set at over Rs30,000 in Punjab has never genuinely been met, and the situation is the same in other provinces as well.

The bubble has to be burst. We need our elite to give more. This should obviously come in the form of taxes, with land taxation

coming as an area of priority. It is completely unjust that citizens who live on salaries or own small businesses are taxed at high rates, putting larger amounts into the national exchequer than the truly privileged. Indirect taxation is of course another major burden forcing every person who purchases even the smallest article to pay tax on this transaction.

Change needs to be widespread if it is to be meaningful. The way to achieve this is not easy, but we have to overcome this challenge. We have been governed poorly for far too many years. Indeed, many historians argue that bad governance began virtually with the inception of Pakistan. To overcome this is a mammoth task. We need experts who can advise our governments, and we have to be sure that our government will follow these experts' advice.

For this, the first step should be taken from the school level, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to learn material which is relevant and useful. Countries which have made progress have done so largely by educating their people and making

them more capable of mastering tasks that can help their country. It is quite obvious that we have fallen far, far behind. We cannot wait any longer to catch up. Indeed, some wonder if we can catch up at all. But there is no other alternative than to do so and to put in place policies which can achieve this. This can preferably be done after discussion and debate at a wide variety of forums ranging from universities to assemblies and every other location where people gather and meet to talk and discuss what has become a nation filled with multiple crises.

We all know what these crises are. Solving them will not be easy. But to do so, we must ensure the willing participation of as many citizens as possible so that they feel a part of the country that has never included them in its working or given them a sense of belonging. And while more people have become disillusioned with their government, it is important for the Pakistani nation to work together if it is to achieve any of its goals. -- Courtesy TheNews

## Pak-US relations



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

At the outset, it is important to recognise that the US has already chosen its strategic partner in South Asia: India. The US requires India's cooperation in pursuit of its priority national security objective: strategic competition with China and containing the latter's economic rise. The US might perceive Pakistan to be a hurdle in two respects: its close friendship with China and its mutually hostile ties with India. This bigger picture is not likely to change soon.

To complicate matters, perceptions about Pakistan in the US and the latter's image in Pakistan have been deeply bruised by the US-led 'war on terror'. Many Pakistanis believe that America dragged Pakistan into a war that was not ours; one which caused enormous human and financial losses to our country. There is a view that America befriends Pakistan only when it requires help to advance its security agenda. For its part, the US perceives Pakistan as a country that impeded its military victory in Afghanistan by providing sanctuaries to the Taliban. US officialdom also accused Pakistan of playing a double game.

Nevertheless, the US, it appears, would still like to engage with Pakistan for two reasons. First, it would not like to see Pakistan completely slip into China's sphere of influence. Secondly, the US might adopt a more balanced approach to South Asia because of India's tendency to exercise its strategic au-

tonomy, including ties with America's rivals, such as Russia.

However, the process of boosting ties with the US will be incremental, with no likelihood of high-level structured engagement at this stage. Nor is any major initiative expected from either side.

Fortunately, people-to-people relations between the two countries has survived the roller coaster nature of government-to-government ties. Both countries will benefit from investing in areas that enjoy popular support in Pakistan. For instance, IT professionals would want to strengthen their links with Silicon Valley. Pakistani students would welcome enhanced opportunities for higher education in American universities. And the US healthcare system has been a preferred destination for Pakistani physicians for several decades.

Meanwhile, US agriculture experts are held in esteem for their contribution to creating crop varieties in Pakistan in the early life of the country. Even today, agriculture remains a potential area of bilateral cooperation. Corporate America might also want to invest in Pakistan's rich mines and minerals industry, particularly in Balochistan.

It would be in our interest to attract investments into the country from the West to build their stakes in the stability of Pakistan. This can be done by facilitating further people-to-people ties and opening new special windows or economic zones for businesses from the West with incentives comparable to those offered to any other foreign investor in Pakistan.

The revival of close economic relations with the US should not be a zero-sum exercise in the context of Pakistan's ties with China, which remain deep-rooted. It would be a folly

to view these two important relationships as an either-or choice for Pakistan. It is heartening that the leadership of the US and China have announced that there will not be another Cold War and that they would not like to see the world divided into camps.

Pakistan's pivot to geo-economics will also be facilitated if we maintain close ties with all countries, including the US and China, to help Pakistan bolster its economic growth and development. Those who argue that Pakistan should pick its side and not sail in two rival boats are not factoring in the point that in a multipolar world, multi-alignments are the order of the day.

In seeking to enhance our relations with the US, it would be important to reorient this bilateral relationship from a counterterrorism and security-centric angle to the mutually beneficial fields of trade and investment, underpinned by strong people-to-people ties.

China, which has been a reliable development partner all these years, is not likely to resent Pakistan's close economic ties with the US. Yet, it would be in our interest to keep Chinese and other investors in Pakistan on board with our desire to diversify the sources of investment in the country. The latter would also be better served by adopting transparency and equal opportunity approach for all investment projects. The Special Investment Facilitation Council has opened an attractive 'single window' for investments by facilitating entrepreneurs in the sectors of agriculture, mines and minerals, IT, and energy. It would be useful if, besides investment partners from the Gulf countries, corporate America also took advantage of the SIFC to invest in Pakistan, given its high-dividend market. -- Courtesy Dawn

## Bad business



Muna Khan

In my lectures about audience metrics — who and how audiences view and share stories — I always bring up Freaks and Geeks, a 1999 TV show that was cancelled after just one season.

The show enjoys cult status today but met a terrible fate for various reasons, including a difficult relationship between the creators and the network. Its air time was unsuitable — Saturday 8pm when teenagers, the prime target audience, did not watch TV. It was competing against Who Wants to be a Millionaire, a popular game show which drew 18 million viewers followed by a new show, Friends, which had 14m. The 12 episodes of Freaks and Geeks, which had an erratic schedule as it went on a few weeks' break, had 6.7m views, so the network didn't think it was worth renewing.

Every year I bring up this show, fewer students know about it, but inevitably every student who watches it returns to tell me they loved it. And ask why it didn't work.

Popularity is not an indicator of quality. It is also not the same as truth.

This may help us understand why the well-known anchor Mehdi Hasan's show on the American cable network MSNBC was cancelled. The British political commentator is known for his tough style of interviews; he challenged guests, was progressive and humanised Palestinians — things you don't see on TV news, at least not in the US. This is why most people

believe Hasan's pro-Palestinian stance caused the show's cancellation.

Ayman Mohyeldin's programme will be extended to two hours to replace Hasan's show so one can't cite anti-Muslim discrimination. Hasan himself has not spoken on the issue other than to echo the MSNBC press release on the issue. Many 'media insiders', however, say his show was axed because it had poor ratings.

Of course, it did. It aired on the weekends when rarely anyone watches TV, a medium with fewer takers. This is probably hard to believe given how you've likely come across at least a few of Hasan's clips on social media — where he's obliterating Israel's point of view. The audiences for TV and social media are different, with different expectations. Advertisers, however, have one expectation.

Advertisers don't want controversial TV anchors challenging dominant views. Neither do media owners who want to protect their business interests that audiences may know about. When it was owned by General Electric, MSNBC was pro-Iraq war and even fired Phil Donahue, who was anti-war and promoted those views, when few dared to question the Bush administration. An internal company memo described Donahue then as a "difficult public face for NBC in a time of war" giving "a home for the liberal anti-war agenda at the same time that our competitors are waving the flag at every opportunity". Then too they cited poor ratings as the reason for his show's cancellation but we know General Electric was a huge defence contractor.

Donahue reflected on his firing 10 years later. "They were terrified of the anti-war voice," he said in 2013. "Anti-war voices were not popular. And if you're General Electric, you certainly don't want an anti-war voice on a cable channel that you own; Donald Rumsfeld is your biggest customer." He also described how audiences perceived anti-war voices. "We were scolds. We weren't patriotic. American people disagreed with us. And we weren't good for business."

News media is a profit-driven business. That model, which does not practice journalism in the public interest, creates a less-informed citizenry. In his book Democracy Without Journalism the media scholar Victor Pickard writes how journalism is at the mercy of the marketplace. News organisations supported by advertising will continue to be in trouble especially in the face of economic uncertainty. The market decides the news agenda and how much news audiences will receive. He also says social media companies profit from disinformation.

It's why we need to amplify voices calling for public journalism. Pickard's book reminds us that such models exist and he advocates for government intervention in ensuring the public has access to information that allows for democracy to function. A government supporting free press may sound like anathema but Pickard writes how governments have invested in communication systems, like the postal system, that gave people access to information. Governments fund public broadcast systems everywhere; it can work provided journalism reflects the communities it is meant to serve, not the media owners. We will soon — hopefully — have a new government. I request them to read Pickard's prescription: create a robust public fund to support a public media system, one that is run by partnership of policymakers, academics and journalists who want to strengthen democracy, not the market, not the owners, not the politicians' rich friends. -- Courtesy Dawn

## CM urges NGOs to work in healthcare as needs of city grow at fast pace

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar, has said that the healthcare needs of Karachi are growing at a very fast pace, and the addition of hospitals by non-government organizations will help ease the burden of patients in government hospitals.

This he said while speaking at a gathering organized to raise funds for the University Medical Complex being established in Karachi. Those who spoke on the occasion include Sohail Mahdi, Dr Dilbar A. Saeed, and others.

Baqar said that the establishment of a university medical complex marked a significant

milestone in our commitment to advancing healthcare and ensuring the well-being of the people of this city. "The healthcare needs of our metropolis are growing at a very fast pace, and the addition of this hospital will help to ease the burden of patients on the existing hospitals," he said.

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the visionary healthcare leaders, dedicated professionals, and all those who were tirelessly working to turn the dream into a reality. "The establishment of this hospital would reflect a collective dedication to the health and prosperity of the people of Karachi," he said, adding that the

establishment of the University Medical Complex would be a noble project for the people of the city in particular and the people of the whole province of Sindh and Balochistan in general.

The CM said that in a world that constantly presented us with new challenges, a hospital was not merely a structure of bricks and mortar but a symbol of hope, compassion, and healing. He added that the UMC hospital would stand tall as a testament to our unwavering commitment to providing world-class healthcare services to our people, embracing the latest advancements in medical science and technology.



FAISALABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Rana Sana Ullah Khan, President of Muslim League-N Minority Wing Punjab Khalil Tahir Sandhu and others cutting the Christmas cake during a Christmas Milan Party ceremony in the city.

## Sindh Minister inaugurates digitalization of Revenue land, Online Facilitation Center

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Revenue, Industry and Commerce Muhammad Younis Dagha inaugurated the digitalization of Revenue land and Online Facilitation Center at the office of Association of Builders and Developers Pakistan (ABAD), here Sunday.

On the occasion, Younis Dagha said, "Caretaker Sindh Government has established a facilitation center in the office of ABAD for digitization of revenue land and provision of online services. Under which ABAD members can now submit their applications at ease and can also get information about their applications online," said a statement.

He said, "Facilities of e-service have been provided in all the revenue offices of Sindh including

Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioners and Mukhtarkars offices as now the people of the province can submit their applications online in these offices and get results while documents can be received at home by courier."

Muhammad Yunus Dagha said, "Through digitization, the work will be completed with transparency in revenue and the difficulties of the customers will be reduced." He said, "Through the digitalization of land, we are also computerizing the land records of the entire Sindh, with this process, no one's land ownership record can be changed through manipulation and now no one will be deprived of his right."

He said, "Through this application, we are providing 10 different services.

## Mohsin and Huma IT Centre conducts written test for 2nd batch

PESHAWAR (APP): Mohsin and Huma IT Centre, an initiative spearheaded by Aziz Jan Trust, conducted written test for its second batch here at Qayyum Sports Complex on Sunday.

This significant event marked another stride in the endeavor to equip the local youth with essential IT skills.

The second batch of Skills for Market Information Technology (SMIT) course drew a commendable participation of 5,000 student.

This initiative aims to provide intensive IT training to an additional 2,000 students across varying course durations, ranging from six months to a year. Courses encompass a spectrum of modern IT fields, including artificial

intelligence, cloud computing, mobile app development, web development, graphic design, video animation, and CCNA. Notably, these courses are facilitated by proficient instructors and, importantly, are offered free of charge to eligible candidates.

Launched in September 2023, this initiative, jointly operated by Aziz Jan Trust and Saylani Welfare Trust, continues its mission from the success of the 1st batch, where 1,400 students were selected among 3,000 applicants for these transformative courses.

The primary goal is to empower local youth by imparting crucial IT skills, unlocking new prospects for personal and professional growth.

## SFA inspects Paradise Bakery, fines over Rs0.2m

KARACHI (APP): A Sindh Food Authority (SFA) team Sunday conducted a surprise visit of the Paradise Bakery Gulzar Hijri and imposed a fine of Rs0.2.5m on the Paradise Bakery located in Gulzar Hijri for violating SFA guidelines and laws.

The team acted upon on the instructions of the Caretaker CM Sindh Justice (Retd.) Maqbool Baqar and Director General of SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain, a communique said.

During the inspection the sanitation situation was found very poor. The medical records of the staff working at the bakery were also not available.

The production unit of the bakery was also temporarily closed due to the presence of rats and cockroaches in the production unit.

The Paradise Bakery had also been issued a notice to improve the situation within 15 days.

## Seminar on "Youth role in nation building" conducted

SARGODHA (APP): National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) in collaboration with University of Sargodha media studies department conducted a seminar titled "Importance of Youth in Nation Building" at Community development Center here on Sunday.

Founder Director Pakistan Human Development Fund Parvaiz Iodhi was the chief guest of the seminar.

Sajid Ali, Director Operations Punjab (NCHD), Syed Hassan Raza Sherazi, Chairman Media studies University of Sargodha, Mehr Umar Daraz Jhawri, Deputy Director NCHD, Ghulam Abass Gondal.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar speaks at Fund Raising Event of University Medical Complex at a local hotel.

## KP to include skills as subject in contemporary education: Dr. Aamer

**Independent Report**  
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries, Commerce and Tribal Affairs, Dr Aamer Abdullah has agreed with the proposal to equip the students with various technical schools and courses during their academic period as feasible, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

He has further directed the furnishing of a feasible proposal for the pilot project, with a possible partnership between higher education and technical education with clear possibilities of the success and usefulness of the project.

In this regard, a meeting was held here at Civil Secretariat Peshawar with the Caretaker Minister for Technical Education, Industries, Commerce, and Tribal

Affairs, Dr Aamer Abdullah, in the chair. Besides, Secretary of Higher Education Arshad Khan Secretary of Industries and Commerce, Syed Zulfikar Ali Shah and Director (Finance), Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), Munir Gul, Chief Economist Department of Industry Basit Khalil also attended the meeting.

Keeping in view, the importance of technical skills, skilled education, and training in the modern era, the meeting also discussed the inclusion of vocational training courses along with contemporary education and the possibilities of the departments of Technical Education and Higher Education in this regard.

The participants of the meeting agreed with the proposal and gave their useful feedback.



SUKKUR: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Sindh General Secretary, Allama Rashid Soomro addresses to media persons during press conference held in Sukkur.

## Returning of illegal foreigners from KP continued

PESHAWAR (APP): Returning of illegally staying foreigners from Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continued with 1014 people being sent to Afghanistan via Peshawar, Torkham border, an official of the Home and Tribal Affairs said here Sunday.

He said another 92 people were deported from Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 82 more illegal foreigners from Peshawar, Punjab will be deported through the Torkham border, the official of the Home Department said.

He said a total of 6452 migrants were sent to Afghanistan and a total of 5249 migrants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 125 from Islamabad, 1045 from Punjab, and 34 from Azad Kashmir were sent to

Afghanistan.

Likewise, a total of 260,909 people have been deported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Afghanistan through Peshawar, Torkham border. He said, efforts are being made to send migrants to Afghanistan from Peshawar, other borders, Angoor Adda and Kharlachi and similarly a total of 3648 people were sent to Afghanistan through Angoor Adda border while 698 people were sent to Afghanistan from the Kharlachi border.

The official of the Home and Tribals Affairs said that 265,256 people have been sent to Afghanistan from the three borders of Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and according to the latest survey by Deputy Commissioners, Peshawar.



HYDERABAD: Members of Asgharia Ilim-o-Amal Tehreek Pakistan are holding protest demonstration against Israeli aggression and atrocities on the Gaza Strip and solidarity with the Palestinians, at Hyderabad press club.

## Voters eye on political parties' manifestos for generation of employment, education chances

PESHAWAR (APP): In democratic setups all over the world including Pakistan, manifestos play a significant role in deciding the fate of political and religious parties during general election and take the countries forward on path of prosperity.

Prior to general election, political leaders announce their parties manifestos for information of millions of electorates about their future programs and priorities for well being of masses and resolution of the country's problems if voted to power.

announcement of the election schedule by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), most of political and religious parties have yet to announce its manifestos.

"The people of KP eagerly awaited of the political parties' manifestos for solution of their problems such as unemployment, poverty, price hike and illiteracy," said Professor Dr H.R.Hilali, former Chairman Political Science Department, University of Peshawar while talking to APP.

Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who has recently announced key points of his party's election manifesto including construction of three million houses for poor, launching of welfare cards for labourers, patients and farmers besides increasing BISP assistance during various public addresses in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the other political parties have yet to announced salient features of manifestos and long delay in this regard may counterproductive for it to attract voters during election campaigns," he

said. He said that thousands of graduate voters wanted dignified jobs and any political party have a solid program for employment creation would take an edge over others on February 8, 2024.

Dr Hilali said that unfortunately, unemployment has increased in last few decades in the country due to lackluster approach of the past governments.

He claimed that unemployment rate in Pakistan was 6.42 percent in 2022, a 0.08 percent

increase from 2021 while in 2020 it was 6.55 percent, showing a 1.72 percent increase from 2019 besides 4.83 percent in 2018, a 0.75 percent increase from 2018.

He said over 21 million voters were added to the electoral rolls since 2018 elections in Pakistan where the number of women voters had swelled from 46.73 million in last polls to 58.47 million in 2023 due to population explosion that put extra burden on all resources besides increasing unemployment and illiteracy.

## CM KP declares anti-corruption "Jihad"

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Sunday has called for a collective effort to combat corruption, emphasizing a zero-tolerance policy for negligence in duty across all institutions. He expressed these views while talking to various delegations at KP House Abbottabad.

The Caretaker CM said that Abbottabad has been officially declared a sister city with Azerbaijan, marking the commencement of various developmental projects. The government is determined to ensure transparent and fair

elections in Abbottabad, prioritizing the resolution of local issues.

Following meetings with various delegations. Delegations from Azerbaijan, along with key officials such as Health Minister Dr Riaz Khan and Mineral and Planning Minister Dr Sarfraz Ali Shah, were present at the occasion.

During the discussions, the Chief Minister acknowledged the existing issues in the district, particularly concerning water, electricity, and cleanliness. The Commissioner informed about devised solutions for these problems.

Chief Minister Arshad Hussain outlined a comprehensive strategy to tackle unemployment, aiming to train half a million youth within a year. Task forces have been formed in various institutions, offering courses ranging from four months to four years. The goal is to provide employment opportunities, both domestically and internationally, based on demand. Additionally, Chief Minister Arshad Hussain announced the Quantum Valley declaration for Haripur and Abbottabad, ensuring that youth will no longer face employment issues.

## Four of a family injured in gas stove explosion

SIALKOT (APP): As many as four people of family including a child suffered burns in gas stove explosion here at mohallah Islampura, Sialkot.

According to Rescue 1122, the blast occurred due to gas leakage as the stove was placed in room. Nazeer, owner, (55) Musarrat (55), Atiqa (28) and a year-old Mishal suffered injuries.

Rescue 1122 provided first aid to the injured and shifted them to AIHM. Rescue said that the blaze caused a loss of Rs. 500,000 worth of goods, while due to timely rescue operations goods worth Rs. 1 million and the house were saved.

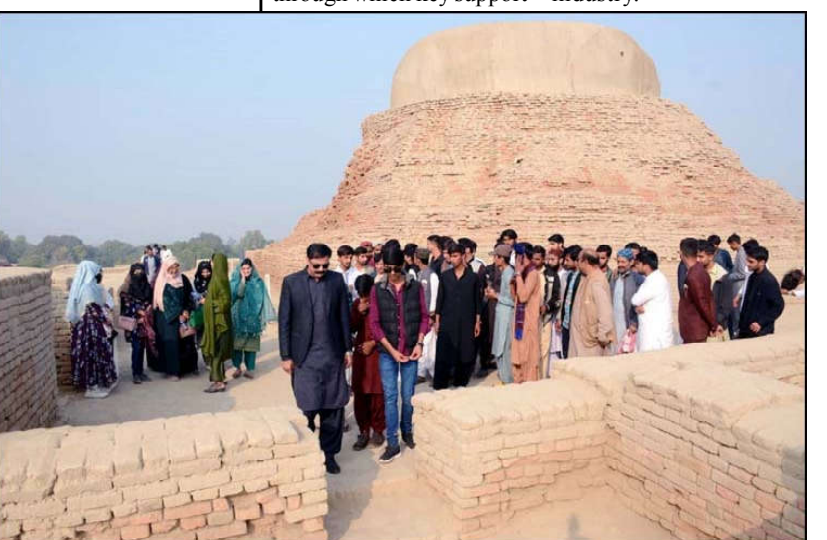
## NCA teachers, students visit CTI

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of teachers and students of National College of Arts (NCA) here Sunday visited the Carpet Training Institute (CTI) and they were briefed on various stages of manual carpet manufacturing and its export.

Chairperson CTI Ijaz-ur-Rehman welcomed the delegation and gave them a detailed briefing about the handmade carpet industry.

Ijaz-ur-Rehman said that strong linkages between educational institutions such as the National College of Arts and various industries, especially the handmade carpet industry, have strategic significance and through which key support

can be provided in increasing production and availability of skills required by the industry. "Promoting cooperation between the two institutions can also be effective for entrepreneurship," he added. He said that working together would yield best results and especially those who are doing their business can get best support. He suggested that all relevant institutions such as universities, Higher Education Commission and people associated with the industry after recognizing challenges and opportunities should meet and hold dialogue in the context of bridging the gap between academia and the industry.



MOHENJO DARO: Students of Government Arts and Commerce College Larkana are visiting and express keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro.

## CM directs DCs to ensure cut in transport fares

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has assigned a task to officials concerned to ensure reduction in the inter-city transport fares in proportion to the cut in the prices of diesel. He ordered all deputy commissioners across Punjab to meet the deadline for reduction in fares. CM Naqvi stated that the benefit in the reduction of petroleum prices should be passed on directly to the people of the province. Naqvi ordered an indiscriminate action against transport owners who refuse to reduce transport fares by tonight.

## PU PSC organises talk on Quaid's Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab University Pakistan Study Centre organized a panel discussion on "Quaid's Pakistan: Contemporary Challenges and Future".

Director Pakistan Study Centre Prof Dr Naumana Kiran, Dr. Erum Muzaffar from Pakistan Study Centre, Karachi University, Director PSC Jamshoro University, Sindh Dr. Mukaish Kumar, Director PU Centre for South Asian Studies, Dr. Naheed S Goraya, Associate Professor Dr. Amjad Abbas Magasi, Dr. Ahmad Ajaz, faculty members and students

were present on the occasion.

In her address, Dr. Naumana welcomed the participants and recalled the vision of the Quaid about Pakistan. She said that Quaid-i-Azam desired Pakistan to be a modern, egalitarian and democratic state based on the principles of Islam i.e. fraternity, equality, democracy and fair play. She said that Jinnah had laid down the basic principles that could lead to national integration and cohesiveness, if followed in true spirit. Dr. Erum Muzaffar focused on the practice of political values.



KARACHI: Christian's community wearing Santa Claus costume, participate in a Christmas peace rally ahead of the celebration of Christmas.

## Business community, experts hail govt's economic strategies

ISLAMABAD (APP): Despite challenges, the comprehensive strategies implemented by the caretaker government have led to notable economic progress, evident through various indicators and recognized by both the business community and experts.

The business community and economic experts described the reduction in oil prices stability of the exchange rate and outstanding performance of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) as positive for the country's economy.

Talking to APP, they said, the petrol price has come down from Rs 331.38 in January 2023 to Rs 267.34 now, showing a decrease of Rs.65 rupees, adding it would result in a decrease in the inflation rate; further strengthening the exchange rate and lead PSX towards more positive performance, besides helping in promoting local market and

external sectors of the economy.

President of Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Irfan Iqbal Sheikh told APP that the government had decided to give the benefit of the fall in international prices to the industry and the domestic consumers.

The President of FPCCI said that it will have a good impact on domestic industry including internal and external sectors.

Sheikh said that stability in the exchange rate, which has crossed the limit of Rs 300 and is now between Rs 280 and Rs 285, is proof of the success of the government's administrative measure.

He said that there has been an upward trend in the stock exchange for the last few months, which is pleasing.

The President said that the government needs to take more measures to give industry businesses a

chance to grow in the country.

Talking to APP, President ICCL, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawri said that the reduction in petrol prices will reduce inflation in the country and more buyers will come to the market. He said that the country's economic situation was improving at present, which would benefit the common man including the business community.

On this occasion, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce, Dr Khurram Tariq said that the reduction in oil prices, stability in the exchange rate and improvement in the stock exchange are the result of the current government's better economic policies.

He said that the government should come towards business regulation and take measures for ease of doing business so that there is more economic growth in the country.



ISLAMABAD: CEO of Centaurus Mall Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan inaugurates Versa exhibition organized by Rawalpindi women's chamber of commerce and industry.

## FTO Coordinator warns taxpayers of scams and fraudulent schemes

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Coordinator Meher Kashif Younis on Sunday urged taxpayers to remain vigilant against scammers, fake websites, non-existent charities, fictitious emails and dummy tax notices.

Addressing the business community at an awareness session on the directives of FTO Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, Sitara-Imtiaz and Hilal-Imtiaz, he said that it was his duty as coordinator to bring their knowledge to a pressing matter that requires immediate attention, the escalating prevalence of scams and fraudulent activities targeting taxpayers across Pakistan, said a news release issued here.

He said, "FTO has noticed a disturbing surge in deceptive practices, including fraudulent emails, fabricated notices, sham websites and the creation of non-existent charities, all designed to exploit unsuspecting taxpayers, adding, these malicious tactics excel at mimicking official communication channels, posing a significant threat. He said that tax payers received calls or messages promising hefty tax refunds in exchange for a fee from impersonating tax authorities. In 2022, he said Pakistan's computer emergency response team reported a 300 percent increase in tax-related phishing incidents, and scammers pose as charity, which is non-existent."

He said, "Fraudsters steal taxpayers' personal information to file fake tax returns, claiming refunds and leaving the victim with

a tax liability. FBR has reported over 1500 cases of identity theft in 2021. He said tax scams pose a considerable challenge in Pakistan, but through the partnership of vigilant taxpayers and the FTO, significant progress can be made in protecting taxpayers from falling prey to fraudulent tactics. He said that by staying informed, vigilant, and proactive, taxpayers can ensure their financial security and maintain the integrity of the tax system. He stressed the need for the implementation of a comprehensive public advisory campaign. This campaign should underscore the imperative for taxpayers to exercise heightened caution and diligence when encountering any communication.

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## LCCI welcomes increase in FDI, emphasizes more efforts

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI) Sunday welcomed rise in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and called for more aggressive efforts to maintain the good momentum.

LCCI President Kashif Anwar, Senior Vice President Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry and Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt said in a media statement here that rise in Foreign Direct Investment is an encouraging sign for the economy.

They said that the net Foreign Direct Investment in the first four months of the current financial year (July-October 2023-24) stood at USD 524.7 million, exhibiting an increase of 7 percent as compared to USD 488.9 million in the same period of FY 2022-23. There is a need for concrete efforts to enhance the level of FDI in the country.

The LCCI office-bearers said that Special Investment Facilitation

Council (SIFC) can play an instrumental role in materializing the signed agreements with UAE and Saudi Arabia for bringing investment in diverse sectors of the economy. Going forward, stability in macro-economic policies, and focus on competitive business regulatory environment, particularly related to taxation and cost of doing business can play a pivotal role in enhancing foreign direct investment in the country. The LCCI office-bearers said that Pakistan has the potential to attract FDI worth billions of dollars in various sectors of economy like energy, agriculture, tourism, health, mines and minerals, precious stones, information technology and various others. LCCI President Kashif Anwar suggested that the government should persuade the investors for taking over the those state-owned enterprises which are not performing well and turned these into profitable.

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ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying warm clothes in Landa bazaar at G-10 Sunday weekly bazaar in Federal Capital.

## CAB Intl launches first ever curriculum for organic cotton production training

MULTAN (APP): CAB-International launched the first-ever compiled curriculum for organic cotton production training in Pakistan.

The representatives of CAB-International, Muhammad Waseem Ishaq, Dr Saif Ali, Dr Muzammil, and Dr Yusuf Zafar, while addressing the two-day training program during the unveiling of the curriculum training ceremony, said that lack of information on agriculture, especially organic cotton production, was a major issue in Pakistan.

The cotton experts from all over the country, representatives of the Ministry of Federal Agency for Food and Agriculture Protection, industry, brands, and research institutions participated.

The organic

agriculture team of CAB-International has compiled this syllabus in Urdu and English to guide the experts. The participants and experts appreciated the efforts and added that the publication of this syllabus would guide organic cotton production practices and certification.

Speaking on the occasion, the Project Manager of CAB-International, Muhammad Waseem Ishaq, and others said that the curriculum was the first of its kind in Pakistan on organic cotton training, which will fully guide the farmers.

The training of the staff working on organic cotton was also done in different sessions. The experts also guided the participants in formulating strategies for organic cotton training and certification.

## Transport fares reduced in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD (APP): The district administration has made reduction in transport fares from 3 to 5 percent for passengers of various routes.

A spokesman for the local administration said here on Sunday that after a decrease in the prices of petroleum products, officers of the district administration held a meeting with transport owners and made them reduce transport fares. Therefore, they agreed to reduce the fare of AC buses by 3pc and non-AC buses 5pc, which run from B-class transport stands of Faisalabad to Lahore, Rawalpindi, Multan, Gujranwala, Jhang and Toba Tek Singh etc.

Meanwhile, RTA Secretary Ahmad Raza also visited various transport stands and directed transport owners to display fare lists and banners at conspicuous places, the spokesman added.

## 3rd Int'l Hydropower Conference to be held on Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third International Hydropower Conference, themed "Hydropower: A Renewable Energy Source for a Sustainable Future," will be held here on Wednesday.

The global convergence of energy experts is going to be organized by The Energy Update in collaboration with the Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and the International Hydropower Association (IHA).

"The conference is poised to unveil discussions that can shape the trajectory of clean and sustainable power in the region."

## Workshop held to review GLOF-II Project progress

GILGIT (APP): The Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority (GBDMA), in collaboration with the GLOF-II Project, organized a one-day provincial-level stakeholders' communication and coordination workshop aiming to deliberate on the strides achieved under the GLOF-II project in 2023.

The workshop served as a platform for collaboration and knowledge exchange, bringing together representatives from various government and non-governmental organizations. Speaking at the event, Director-General Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority

(GBDMA) Safdar Khan highlighted the global significance of Pakistan being ranked fifth among countries most affected by climate change.

The impact of climate change has led to natural disasters causing significant losses of human life, property, and infrastructure.

Gilgit-Baltistan, with its geographical sensitivity, faces challenges such as glacier melting, the risk of glacial lake outburst floods, and other sorts of disasters. He said that in the current era of technology, science provides early awareness of the effects of climate change on human life, livelihoods, and the natural environment.

## Railways ask officials to recover outstanding dues federal, provincial depts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Railways has asked its officials concerned to initiate the procedure to recover outstanding dues from the federal and provincial departments for using its land and services.

The Ministry of Railways has asked the federal and provincial departments to pay their outstanding dues worth billions of rupees on account of using its land and other services, within the least possible time as the department was facing economic issues, an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

About the amount payable against the different departments, the official said that over Rs 8,375 million (over 8 billion) are payable by different departments on account of using its land and various services.

He said the federal departments had to pay an amount of Rs 709.084 million, provincial

departments Rs1980.217 million and autonomous and private bodies Rs 5685.736 million.

To a question, he said Pakistan Railways has upgraded as many as 181 vulnerable un-manned level crossings to manned level crossings, out of 550 which are identified by the department over the entire railway network.

"The relevant provincial government provided the finances to Pakistan Railways for the upgradation of un-manned level crossings in the country," he added.

He said the department was taking several steps including the up-gradation of un-manned and vulnerable railway level crossings across the country in collaboration with respective provincial governments.

The official said there were two types of level crossings over the Pakistan Railways network, un-manned and manned level crossings.

## PFC delegation China visit to open new business opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The visit of Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) delegation to Guangzhou, China is likely to contribute to the growth and diversification of the furniture market, opening up new opportunities for businesses on both sides.

The visit serves as a platform for fostering collaboration and understanding between the Pakistani and Chinese furniture industries, said a news release here.

The enthusiastic reception underscores the potential for enhanced bilateral trade and partnerships in the furniture sector. As both countries explore avenues for economic cooperation, the PFC delegation led by its Chief Operating Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq's positive engagement in Guangzhou showcases the commitment to strengthening ties and promoting mutual prosperity.

## LESCO detects 278 power pilferers on 99th day of anti-theft campaign

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has detected a total of 278 connections from where the customers were pilfering electricity in all its circles of five districts (Lahore, Sheikhupura, Nankana Sahib, Kasur and Okara) on the 99th day of grand anti-power theft campaign.

The LESCO spokesman told media here Sunday that the company has also submitted FIR applications against 278 electricity thieves, out of which 144 FIRs have been registered in respective police stations, while 13 accused have been arrested.

Grand anti-power theft operations against electricity thieves are being

conducted on the directives of the Federal Power Division and the LESCO Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engineer Shahid Haider is supervising these operations. The LESCO chief vowed that the operations would continue without discrimination until the complete end of electricity theft. The electricity pilferers as well as the LESCO officers and employees who facilitate them are also being brought to justice. On the 99th consecutive day of the anti-power theft campaign, the spokesman added, large commercial consumers were also found involved in electricity theft and all of them were also disconnected.

## PVTC delegation calls on MCCI president

MULTAN (APP): Punjab Vocational and Training Council (PVTC) delegation led by industrial linkage focal person Bushra Naz called on President MCCI Mian Rashid Iqbal and informed him about training programmes.

Senior manager PR & Marketing and industrial linkage focal person Bushra Naz informed Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) president that PVTC was making efforts to enable the young male and females to earn respectable jobs.

She said that minimizing the ratio of unemployment in the province through vocational training was also part of PVTC's mission.

She said, "PVTC was equipping young generation with advanced

training of competency based training and assessment (CBT&A) keeping in mind the needs of industry as they will be able to get better job in future."

She further informed, "Such programmes were being introduced which could ensure employment to maximum number of people and in this regard they are making people skilled as per market requirements."

Mian Rashid Iqbal said that unemployment could be reduced only by preparing the workforce as per the requirement of the industry. He praised the efforts of PVTC and assured all possible support under the child sponsor scheme from the chamber. On the occasion, Regional Manager South Ansar Mahmood.



ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying Fruit Kinow at G-10 Sunday weekly bazaar in Federal Capital.

## Net Metering – an impending source of relief for consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): In an era of escalating power prices, selling power to national grid would definitely be a source of relief for consumers as alternate energy systems installed at houses would make them earn money instead of simply being the consumers.

Yes, the Net Metering system that now enables them to sell extra electricity to Power Distribution Companies (DISCOs) generated easily through their solar and wind systems for years, just after one time spending. Thousands have already converted to this system as power distribution companies are now providing them with this modern facility of selling extra electricity to

concerned distribution company.

This novel facility of selling extra electricity has already started functioning with certain companies including K-Electric awarding net-metering connections to purchase surplus electricity.

"Instead of just keep paying as consumers, the clients of power distribution companies are now becoming sellers by selling their extra electricity," said Chief Executive Officer of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Dr. Muhammad Amjad.

He said following successful models of several western and eastern countries, the government ultimately introduced this technology to facilitate

power-producing consumers.

"Net metering is also an innovative and immediate solution to current power shortage in the country," Dr Amjad stated and informed that IESCO was country's first power distribution company facilitating both commercial and domestic customers to generate electricity through solar panels and sell their surplus electricity to IESCO.

Net-metering project was launched countrywide in 2016, allowing any domestic, commercial, industrial and other consumers to have at least a three-phase meter connection to avail this facility. Under the arrangement, such a

consumer could sell additional energy to respective power distribution companies and make stocktaking (calculations) with it at the end of a month. Since the system allows the consumers to generate electricity from one kilowatt to one megawatt, NEPRA issues license to applicants seeking generation above 25kW in the service area jurisdiction of all distribution companies.

"We got extremely encouraging response from public. The IESCO has installed 21,218 net metering connections with a total generation capacity of 229.09 megawatts (MW) in its jurisdiction from January 2016 to October 2023," informed

Manager Public Relations IESCO Asim Nazir Raja.

He said the company had received 22,174 applications for net metering connections worth 244.77 MW and so far licenses have been issued to 22,114 consumers with an accumulative capacity of 242.33 MW.

"The import and export of billing units had started from 18,310 net metering connections with a total capacity of 201.09 MW," he informed. "Total exports and imports from these connections stood at 254,454,591 units and 411,934,674 units respectively." Asim said the company had paid an amount of Rs 2,995,823 to connections' holders till March 2023.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging and displaying guava to attract the customers at G-9/4 in Federal Capital.

## North Korea fires suspected ballistic missile, condemns US for raising tensions

**Monitoring Desk**  
SEOUL: North Korea fired an unidentified ballistic missile on Sunday, Japan's Coast Guard and the South Korean military said, as Pyongyang condemned US-led military shows of force as tantamount to "a preview of a nuclear war".

The missile was launched towards the sea off North Korea's east coast, according to the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff.

About 20 minutes after initially reporting the launch, the Japanese coast guard said the missile had already fallen.

It appeared to have fallen outside Japan's exclusive economic zone (EEZ), broadcaster NTV

reported. No further details were immediately available.

The launch came after warnings from officials in Seoul and Tokyo that nuclear-armed North Korea was preparing to test-fire a missile, including one of its longest-range intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) this month.

All of North Korea's ballistic missile activities are banned by United Nations Security Council resolutions, though Pyongyang defends them as its sovereign right to self-defence.

Less than half an hour after the launch, North Korean state media carried a statement from the defence ministry criticising "military gangsters" in the United States and South Korea for raising tensions with drills, displays of force and nuclear war planning.

The statement by an unnamed ministry spokesman cited the arrival of the US nuclear-powered submarine USS Missouri in the South Korean port city of Busan on Sunday.

"The armed forces of the DPRK will thoroughly neutralise the US and its vassal forces' attempt to ignite a nuclear war and thus reliably ensure peace and security in the Korean peninsula," the statement said, using the initials of North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Deadly incidents this year included one in June, when a fishing boat packed with hundreds of migrants sank off Greece after departing from Tobruk, Libya.

The voyage, which was supposed to end in Italy, resulted in 78 recorded deaths with the fate of 518 others unknown, according to an IOM report.

Drowning was the main cause of death on migration routes globally in the first half of 2023, with 2,200 recorded fatalities in the period, according to the IOM report.



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida greets Philippines' President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. upon arrival for the opening session of the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting at the Hotel Okura Tokyo in Tokyo, Japan.

## 61 migrants drown in shipwreck off Libya: IOM

**Monitoring Desk**  
LIBYA: Sixty-one migrants, including women and children, drowned following a shipwreck off Libya, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in Libya said.

IOM, in a post on social media platform X, quoted survivors as saying the boat, carrying around 86 people, departed the Libyan city of Zwara, about 110 km (68 miles) from the capital, Tripoli.

"The central Mediterranean continues to be one of the world's most dangerous migration routes," IOM said.

## Severe storm strikes coastal city in Argentina, at least 13 dead

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUENOS AIRES: At least 13 people have been killed in Argentina, a local city mayor said on Saturday, following a severe electrical storm that struck along the South American country's Atlantic coast.

Federico Susbielles, mayor of Bahia Blanca, confirmed the death toll in a post on X.

The city is near the southern tip of Buenos Aires province, one of Argentina's top grain-producing regions.

## Australia confident of end to China wine tariffs early in 2024

**Monitoring Desk**  
SYDNEY: Australia's government on Sunday said it was confident punitive tariffs on Australian wine introduced by China in 2021 would be lifted early next year.

"I would be very confident that early in the new year we will get a favourable result from the Chinese authorities to lift the ban on Australian wine," Trade Minister Don Farrell told Sky News television on Sunday.

"That'll be very important for Australian winemakers; we're coming into the processing season."

## Italy's Meloni takes aim at influencer Ferragni over misleading claims

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni on Sunday criticised those who make money from misleading charity claims, in a clear reference to a recent antitrust sanction against the country's top influencer Chiara Ferragni. On Friday, Italy's antitrust authority imposed a 1.075 million euro (\$1.17 million) fine on companies controlled by Ferragni as a result of a probe into misleading advertising on Christmas cakes last year.

Ferragni, a businesswoman and fashion influencer with nearly 30 mil-

## Philippines wants to start new energy exploration projects in South China Sea

**Monitoring Desk**  
MANILA: Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said his country is working to resolve "exploration issues" in the South China Sea so it could start new energy exploration projects in the resource-rich waterway to meet his nation's energy needs, Marcos, in an interview with Japanese media on Saturday, said tensions in the South China Sea have "increased rather than diminished" in recent months, warning that a "more assertive China" posed a "real

## Russia loads new intercontinental ballistic missile into silo south of Moscow

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russian rocket forces have loaded a new Yars intercontinental ballistic missile into a silo at the Kozelsk base in the Kaluga region, southwest of Moscow, the defence ministry said.

The 23-metre long RS-24 (Yars) missile is designed to carry multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), which allow the missile to deliver multiple nuclear warheads at different targets.

"In the Kozelsky compound, Strategic Mis-



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni attends political festival Atreju organised by Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia) right-wing party, in Rome, Italy.

## Trump repeats 'poisoning the blood' anti-immigrant remark

**Monitoring Desk**  
DURHAM: Donald Trump, the Republican presidential frontrunner, said on Saturday that undocumented immigrants were "poisoning the blood of our country," repeating language that has previously drawn criticism as xenophobic and echoing of Nazi rhetoric.

Trump made the comments during a campaign event in New Hampshire where he railed against the record number

## Russia is not interested in extending Black Sea grain deal - RIA

**Monitoring Desk**  
MOSCOW: Russia has no interest in extending the Black Sea grain deal, the RIA news agency reported on Sunday, citing Russia's agriculture minister Dmitry Patrushev.

He added that to a large extent this is a political decision, but Russia will continue to export its grain, as it has its buyers.

"Our grain export volumes, taking into account the winding down of the grain deal, have by no means fallen, they even slightly increased," RIA quoted Patrushev as saying.

Russia withdrew in July from the deal which had allowed Ukraine to safely export grain from its Black Sea ports. Russia says it quit the deal because the arrangement was not delivering grain to the poorest countries, and because it still faces barriers to its own exports of grain and fertiliser.

## India's Modi calls for probe, not debate, of parliament breach

**Monitoring Desk**  
NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a detailed investigation into last week's major security breach of parliament, countering demands from opposition parties for a debate in the chamber on the incident.

"What happened is very serious," Modi told the Dainik Jagran newspaper in an interview published on Sunday, his first comments on Wednesday's breach.

"There is no need to debate this, there should be a detailed investigation into this."

Police arrested six people, filing terrorism charges against four, after a man jumped into the lower house chamber while members were in session, shouted slogans and set off a smoke canister. A second man tried to follow him.



A mourner reacts as Palestinians attend the funeral of Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa, who according to the Arabic broadcaster was killed by an Israeli drone strike while reporting on the earlier bombing of a school sheltering displaced people but Israel's military did not respond to a request for comment, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

## Ukraine's a step closer to joining the EU. Here's what it means, and why it matters

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRUSSELS: Ukraine got a green light Thursday to start sped-up talks on joining the European Union. That's a big boost for war-ravaged Ukraine and a loud message to Vladimir Putin — but it could be years before the country actually becomes a member of the EU.

Here's a look at what Thursday's decision means, and why joining the EU is especially important, and especially hard, for Ukraine.

The European Union

## Parts of China gripped by record-low temperatures as icy snap intensifies

**Monitoring Desk**  
BEIJING: Temperatures in parts of China, including in provinces Shanxi, Hebei and Liaoning, hit their lowest levels since records began, the state broadcaster said on Sunday, as a cold snap gripped large swathes of the country.

The city of Yichun in Heilongjiang could see a record low of minus 47.9 C (minus 54.2 F), recorded in January 1980, broken early next week, according to a meteorological forecaster from the area.

## One killed in Russian drone and missile attack on southern Ukraine - Kyiv

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Russia launched 42 drones and six missiles at regions in southern Ukraine overnight, killing one civilian and damaging grain warehouses near the River Danube, Ukrainian officials said on Thursday.

The death was in an overnight missile strike on the Kherson region which destroyed a medical facility, a private house and a garage, emergency services said.

Ukraine's air force said 41 of the 42 Shahed-136/131 attack drones fired overnight had been shot down.

## Zuma says he will not vote for ANC in South Africa's election

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: Former South African president Jacob Zuma said he will not campaign for the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party in the 2024 general election and will vote for a new party, a sign of growing divisions within the ANC ahead of the vote.

Zuma, who said he remained an ANC member, has previously lashed out at his successor Cyril Ramaphosa, accusing him of failing as a leader and betraying the ANC with his stance against corruption.

Zuma repeated the accusations and cited among other issues the expulsion from the party of its former

## Thousands urged to higher ground as Australia battles floods

**Monitoring Desk**  
SYDNEY: Australian authorities on Sunday urged thousands of people in north Queensland state to move to higher ground because of the danger of flooding from torrential rains.

Queensland authorities said major flooding was underway in some suburbs of Cairns, a tourist hub of around 170,000 people located around 1,700 km (1,060 miles) north of state capital Brisbane.

"Properties in these areas may continue to experience flooding with the approaching high tide and continued rainfall. Residents should move to higher ground now," Queensland Fire and Emergency Services said on its website in one of several emergency alerts for parts of north Queensland.

The flooding came with heavy rain from ex-Tropical Cyclone Jasper, which hit the region this week, leaving tens of thousands without power and forcing evacuations.

Australia's weather

## US wants shakeup of Palestinian Authority to run Gaza

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: A succession of top US officials have travelled to the West Bank in recent weeks to meet with Mahmoud Abbas in the hope he can overhaul his unpopular Palestinian Authority enough to run Gaza after the crisis.

An architect of the 1993 Oslo peace accords with Israel that raised hopes of Palestinian statehood, Abbas has seen his legitimacy steadily undermined by Israeli settlement building in the occupied West Bank, which he oversees. Many Palestinians now regard his administration as corrupt, undemocratic and out of touch.

President Joe Biden has made it clear that he wants to see a revitalised Palestinian Authority which Abbas has run since 2005 — take charge in Gaza once the crisis is over, unifying its administration with the West Bank.

Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser, met with Abbas on Friday, becoming the latest senior US official to urge him to implement rapid change. Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters after meeting the Palestinian leader in late November that they discussed the need for reforms to combat corruption, empower civil society and support a free press.

## Aid enters Gaza through Israel's Kerem Shalom crossing for first time in war

**Monitoring Desk**  
JERUSALEM: The Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and Gaza opened on Sunday for aid trucks for the first time since the outbreak of the war, officials said, a move intended to double the amount of food and medicine reaching the enclave. The crossing had been closed after an Oct. 7 attack by Hamas and aid was being delivered solely through Gaza's Rafah crossing with Egypt, which Israel said could only accommodate the entry of 100 trucks per day.

Two sources in the Egypt Red Crescent told Reuters that trucks were starting to enter on Sunday through the Kerem Shalom crossing on their way into Gaza. One said there were 79 trucks. Kerem Shalom,

on the border of Egypt, Israel and Gaza, is one of the main transit points for goods in and out of Gaza, allowing much faster transit than the Rafah passenger crossing a few kilometres away. Israel approved the entry of aid last week.

"Starting today (Dec. 17), UN aid trucks will undergo security checks and be transferred directly to Gaza via Kerem Shalom, to abide by our agreement with the US," COGAT, the branch of military that coordinated humanitarian aid with the Palestinian territories, said in a statement.

The prime minister's office has previously said this would allow Israel to maintain its commitments to permit the entry of 200 trucks of aid per day.

## Israeli airstrike killed a USAID contractor in Gaza, his colleagues say

**Monitoring Desk**  
WASHINGTON: An Israeli airstrike killed a U.S. Agency for International Development contractor in Gaza last month, his colleagues said in a statement Saturday. The U.S. development agency noted the death and urged greater protection for humanitarian workers in the fighting there.

Hani Jneha, 33, was killed Nov. 5 along with his wife, their 2-year-old and 4-year-old daughters, and her family, the U.S.-based humanitarian group Global Communities said.

## Nine dead, several injured in a blast at India explosives factory

**Monitoring Desk**  
MUMBAI: At least nine workers were killed and several injured in a blast at an explosives factory in Nagpur, a central district in Maharashtra state on Sunday morning, a local police officer told Reuters over the phone.

The blast occurred around 8.30 a.m. (0300 GMT) at a factory run by Solar Industries India, the police officer surnamed Salve said. The factory manufactures industrial and

## India's Modi calls for probe, not debate, of parliament breach

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NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for a detailed investigation into last week's major security breach of parliament, countering demands from opposition parties for a debate in the chamber on the incident.

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"There is no need to debate this, there should be a detailed investigation into this."

Police arrested six people, filing terrorism charges against four, after a man jumped into the lower house chamber while members were in session, shouted slogans and set off a smoke canister. A second man tried to follow him.

## Deputy prosecutor Antoine Leroy speaks during a press conference in Toulouse about Alex Batty, an adolescent from Britain, who disappeared six years ago in Spain and resurfaced in southern France.



Deputy prosecutor Antoine Leroy speaks during a press conference in Toulouse about Alex Batty, an adolescent from Britain, who disappeared six years ago in Spain and resurfaced in southern France.

# Media urged for factual reporting on CPEC, countering propaganda

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at the training workshop here on Sunday called upon the Pakistani media to engage in objective and factual reporting on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and counter the negative propaganda against the game-changer project.

The journalists are the source of information for the public and their impartial reporting can convey authentic information about CPEC to the people of Pakistan, they said.

The speakers expressed these remarks during a three-day training

workshop organized by the Center for Democracy and Climate Studies (CDCS) for the journalists of Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Bao Zhong, Counselor of the Political and Media Section, Embassy of China to Pakistan while speaking to the participants said that the Pakistani media was playing a vital role in promoting CPEC and creating a positive image of the China-Pakistan bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields beneficial for both the nations.

She however said the fake news and negative propaganda against the CPEC

still exist in some sections of the media which should be countered by the journalists.

She said that the Chinese embassy was always open to answer queries about CPEC or information related to any project initiated by the Chinese embassy.

She urged the journalists to do factual reporting on CPEC and play their role against malicious media campaigns and disinformation against the projects.

Expressing deep affection for Pakistani friends, Ms. Zhong, with over six years of service in the coun-

try, emphasized the robust foundation of the China-Pakistan relationship, attributing it to the profound political trust, particularly exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

She expressed the confidence in ongoing collaboration with the Pakistani government and encouraged media and citizens to contribute valuable insights for the continued success of China-Pakistan relations. She highlighted the warm reception of Pakistani visitors in China, underscoring the reciprocal treatment she and her family receive in Pakistan.



PESHAWAR: Students are solving paper of Entry Test for Information Technology (IT) Courses under the supervision of Saylani Welfare International Trust and arranged by Aziz Jan Trust.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki distributing appreciation certificates among officers on completion of Quetta Development Package project

## No permanent peace in South Asia without Kashmir solution

ISLAMABAD (INP): There can be no permanent peace in South Asia without settlement of the lingering Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations resolutions and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service, today, said regional peace is hinged on settlement of the Kashmir dispute but India has been impeding the way for just solution of the dispute for the last over seven decades.

It said Kashmir dispute is a reality and its disputed nature is recognized by the United Nation, adding the Modi regime cannot suppress the Kashmiris' struggle to secure their inalienable right to self-determination.

The report said the

Modi regime's brutal actions in Kashmir are posing a grave threat to regional peace and stability and the Kashmiris have the right to seek the resolution of the Kashmir dispute as per their wishes and aspirations.

India must remember that its policy of repression is bound to fail in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, it said, urging the United Nations to play its rightful role to help resolve the long-pending Kashmir dispute as per its resolutions.

The report said the world community has a responsibility towards helping resolve the Kashmir dispute for durable peace in South Asia and India must be asked to fulfill its pledges made before the UN to settle the Kashmir dispute.

## ECP resumes DROs, ROs training ahead of General Elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has resumed nationwide training for District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs), with a focus on election procedures, rules, and other administrative aspects.

An ECP spokesperson stated that the training, led by senior commission officers, will conclude for ROs on Monday (December 18) and for DROs on Tuesday (December 19).

The extensive training for 144 District Returning Officers (DROs) and 859 Returning Officers (ROs) commenced on December 13 but was initially paused due to Lahore High Court orders prompted by a petition from PTI objecting to selecting election supervisory staff from the executive.

However, it later resumed following orders from the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

## Saddam Khan Tareen says Sending Shoab Shaheen back to Lahore from Quetta not democracy

Independent Report QUETTA/HARNAI: The sun of Tehreek-e-Insaf's success will rise on February 8. We love Pakistan, will raise its flag all over the world, under the leadership and ideology of Imran Khan the destiny of Harnai will be changed in the light of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Saddam Khan Tareen, president of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, while addressing the party workers' convention in district Harnai, said that the people of Harnai have woken up who rejected these so-called nationalist and religious political parties.

On February 8, the sun of Tehreek-e-Insaf's success will rise. Sending

senior lawyer Shoab Shaheen back to Lahore from Quetta is not democracy but the worst example of dictatorship.

Workers' Convention was led by Provincial General Secretary Salar Khan Kakar, Nawab Khan Domar, Zakir Khan Tareen, Sardar Akbar Tareen, Syed Mir Ali Agha, Aziz Kakar and others, said in their statement that Congratulations to Saddam Khan Tareen for organizing the historic workers' convention and also thank the people of Harnai, on 8th February 2023, the people of Harnai will stamp the bat and reject the so-called self-interested political parties and change the destiny of Harnai with success.



FAISALABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Rana Sana Ullah Khan addressing during the Christmas Milan Party ceremony in the city.

## ECP to hear PTI intra-party case today

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will hear plea filed by PTI founding member Akbar S. Babar against intra-party elections on December 18 (Monday).

A five-member bench of ECP will take up the plea to address the challenges and concerns raised against PTI's intra-party elections. Prominent among those who filed the applications against the PTI intra-party polls were Akbar S. Babar, Raja Tahir Nawaz, and Naureen Farooq.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Gohar Ali Khan

in intra-party election case. The electoral watchdog also summoned the party's chief election commissioner Niazullah Niazi, Umar Ayub, Haleem Adil Sheikh, Yasmin Rashid, Ali Amin Gandapur and RO central secretariat Sardar Masroof.

Additionally, the notices were also issued to Returning Officer Central Secretariat Sardar Masroof Khan and Returning Officer Ansar Mahmood in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Central Secretariat. The PTI's founding member Akbar S Babar had termed the intra-party polls as drama. In a video statement, he said that the PTI has put the party and the election symbol of 'bat' at stake.

## Customs foil bid of smuggling of huge quantity diesel

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Customs foiled a major attempt of smuggling of huge quantity of Iranian diesel by three passenger buses in Khuzdar area on Sunday.

According to the spokesman of Customs, the Customs patrolling team intercepted three passenger coaches on way to interior country in Wango area. During the search, the Customs recovered around 39,000 liters of Iranian diesel, which was being smuggled from border areas to the interior parts of the country via Khuzdar.

The spokesman of Customs informed that the worth of smuggled Iranian diesel is around Rs. 60 million. The passenger buses have been impounded and further investigations have been started by the Customs.

## Abbasi's to parts ways with PMLN

LAHORE (Online): Senior politician former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has decided to leave Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N).

According to the media report with reference to the sources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has decided to leave the PML-N after consulting the people of his constituency.

A formal announcement is likely to be made during a press conference in a few days.

According to sources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, he clarified his position before the election and said that if PML-N gives ticket to Party, he will support it. Other than that there will be no support.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that he will not join any other party, he can form a new party after the election.

## Petrol price declines by Rs 64.04 per litre in three months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The caretaker government has decreased the price of petrol by Rs. 64.04 per litre and diesel by Rs. 52.99 per litre during the last three months.

A chart shared by the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum on the official social media account shows that the price of petrol at Ex-depot was Rs. 331.38 per litre in October, and now, the price has decreased to Rs. 267.34 per liter in the current month, directly benefiting consumers and

alleviating the financial burden on fuel expenses. Similarly, the price of diesel in October was Rs. 329.18 per litre and has now dropped to Rs. 276.19 per litre, providing consumers with a benefit of Rs. 52.99. The drop in the price of petroleum products is expected to contribute significantly to easing the financial impact on consumers. These reductions are anticipated to have positive implications for various sectors of the economy, offering a reprieve to consumers and businesses alike.

## ECP bans registration and deletion of votes from electoral rolls

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has banned registration and deletion of votes, citing. According to media reports, the electoral body has imposed ban on registration of new votes, deletion, change and correction of votes in electoral rolls.

ECP has also imposed ban on leaves of its officers, other employees and returning officers (ROs). The election commission's regional offices will remain open today (Sunday) for provision of voter lists and other material.

The ECP has also imposed ban on transfers and postings of provincial and federal government employees. It is to be mentioned here that the election commission had issued the

election schedule for the February 8 general elections in compliance with the Supreme Court order on Friday.

The development came hours after the apex court ordered the ECP to announce the election schedule as it suspended a Lahore High Court (LHC) order on the appointment of returning officers (ROs) and district returning officers (DROs) from bureaucracy, which had cast a shadow over holding of general elections.

During a chat with newsmen, Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja vowed to provide level-playing field to all political parties. "I had never said the elections would be delayed in the country."



QUETTA: Renowned Politician and former Senator Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani speaking to participants during dialogue session of the launching of the book organized by Peace Balochistan Forum, held at Quetta press club.

## Imran should apologise for May 9 events: Sana

FAISALABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Punjab President Rana Sanaullah asked the former chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to apologise for his actions that triggered the May 9 events.

Sana was addressing an event organised by Christian community in PP-108 in connection with election campaign.

He said that his party had won the previous elections with the support of the Christians in this constituency. He vowed to fix the problems faced by the local residents after coming into the power.

He counted the feats of PML-N government in 2017. He said that the country was progressing under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif.

He said that a conspiracy was hatched in 2017 that led to the ouster of Nawaz Sharif.

"Now they [PTI leaders] are saying that we're

not getting a level playing field. They are saying cases are being filed against them. They wanted to do politics but their leader pushed them to the sidelines. They have crossed the red line on May 9," said the PML-N leader.

"It is not their right to attack the GHQ. The statues of the martyrs were thrown down. On May 9, the biggest defence office was attacked.

Those who do such things will face consequences," said Sana.

At the end, Sana said that he would talk to the caretaker chief minister for release of outstanding dues of Christian employees.

He said that Nawaz Sharif brought prosperity to the country, in 2017, the dollar was cheap and the country was developing. Nawaz Sharif brought an investment of 40 billion dollars through CPEC. Due to this, in 2018, many forces tried to block the path of PML-N.



NASEERABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Naseerabad, Dr. Muhammad Sami addresses to media persons during press conference held at City Police Station Dera Murad Jamali.

## Durrani says Thorough investigations needed into supply of US weaponry to terrorists

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former federal minister and senior politician Muhammad Ali Durrani has said that source and trafficking of the latest American weapons and technology to terrorists in the war against Pakistan was matter of grave concern.

Demanding thorough investigations into the matter, he questioned, "Where are the terrorists fighting against Pakistan obtaining the latest American weaponry?" In a statement issued here on Sunday, Muhammad Ali Durrani said that it was imperative to undertake these investigations to root out terrorists and eliminate the

scourge of terrorism.

The United States of America (USA) should assist Pakistan with cutting-edge technology which was in the interests of both the US and global security, he emphasized. "The possibility of another 9/11 cannot be ruled out if the supply of the latest weaponry to terrorists is not curtailed," he urged. Durrani said that the availability of sophisticated arms to terrorists is a matter of concern for regional and global security.

"A new war is being orchestrated against Pakistan through the latest American arms," he said. In such circumstances, the US should support Pakistan

with latest technology in the war against terrorism. "It is the interest of the US to play a role for peace in the region," he said.

The former minister said that American weapons and technology are being used against Palestinians by Israel and against Pakistan by terrorists. The presence of such weaponry and technology among terrorists raises numerous questions that cannot be ignored, he added. Senator Durrani said that the responsibility lies with the United Nations and especially with the United States to prevent the supply of new technology and weapons to terrorists.

## Sardar Latif Khosa joins PTI

LAHORE (INP): Legal expert and disgruntled PPP stalwart Sardar Latif Khosa has joined the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Latif Khosa, the former Punjab governor, confirmed his decision to join the PTI during a press conference in Lahore on Sunday. The PTI also officially announced his membership on X, erstwhile Twitter, sharing a video of Latif Khosa being welcomed into the party, draped in the customary flag. During the interaction with media, Khosa stated, "Today marks a journey towards happiness."



UTHAL: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Excise and Taxation Prince Ahmed Ali talking with media men

## Siraj rules out any electoral alliance with PML-N, PPP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Jamaat-e-Islami will not form an alliance with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz or the Pakistan Peoples Party in the upcoming elections, JI chief Sirajul Haq announced on Sunday.

In a statement released here, Siraj added that the Jamaat-e-Islami would contest the elections on the manifesto of peace, progress and prosperity, aiming to end the culture of governors' houses and commissioners' houses built on vast areas spanning 8 kanals.

The JI chief stated that his party would convey the message of real change to the people and would not compromise on

the public mandate in the impending elections.

Siraj stressed that his party would rectify financial management and fund utilisation, implement emergency measures in the education and health sectors, as well as establish rehabilitation training centres for the poor.

The JI chief ruled out any alliance with the PPP and the PML-N, blaming the two political groups for ruining the country.

According to Sirajul Haq, the JI has issued tickets to more than 50 percent of the party's election candidates.

He said if transparent elections were not ensured, the JI would not accept the results.

## Sajid Mir for seat adjustment with PML-N in elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Prof Sajid Mir has announced seat adjustment with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in general elections.

In a statement issued on Sunday, he said that strong democratic government was vital for political and economic stability in country. Prof Sajid Mir said that commitment to ensure timely elections was laudable and role of Supreme Court in this connection was commendable.

He declared social media an easy progression to spread message of peace, education and awareness.



QUETTA: International player Fida Muhammad Dummar presenting a shield to Caretaker Minister Sardar Asifur Rehman Dummar

## Drive against power theft continues; over Rs 53b recovered

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the government's initiative, the fruits of effective actions against electricity thieves across the country began to emerge. "From September 1- December 10, the authorities has so far recovered 53.65 billion rupees with multiple individuals arrested nationwide under actions against power theft," according to PTI.

Similarly, from 3rd to 10th of this month 2.36 billion rupees have been collected while 222 people have been arrested.

## Artificial rain ends smog in Lahore, Karachi on top in pollution

LAHORE/KARACHI (Online): Due to the artificial rain made in Lahore, the smog in the city ended and Karachi became the first place in the world in pollution.

According to the details, Karachi is on the top of polluted cities list across the globe.

The air quality index in Karachi was recorded at 332, due to which the air quality in Karachi is unhealthy.

Health experts advised citizens to wear masks to avoid harmful air.

Meteorological department said that the weather in Karachi is likely to remain cold and dry. Cold winds may increase the intensity of the cold.

The temperature of the city was recorded at 14 degrees Celsius early in the morning. The maximum temperature today is It is likely to

stay up to 28 degrees Celsius.

The humidity ratio in the air is 82%, the winds are blowing from the north-east at a speed of 6 km per hour. The Department of Environmental Protection, Punjab, while releasing today's air quality index, said that after the artificial rain in the city, the pollution in Lahore has decreased. There has been a move from first to sixth position in the global ranking.

Air Quality Index (AQI) was 366 at Green Fort 2, 275 at Punjab University Lahore College of Earth. AQI of 366 was recorded at Town Hall Lahore. AQI 242 at Shale Valley Range Road Rawalpindi, AQI 163 was recorded on Lahore Faisalabad Bypass Road Sheikhpura.