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Meeting with US think tanks

Pakistan wishes to develop as hub of connectivity: COAS

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

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir, said Pakistan is a country of consequence both from a geopolitical and geoeconomic perspective and wished to develop itself as a hub of connectivity and a gateway to Central Asia and beyond. The Army Chief further said, "The country, however, eschews bloc politics and believes in maintaining balanced relationships with all friendly countries."

think tanks and media, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued here. The COAS, during the interaction, put across Pakistan's perspective on regional security, transnational terrorism, and the importance of maintaining strategic stability in South Asia. General Asim Munir highlighted that Pakistan desired to broaden bilateral engagement with the U.S. through a long-term multi-domain partnership. He highlighted, "His interactions during the visit to the U.S. with political and military leadership

have been very positive, and he looks forward to further strengthening the relationship." The COAS also highlighted, "Pakistan stood as a bulwark against transnational terrorism for decades, ensuring regional stability and global peace and security." "It has made unparalleled contributions and sacrifices in its enduring fight against terrorism and will continue to fight till the logical end, in line with the aspirations of people in Pakistan," General Syed Asim Munir said. The COAS also stressed the need for resolute of the Kashmir issue

as per the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and the UNSC Resolutions. He said, "Kashmir is an internationally accepted dispute, and no unilateral action can alter the nature of this dispute against the wishes of millions of people in the area." COAS also emphatically highlighted the immediate need for ending the sufferings in Ghaza, the provision of humanitarian assistance, and the implementation of two state solutions for enduring peace in the region. Earlier on arrival, COAS was received by the Ambassador of Pakistan to the US.



WASHINGTON DC: COAS General Syed Asim Munir, engaged in a candid discourse with members of prominent US think tanks and media, at Washington DC.



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

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

SWABI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq on Wednesday, calling the brain drain, a part of talent hunt, said those leaving Pakistan for better opportunities would eventually become a strength for the country, which ought to be encouraged. The prime minister, in an interactive session with the students of Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering, Science and Technology, exemplified the Indian nationals who

had left their country and returned as an asset to contribute to their country. Responding to a question about the measures taken by the government to stop the brain drain, he said those leaving the country were not going to vanish, rather they would seize better economic opportunities and skills, which should be encouraged. He said after improving their skills and qualifications, they would become a valuable asset and prod-

uct as the world was in search of talent. "I consider their journey a part of the talent hunt," he added. He said there was no evidence of any dramatic surge in brain drain in the prevailing circumstances rather it was a continuous process of skilled, semi-skilled, and non-skilled people moving abroad for better economic opportunities. He said the export of

Continued on page 2

Murtaza Solangi says CPEC transformed Pakistan's socio-economic landscape

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), formally launched in 2013, had substantially transformed the socio-economic sce-



nario of Pakistan by addressing the dire energy crisis and crumbling infrastructure. "The CPEC has infused hope, trust and confidence in Pakistani people", Solangi said while delivering a keynote address at the 8th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Media Forum. Prior to the CPEC, Pakistan had been facing daunting challenges in 2013, that included 10-hour blackouts, a 2500 MW electricity deficit, and a \$250 billion economic loss, he said, and added later the CPEC projects had profound positive effects on the lives of local people with provision employment opportunities. Continued on page 2

PTI founder to contest elections from three constituencies: Gohar

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

of democratic process," he said. "We won't boycott the election, the opponents will try to create the situation," Barrister Gohar said. He said, he will contest the election from Buner. "The election commission should ensure that the PTI gets its rights as a political party," Gohar Khan said. They are nervous to the extent that denying election field to the party candidates, PTI chairman said. "We don't want to exacerbate the situation, opponents will try to worsen it," he said.

Alvi, Raisi for coordinated efforts by Islamic states for an end to Gaza massacre

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi and President Ebrahim Raisi of Iran on Wednesday had a telephonic conversation wherein they underscored the need for coordinated efforts by the Islamic countries to bring an end to the ongoing massacre and crimes against humanity in Gaza. During the conversation that lasted almost 45 minutes, President Alvi voiced deep concern over the dire situation in occupied Palestine, including Gaza as a result of ongoing Israeli aggression and occupation. He regretted that despite the deaths of over 19,000 Palestinians, including women and children, the United Nations Security Council had failed to impose a ceasefire and bring an end to the unspeakable Israeli atrocities. President Alvi reiter-



ated that a just solution to the Palestinian question based on an independent and contiguous Palestinian State with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as capital was critical for lasting peace in the Middle East. The president reaffirmed Pakistan's support to all diplomatic initiatives to the end, and appreciated Iran's concerns and initiatives about the ongoing situation. He also appreciated the Iranian leadership for its principled stance on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and its support for the Palestinian cause.

Nawaz, Bilawal obtain nomination papers

Nawaz received nomination papers from NA-15 Mansehra, Bilawal from NA-194 Larkana

MANSEHRA (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif including 14 other candidates Wednesday obtained nomination papers for NA-15 Mansehra to contest the upcoming general elections scheduled for Feb 8, 2024. According to details, in the lead-up to the General Elections, the electoral landscape in Mansehra has gained momentum as 15 candidates, including former prime minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, have successfully obtained their nomination papers in the NA-15 constituency. The formal procedure

for acquiring nomination papers was currently underway in the Mansehra district for participation in the upcoming elections. In the NA-14 constituency of Mansehra, 20 candidates, notably former federal minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf from PML-N and provincial leaders such as Shujaat Saleem Khan from PPP, have secured their nomination papers. Meanwhile Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received nomination papers nomination papers for NA-194 Larkana. According to sources, Bilawal Bhutto's political Secretary Jameel Soomro has received nomination papers in his place.

Govt all set to drop another electric bombshell

ISLAMABAD (Online): Preparations have been made to drop another electricity bombshell on people. Electricity tariff is likely to increase by RS 4.66 per unit. Central Power Purchasing Agency has submitted the application to NEPRA. According to NEPRA, this increase has been sought in November Fuel price adjustment. Application will be heard on December 27 in NEPRA. In case of approval from NEPRA, an additional burden of RS 40 billion will be put on consumers. The possible increase will not be applicable to K-electric consumers.

leadership of Chief Manager State Bank Quetta, Sarfraz Ahmed Nadeem here on Wednesday. Speaking to the delegation, Governor said that Pakistan is basically an agricultural country and major part of our population is still associated with the agricultural sector. He urged the banking sector to make it more ef-

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Government calls for support, guidance of banking sector

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QUETTA: A delegation led by Chief Manager State Bank Quetta, Sarfraz Ahmed Nadeem meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Join national mainstream BNA Commander Sarfaraz Bangulzai alongwith 70 companions surrender

PM terms surrender of BNA members as 'welcome development' for peace, stability

QUETTA (APP): In a major development towards restoration of peace in Balochistan, Commander of Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA) Sarfaraz Bangulzai, along with his 70 companions on Wednesday surrendered to the State and joined the national mainstream. They made the announcement during a press conference here at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium, Civil Secretariat. Caretaker Provincial Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Captain Zubair Ahmed Jamali, and



Caretaker Provincial Information Minister Jan Achakzai were also present on the occasion. "We have decided to leave the path of violence and join the national mainstream to play a constructive role in the development of the province and the country," Bangulzai said. "I was working in the Food Department in



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over 8th meeting of B-TEVTA Board

CM forms special committee for making B-TEVTA functional

Mir Ali Mardan Domki emphasizes on need to encourage technical and vocational training institutions and produce skilled human resource by making them functional

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has constituted a special committee for making the Balochistan Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (B-TEVTA) fully functional. He has directed to the concerned high ups to take

emergent measures for operationalization of the B-TEVTA. In this regard, the special committee should ensure implementation on the initiatives after proposing it. The caretaker Chief Minister was presiding over the 8th meeting of the board of B-TEVTA here on Wednesday. Continued on page 2

World Bank approves loan of 350 million dollars for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): World Bank has approved a loan of 350 million dollars for Pakistan. A loan of 350 million dollars has been approved by the World Bank under the Rise to Program. The World Bank says that Pakistan will have to



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

World Bank approves loan of 350 million dollars for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (Online): World Bank has approved a loan of 350 million dollars for Pakistan. A loan of 350 million dollars has been approved by the World Bank under the Rise to Program. The World Bank says that Pakistan will have to implement the policy of reforms for stability in the economy, implementation of financial management is necessary for stable growth. The money provided by the World Bank will be used for institutional reforms besides achieving sustainable growth and targets.

No difficulty in holding polls on February 8: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said that there was no difficulty in holding elections on February 8 next year.

"The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a schedule for the elections, which will be held across the country on February 8, 2024," he said while speaking in a television talk show.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to assist the ECP in holding the elections in accordance with its schedule.

Solangi expressed confidence in the Election Commission's ability to conduct free, fair and transparent elections on the given time.

The ECP, he said, was fulfilling its responsibilities for carrying out the electoral process. It had made it sure that all the political parties got 54-days time for electioneering before issuance of the election schedule, he added.

The minister mentioned the submission of a high number of nomination papers on the very first day of process and reiterated the caretaker government's commitment

to remain impartial.

To a query, Solangi said complaining for the sake of complaining had become part of the political culture.

He said all the political parties had a right to protest within the parameters of the law. The difference of opinion was a hallmark of the democracy, and the people could not be deprived of their rights, he added.

To another query, the minister said the caretaker government worked towards economic progress in order to pass on a financially stable country to the next government.

Punjab Police appoints Shadab as its brand ambassador

LAHORE (Online): Shadab Khan, the all-rounder of the national cricket team, has been appointed as its brand ambassador by the Punjab Police.

Spokesperson of Punjab Police said that national cricketer Shadab Khan met IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar at Central Police Office and donned police uniform.

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar and Additional IG Punjab Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry have installed Shadab Khan on the rank of Honorary DSP, the all-rounder also saluted IG Punjab after being appointed Honorary DSP.



PESHAWAR: Leaders and supporters of Jamat-e-Islami (JI Women Wing) are holding protest rally against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, held in Peshawar.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi in a group photograph with the dignitaries at 8th CPEC Media Forum on "Next Decade of CPEC Opportunities & Learning from Past Decade" at COMSTECH.

Govt calls for support...

Continued from page 1

He said that he can make our exports profitable by establishing refinery and other industries on one hand, and new opportunities of employment can be created with this, on the other hand.

Later, a delegation led by President of Zarayee Tarqiati Bank, Yaqoob Tahir Bhatti also called on the Governor here the same day.

During the course of meeting, matters about provision of soft term agricultural loans, solar energy, modern training were discussed.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor said that there are bright chances of development in agriculture sector in Balochistan.

The environment of Balochistan is conducive for production of olive in different districts of the province, he added.

The Governor also stressed the need to extend financial assistance to the growers besides imparting training to them and make their encouragement.

PM calls brain....

Continued from page 1

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

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

He urged the educated class to also debate their political attitudes besides asserting their right to agitate.

Prime Minister Kakar called for adopting the "all of us" approach, in addition to encouraging qualitative discussions for betterment of the society.

He said democracy should morph towards the performing democracy as the performance was the key indicator to judge the success of the democratic system.

He said transitional democracies like Pakistan could not turn into settled democracies for not giving due focus on performance.

CM forms...

Continued from page 1

Saboor Khan Kakar besides other concerned high ups.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister said that special attention is being given on technical and vocational training all over the world instead of traditional education in the present modern era.

The youngsters are being imparted technical education in information technology and other different sectors and thus being guided in the right directions, Mr. Domki maintained.

This is why, we need to encourage the technical and vocational training institutions and produce skilled human resource by making them functional.

The Chief Minister directed the special committee to take steps for making the authority effective by suggesting the measures in this regard.

He asserted that there's no room for further delay in making the B-TEVTA functional.

In addition to this, the transparent use of monthly income to be acquired from the fund established for the authority, the Chief Minister added.

Moreover, he directed to present the comprehensive work plan for making the authority more effective in its next board meeting so as to make the important institution useful and expand process of technical training and provision of education for the youth in different sectors.

14 bn irregularities allegedly exposes amid PSL audit

LAHORE (Online): Financial records of Pakistan Super League (PSL) have revealed massive irregularities including alleged non-transparent contracts and losses of Rs 14 billion.

Private TV reported documents of the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) in which it was revealed that Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) entered into a non-transparent deal worth Rs 1.4 billion for the sale of TV broadcasting rights.

PCB suffered a financial loss of Rs 908 million due to illegal advance payments made to vendors for services due to the absence of financial rules outlined in the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) report.

Further disallowance of one of the joint bidders for TV broadcast rights of Rs 4.3 billion for PSL 7 and 8 along with illegal renewal of percentage share of franchises for central revenue caused another 1.6 billion rupees lost as indicated in the audit report.

Audit report revealed that the PCB board awarded a non-transparent contract worth Rs 1.4 billion for the sale of TV broadcasting rights, which violated clause 3(3) of the PCB constitution SRO 43/KE/2014. A breach occurred which underscores the importance of transparent operations. Failure to recover

total global live streaming amount of Rs. 194.741 million due to agreements with M/S Techfront and M/S Blitz for sale of global and local TV broadcast rights.

The comprehensive audit also revealed a lack of transparency in two key deals, one worth Rs 338 million with M/S Transgroup FZE for the sale of Instadia sponsorship rights and the other for the sale of live streaming rights worth Rs 181 million.

PCB management also engaged in non-transparent agreements with M/S Khalif and Transgroup FZE for sale of graphic interchange rights and truck branding rights worth Rs 46 million and Rs 15 million respectively.

Another USD 7.805 million deal with Transgroup FZE/ITW Consulting FZE for the sale of Instadia sponsorship rights (gold, silver, umpire) resulted in a payment of Rs 147 million due to an unnecessary provision for doubtful debts.

PCB management faced challenges in recovering arrears of Rs. 133 million from M/S Khalif Technologies Inc.

Audit team uncovered a major issue where PCB jeopardized PSL's revenue by not obtaining bank guarantees from franchisees.

OGRA-PEMRA jointly launches massive awareness drive against substandard sale of cylinder

ISLAMABAD (APP): Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority' Spokesperson Imran Ghaznavi Wednesday said that OGRA with the joint efforts of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) had launched a massive awareness drive against the sale and use of substandard gas cylinders during winter season for ensuring safety and well-being of consumers.

"All LPG marketing companies have been advised to strictly ensure the compliance of safety instructions at distributor premises in order to avoid any untoward incident in

future and conducting seminars and social media campaigns for the awareness of distributors," he said while talking to a private news channel.

"Our awareness drive aims With these drives we are educating local companies for ensuring their respective distributors for thoroughly check the LPG cylinder with respect to any physical damage, leakage etc prior to handing over the same to the customers."

"LPG marketing companies should also be advised to instruct their distributors to educate every

customer through posters displayed at distributor's premises on safe use of LPG cylinders and also circulate the brochure among the customers for the awareness of the safety measures," he added.

"It is a joint campaign and is a part of our preventive measures so as to ensure the safety of users of gas cylinders, he said.

"In a bid to avoid accidents at home, the campaign will inform users about the accurate safety method of transporting and handling the LPG cylinders," he said.

Modi regime using judiciary as a tool to snatch Kashmir's rights: GA Gulzar

SRINAGAR (INP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Vice Chairman, Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar, has said that the Indian judiciary has always been a puppet of the Hindutva elements and the Narendra Modi government is using it as a tool to snatch the rights of the people of illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umer Saif addressing launching ceremony of "PAK HAJJ APP".

Kashmiris await world's attention on International Human Solidarity Day

ISLAMABAD (INP): As the world is celebrating the International Human Solidarity Day, today, with a main objective to remind the governments to respect their commitments to international agreements, Kashmiris continue to wait for the exercise of their right to self-determination for the past over seven decades.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service on the day said inspired by Adolf Hitler, fascist Indian occupation forces have martyred around five hundred thousands Muslims in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir over the 76 years while the territory is under Indian military and police siege since August 2019.

CPEC transformed Pakistan's...

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

Solangi said: "The CPEC is not just an infrastructure project; it has generated 2,36,000 jobs since 2013 and is set to create 1.2 million direct jobs, contributing to local workforce development and reducing regional disparities."

The minister said the CPEC had significantly enhanced Pakistan's economic growth, contributing a projected annual increase of 2 to 2.5 percentage points. "A 2018 World Bank report suggested a potential 3.5 per cent overall economic growth boost," he added.

Going beyond the urban centres, he said the CPEC had addressed regional development gaps, fostering growth through various projects in the Western Alignment.

In the energy sector, he said CPEC's diverse 17,045 MW capacity, encompassing hydro, wind, solar, and coal-based power generation, had ensured a sustainable and reliable supply chain.

He said the CPEC Media Forum was launched in 2104 to create awareness among the people about the ongoing propaganda against China and Pakistan.

Highlighting the critical role of media, he said: "In a world where information bombards us con-

stantly, shaping our thoughts and opinions, it's crucial to sift through the facts", he added.

The CPEC Media Forum, the minister said, had significant importance for him as he had the privilege of participating in the fourth edition of the CPEC Media Forum in 2018 in Beijing, alongside Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed.

During that period, he said the positive impacts of CPEC did not fully reach local communities at the initial stage, so there was widespread propaganda against CPEC and China in Western and Indian media.

He said that media's role in shaping public perceptions of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) required objective and accurate reporting to highlight its multiple aspects.

"Propaganda really shapes how people see such projects by carefully sharing information to influence their beliefs and feelings. It uses selective facts, emotions, and sometimes misleading stories to create a specific viewpoint."

He said that as the custodian of information, media should disseminate accurate and unbiased narratives in a responsible manner.

"In today's information age, your role as guardians of truth is more vital than ever," he said, and urged the media to verify, cross-check, and prioritize authenticity over sensationalism to counter the corrosive effects of fake news.

CM forms...

Continued from page 1

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QUETTA: President of Quetta Press Club, Abdul Khaliq Rand addresses to participants during the seminar on Stakeholders Dialogue on Transparent Budgeting organized by Salar Foundation, held at Quetta press club.

BNA Commander Sarfaraz Bangulzai...

Continued from page 1

Balochistan, had a house and a car, and was living a comfortable life, but derailed by anti-peace elements in 2009," he added.

Bangulzai admitted that he had committed heinous crimes "in the name of nationalism". However, he realized that the so-called insurgent leaders were anti-peace and enemies of the country as they themselves were enjoying luxurious lives abroad.

It may be mentioned that Sarfaraz Bangulzai took over the reins of BNA after its Commander Gulzar Shambay was arrested, who later joined the national mainstream due to the positive response from the state institutions.

Shambay remained deputy to Brahamdagh Bugti in the Baloch Republican Army (BRA) till 2018, but on the creation of Baloch Raaji Ajoi Sangar (BRAS) he founded a new lethal militant outfit - Baloch National Army.

For being well-connected to the hostile intelligence agencies of enemy countries, including India, Shambay remained opera-

tional head of BRAS and thus was the main character behind violence and unrest in the province.

His arrest was a serious blow for the militant groups, especially the BNA and it encouraged others, including his second-in command Sarfaraz Bangulzai to surrender before the State.

Bangulzai told the news conference that Indian's intelligence agencies were responsible for the unrest in Balochistan.

"India is behind all sabotage activities and every act of terror in the province," he said, urging the youth to shun violence and join the peace process for the development and prosperity of the country in general and Balochistan in particular.

He regretted for being involved in terror acts on the pretext of so-called nationalism. However, he had a change of heart when he observed the luxurious lifestyles of self-proclaimed nationalist leaders.

Earlier, Minister Jan Achakzai called for the inclusion of disgruntled Baloch individuals in the national mainstream.

He acknowledged the tireless efforts of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Muneer in addressing the issue.

He specifically mentioned that Gulzar Imam Shambay had facilitated negotiations with the disgruntled elements for peace in the province.

Achakzai voiced concerns about Indian attempts to create disturbance in Balochistan.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday, terming peace and stability as the government's top priority, said the surrender of Sarfaraz Bangulzai alias Mureed Baloch, the head of Baloch Nationalist Army (BNA) along with his companions and families, was a very welcome development.

"This comes at the heels of another major reintegration in which Gulzar Imam Shambay (the previous head of BNA) was arrested and mainstreamed, in the recent past," he said in a post on the social media platform, X.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting of Provincial Anti-Smuggling Task Force

"EXTENSION/CORRIGENDUM"

With reference to this office tender Notice vide PRQ No.1137/06-12-2023 under TSE No.232412364811, for the procurement of Firewood (Dry Gulka), the date of bid submission and opening is extended due to some technical reason, the new date as follows:-
Last date of bid submission: The Bid must be submitted only electronically latest by 26-12-2023 Till 11:00AM through supplier dashboard. **Tender Opening:** Bid will be opened on the same day at 12:00PM on EPPS System while the term and condition will remain same. **Address:** (Office of Addl. IGP/Commandant, Balochistan Constabulary Headquarters Badkar Line Gulistan Road Quetta) Phone No. 081-9201407
Fax No. 9201401 Email: balochistanconstabulary@gmail.com

SSP/HEADQUARTER
for Addl. IGP/Commandant
Balochistan Constabulary Quetta

PRQ No.1212/20-12-2023

TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer (Buildings) CWPPP&H Department District Harnai invites sealed bids from eligible bidders who can prove their eligibility and qualification as mention in the bidding documents for the works mentioned below. The estimated cost and other information of works are as under, percentage tender based on Composite Schedule of Rates 2018, Government of Balochistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors / firms for the work listed below under BPPRA Rules & Tender complete details please visit <http://www.bppra.gov.pk> Bid Security @ 2% for each work. **Tender Fee A/C # C02716 Rs.3000/- for S.No 1 and Rs.4000/- for S.No.2**

S.No	Name of Work	E/Cost
A	STRENGTHING OF RHC IN SIBI DIVISION CASUALTY, MCH FACILITY, AMBULANCES, EQUIPMENT, MACHINERY, FURNITURE AND SOLARIZATION (KOHLU, HARNAI), PSDP NO 3386 (Z2021.1293)	
1.	(TSE-232412368063) PACKAGE-01	24,195,683
2.	(TSE-232412367923) PACKAGE-02	47,073,165

DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION: Technical and financial proposals from intending contractors/firms sealed in two separate envelopes clearly marked with Work title & type of proposal must be delivered by hand or through registered mail to the address mentioned below on before procurement committee in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend. The Second sealed envelope containing "financial bids" of technically responsive / qualified bidders will be opened on the same date. **Bids Validity: Ninety (90) days Bid submission/Tender opening Date 02 January 2023 Place:** The place of issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be - **The office of the Executive Engineer (B) CWPPP&H Department District Harnai. NOTE:** The DSC meeting for the mentioned scheme occurred on September 23, 2022, which is before August 15, 2023. However, the tender has been delayed due to a lack of funds.

Executive Engineer (Buildings)
CWPPP&H Department District,
Harnai

PRQ No.1203/20-12-2023

CPEC's second phase to unveil record development, economic uplift in Pakistan: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Defence, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Wednesday said Pakistan is on the right side of history by standing with China as the game changer China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s second phase will unveil record development and economic uplift in the country.

He was addressing the 8th CPEC Media Forum jointly organized by the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) and the China Economic Net under the theme of "Next decade of CPEC: Opportunities & Learning from the past decade. The caretaker minister for Information was the chief guest on the occasion who also addressed the forum.

Senator Mushahid said the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has emerged as the most important development initiative of the 21st century. "BRI is a new platform, a new path to development, and a new framework for international cooperation of planning, building, and benefiting together for an open, inclusive, and interconnected

world that is the key element," he said.

The Senator who is also the chairman of the PCI said the BRI was all about openness, inclusivity, and connectivity. Under the BRI's CPEC initiative, a total of \$26 billion was devoted to investments, 236,000 jobs were generated, 8,000 megawatts of electricity were produced, and around 510 kilometers of roads and highways were built under the CPEC projects. "There are 28,000 Pakistani students in China and 8,000 of them are doing their doctorate degrees in China which is very important," he added.

Senator Mushahid said under the second phase of CPEC, the country was focusing on the Main Line-1 (ML-1) upgradation and dualization of the railway infrastructure from Karachi to Peshawar, an 1,872-kilometer railway route.

He added that this would be the biggest transformation in Pakistan's railway infrastructure since independence. The second important aspect, he said was the special economic zones and relocation of

Chinese industry and the third one which is already underway was agriculture cooperation.

"Agriculture is a key element in the whole Pakistan-China framework with new irrigation technology. Pakistan is facing an issue in its Cholistan region that has a lot of deserts like Xinjiang where China will provide technology to have multiple crops being harvested there," he added.

He underscored the need to debunk the disinformation, fake news, and propaganda encircling the CPEC project. "There are two crossing narratives, one from the west led by the United States and the other from China. In the last 10 years, China invested over a trillion dollars in the BRI's 3000 projects, lifting 40 million masses out of poverty in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the last 20 years, in the so-called war and terror, the United States squandered 6.5 trillion dollars fighting wars in Pakistan and Iraq, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen. These are not my figures but of Brown University in Rhode Island the USA.



Mr. Justice Athar Minallah awards a certificate to a trainee Judicial Assistant in a certificate awarding ceremony at the conclusion of a three-day Professional Development Training for the Support Staff of the Supreme Court of Pakistan held at the Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad.

NDMA convenes first National Dialogue on Anticipatory Actions to address climate vulnerability

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday organized the First National Dialogue Platform on Anticipatory Actions here to address climate vulnerability. The dialogue was held in collaboration with key partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), German Red Cross and Pakistan Red Crescent Society, World Food Programme (WFP), Welthungerhilfe (WHH), Concern Worldwide (CWW), and UN OCHA, a news release said. Over a 100 participants from the humanitarian sector, international financial institutions, hydrometeorologists, climate scientists, national governments, academia, community leaders, and decision-makers participated in the dialogue.

The participants discussed about how their experience in developing anticipatory action initiatives can support the building, strengthening, and scaling up of and forecast-based financing to reduce the impact of forecastable disasters; how to learn from each other to improve the design of existing projects; and advance the use of weather and climate data.

The dialogue aims to promote a shared understanding of anticipatory action among stakeholders, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences, understand the roles of international financial institutions in advancing the practice of including funding on disaster risk and pre-arranged financing, develop practical recommendations for the effective implementation of in Pakistan and identify opportunities for collaboration to develop and implement jointly.

Anticipatory action is a unique approach that involves taking timely and informed actions based on credible forecasts or collective risk analysis to mitigate the impacts of potential hazards. It encompasses various terms such as Forecast-based Financing (FbF), Early Warning Early Action (EWEA), Forecast-based Action (FbA), and Anticipatory Humanitarian Action (AHA). Harmonizing these terms will ensure a unified approach to anticipatory action in humanitarian efforts.

Break-out sessions on specific themes were conducted to identify pathways and the ways forward for developing a country roadmap and identify existing gaps, challenges, road-

blocks, and milestones for a collective way forward.

The initial session concentrated on multi-hazard forecasting, triggers, and early warning systems. It delved into forecasting potential hazards in Pakistan, identifying multi-hazard triggers for, and elucidating the distinctions between and disaster risk reduction.

In the subsequent session, the spotlight shifted to Planning and financing. This segment underscored the integration of into Pakistan's DRM planning process, placing a strong emphasis on gender equality, disability inclusion, and social considerations in both Anticipatory Action planning and financing.

The final session centered on knowledge generation and fostering partnerships. This portion highlighted a multidisciplinary approach to knowledge generation for, exploring the connections between and shock-responsive social protection. Additionally, it addressed the reinforcement of partnerships and institutionalization.

Towards the end, the conference participants outlined the priorities for Pakistan, about the fundamental building blocks of anticipatory action.



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and mother of the deceased Sara Inaam in a group photo with prosecution and investigative team during appreciation certificate distribution ceremony.

Solangi reviews arrangements for Sindhi poet Shaikh Ayaz's 100th birth anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday presided over a meeting to review arrangements for commemorating the 100th birth anniversary of great Sindhi poet Shaikh Ayaz.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Culture and National Heritage Jamal Shah, as well as Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi were also present in the meeting, which was attended by senior officers of different ministries.

It was decided to hold a colourful event for paying tribute to the great Sindhi poet.

During the meeting, Murtaza Solangi said Shaikh Ayaz was a promi-

nent figure in the Sindhi literature. He began his literary journey with the Urdu poetry and later excelled in the Sindhi poetry, achieving the highest recognition for his poetic work, he added. Minister Jamal Shah highlighted Shaikh Ayaz's contributions to the Sindhi literature, particularly poetry. He was a legendary poet. Calling him the greatest poet of Sindh and sub-continent, he said Shaikh Ayaz's poetry was essential for understanding the contemporary Sindh.

The meeting discussed the arrangements for celebrating the 100th birth anniversary of the poet in detail. Balochistan Governor Abdul Wali Kakar, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Ifrikhar Arif, Salima Hashmi, Syed Ahmed Shah, Monis Ayaz, and other distinguished personalities.

Indonesian University delegation visits AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation of ten senior faculty members from Terbuka Open University, Indonesia, led by Rector Prof. Dr. Ojat Darujat, visited Allama Iqbal Open University on Tuesday.

During a meeting with Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, emphasized different ways to enhance cooperation and the importance of building links between universities to promote educational development.

He also mentioned that they are working on increasing educational links with national and international universities.

Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that establishing connections between universities was essential for the advancement of education. "As such, we are focused on strengthening our bonds with both local and international universities", he added.



Brig. (Retd.) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha, Chairman, PMIC is chairing the meeting at PMIC, PM Office, Islamabad on PSDP project titled "Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad" on 20-12-2023 and getting briefing from the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing & Works, Pak PWD, NHA, ICT, CDA, FIA, RDA, RCB and Punjab Prison Department.



A group of students of the University of Turbat, Balochistan visiting Senate Museum Parliament House, Islamabad.

PMIC chairman instructs speedy completion of model prison project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Prime Minister's Inspection Commission (PMIC) Brigadier (Retd) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha on Wednesday instructed the relevant authorities to ensure the speedy completion of the Model Prison Islamabad project. The PMIC chairman issued the instructions chiding a meeting to discuss the PSDP project that has been significantly delayed, said a press release.

The meeting was attended by PMIC Member Engineer Aamir Hasan, Director Muhammad Saleh Narejo, officers of the ministries of interior, planning and housing; Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD), National Highway

Authority (NHA), Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Capital Development Authority (CDA), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) and Punjab Prison Department.

Engineer Aamir Hasan briefed the chair on the field visit made on Tuesday by the PMIC team in light of directions given on October 10, 2023, during the meeting held at PMIC.

The representatives of the ministries and departments concerned briefed the PMIC chairman on the implementation status and the latest progress on decisions made in the meeting held on October 10.

Islamabad Capital Police Radio FM 92.4 is working efficiently

ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special directives of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan the Islamabad Capital Police Radio FM 92.4 is effectively carrying out its work, a public relations officer said. He said that FM broadcasts traffic-related awareness messages on a regular basis. In the last month, the station has also carried 130 distinct programs, 840 traffic updates, and 9,000 traffic-related awareness messages.

On this occasion, the CPO Safe City/Traffic states that while Islamabad Capital Police is committed to ensuring the security of life and property of city citizens, they are also actively keeping them informed about traffic matters and providing recreational opportunities.

He further emphasized that the awareness team is continuously providing information on traffic laws and road safety to the public at various times and locations and every possible measure is being taken for the protection of life and property of the city residents.

Hearing of Toshakhana vehicles reference against Zardari, Nawaz adjourned

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad has adjourned hearing of Toshakhana vehicles case against Asif Zardari, Nawaz Sharif and others till January 04.

Toshakhana vehicles reference came up for hearing before Judge Muhammad Bashir of AC Islamabad Wednesday.

Qazi Misbah counsel for Nawaz Sharif and pleader Rana Irfan appeared in the court.

Special prosecutor NAB Irfan Bhola and Sohail Arif also appeared in the court.

The court was requested to restore the petitions filed by common citizens. The said petitions were filed on court's order for auctioning Nawaz Sharif property.

The defence counsel told the court these were the objections of the petitioners. Hearing was adjourned on them following the amendment in the law.

Pagara directs Saira Bano to contest election on general seat

ISLAMABAD (Online): Spokesperson of Grand Democratic Alliance Saira Bano has decided to contest election of National Assembly (NA) on general seat.

Chief of GDA Pir Pagara has directed Saira Bano to contest election on general seat.

Saira Bano will be the candidate of GDA in Tando Adam on NA-210.

Saira Bano will face PPP's Junejo in this constituency.

She will start campaigning after submitting her nomination papers from constituency.

CDA reshuffles officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The top management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has elevated director Land and Rehabilitation to the slot of Deputy Director General (DDG) Land and Rehabilitation.

A BPS-18 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) Umber Gilani has been serving as Director Land and Rehabilitation in the authority for the last few months.

Another BPS-18 officer from PAS has been appointed as director Land and Rehabilitation. Assistant Director Estate Management (Residential) Anwarul Haq has been posted as Assistant Director (Estab) Sanitation.

ECP refutes false reports on Hafizabad delimitation decision date

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday dismissed media misinformation about Hafizabad constituency delimitation, stating the official decision by a two-member bench was declared on November 26 and promptly posted on the ECP's website for public awareness.

An ECP spokesperson explained that a subsequent order regarding the delimitation of Hafizabad district was issued on December 8, following the intervention of the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

The guidelines for constituencies are explicitly outlined in the Election Act of 2017 and its corresponding Rules, as explained below.

According to Election Rules 8(1), the population of the province is divided among the seats designated for the province under Article 106, Section 51 of the

Constitution, after which the quota for each seat is established.

In the second phase, the quota calculated under Rules 8 (2) to determine district seats is divided by the district's population, establishing the number of seats for that district. If the remaining population after seat allocation is less than 0.5, the district is ignored.

However, if the remaining population is 0.50 or more, the district is granted one seat. For instance, if a district's seat share is 4.49 based on its population, it is allocated 4 seats.

On the other hand, if its seat share is 4.52, the district is allotted 5 seats.

Provided that no other district has a higher fraction, for instance, 4.56, it is essential to clarify that the allocation of seats begins with the district having the highest fraction, such as 4.80, 4.75, 4.70, 4.70, 4.66, and so on, until the last seat.

ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, famous film and TV actress Nashiz Jhangir and others clapping during the inauguration ceremony of a beautiful cream at a local hotel.

Saudi Envoy discusses plan for Faisal Mosque renovation with Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Malki on Wednesday held a meeting with Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani to discuss the plan for the renovation of Faisal Mosque.

Secretary Interior welcomed Saudi Ambassador Ahmed Al Malki at his office and offered all support for renovation of the Faisal Mosque, built after the name of Shah Faisal with Saudi Arabia's cooperation.

Interior Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani and Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al Malki agreed to further promote mutual relations between the two countries. He said that the relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would actively participate.

He also lauded the recent visit of Imam Kaaba's visit to Pakistan while the Saudi ambassador expressed best wishes for the upcoming elections in Pakistan. The Secretary Interior informed the ambassador that Road-to-Makkah was a wonderful project and added Karachi would also be included in this project for the upcoming Hajj. He informed the ambassador that Passport and Immigration department had launched E-passport process for the facilitation of public while new machines would be installed for smooth functioning. He said that Pakistan also has interests in which the Jeddah Exhibition in which the Ministry of Interior would actively participate.



ISLAMABAD: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, famous film and TV actress Nashiz Jhangir and others clapping during the inauguration ceremony of a beautiful cream at a local hotel.

IHC adjourns petition against jail trial of ex-chairman PTI

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday adjourned the hearing till December 28, on a petition challenging the jail trial of the founder chairman PTI in the cypher case.

The court instructed the additional attorney general to also share the copy of the trial court's notification of November 29, with the petitioner.

The IHC had written the details that under what circumstance a jail trial could be conducted, it said.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb heard the case filed by former chairman PTI against his jail trial.

The court inquired from the lawyer whether he had read the detailed order, pertaining to the jail trial case.

The IHC had written the details that under what circumstance a jail trial could be conducted, it said.

ICCPO visits Diplomatic Enclave; orders to enhanced security measures

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan conducted a visit to the Diplomatic Enclave to assess security arrangements, monitored safe city cameras and issued directives for enhancing security measures, a public relation officer said.

He said that the ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan interacted with officers and officials of the Islamabad Capital Police entrusted with the security of the diplomatic enclave. He issued directives to senior officers for the enhancement of security mea-

asures at the embassies.

Emphasizing the need for effective monitoring on both internal and external



Akbar Nasir Khan conducted a visit to the Diplomatic Enclave to assess security arrangements, monitored safe city cameras and issued directives for enhancing security measures, a public relation officer said. He said that the ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan interacted with officers and officials of the Islamabad Capital Police entrusted with the security of the diplomatic enclave. He issued directives to senior officers for the enhancement of security mea-



ISLAMABAD: People stands around fire to keep themselves warm during cold weather.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Thursday December 21, 2023

A hurdle crossed

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The country is confronted with numerous crises, with political polarisation, disillusionment with the system, economic stagnation and resurgent terrorism topping the list. It is the job of political parties to convince the electorate that the democratic process has within it the answers to these problems.

Parties need to start unveiling manifestos and explain their policy positions. Older and more traditional voters can be approached through rallies and corner meetings, while the younger generation needs to be engaged through social media. Only a free and transparent election can dispel hopelessness, and bring about a new democratic dawn.



Rafia Zakaria

It is sad that a visit to many of the most famous museums in the world feels like a visit to the treasure trove of a global looter. When one visits the British Museum, for instance, giant stone sculptures stolen from Easter Island, also known as Rapa Nui, are there to greet all visitors. The Ishtar Gate, which once guarded the entrance to the ancient city of Babylon, is not in Iraq but in Berlin at the Pergamon Museum. On more than one occasion, the government of Iraq has officially asked for it to be returned, but its demand has fallen on deaf ears. In the subcontinent, the story of the Kohinoor diamond is well known even though it is just one of the many objects and artifacts that were looted by the British and taken back to Britain before they left India.

In the past few years, however, the movement to have all these stolen goods returned to the countries from where they were looted has gained ground. Many scholars in the West have turned their attention to art theft and the issue of 'provenance' or how a particular institution managed to procure a piece for its collection has begun to be discussed. Some have pointed out how museums have circumvented the issue of illegal procurement by encouraging a wealthy donor to acquire an object and then displaying it with the label 'from the collection of XYZ' so that the museum itself does not have to disclose how the object was obtained. This applies to objects that were stolen on the art black market or during the colonial era.

Recently, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art announced it would be returning more than a dozen art objects reported to have been supplied by an art dealer and collector who was running a worldwide antiquities trafficking ring. Most of the sculptures

will be returned to Cambodia and a few to Thailand. The ancient statues were part of the collection of British art dealer and collector Douglas Latchford. Many appear to have been taken out of Cambodia during the rule of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. Art objects often become the subject of looting or illegal trade during periods of political tumult when competing parties or the fog of war obscure what is happening in cultural institutions.

Latchford was finally indicted for the theft of these and many other objects in 2019. However, he conveniently died the next year and so was never convicted and brought to justice. His heirs in the Latchford family admitted that the collection had hundreds of pieces of ancient Khmer objects and pieces of jewellery, which were reported to have been returned to Cambodia. It is very likely all these were procured by Latchford, whose dealings spanned the course of several decades. Other than ancient jewellery, there were statues of the Buddha, including one rare one referred to

as the Head of the Buddha.

The subject of art theft and the return of looted objects has started to reach the highest levels. A meeting between Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and his British counterpart Rishi Sunak was cancelled because the latter learned that Mitsotakis was going to raise the issue of the stolen Elgin Marbles that were taken from the site of the Parthenon by the British and whose return the Greeks have been demanding for several decades. In an interview with the BBC, the Greek prime minister said, "This is not a question of returning artefacts... this is not an ownership question, this is a reunification argument", going on to provocatively indicate that the Parthenon without the marbles was like the Mona Lisa torn in half.

As for the British Museum itself, it set up a website asking for the public's help in addressing the question of hundreds of objects, mainly "gems and jewellery" dating from the 15th century BC, that had gone missing from its collection.

Unsurprisingly, it focused largely on theft from its own stock rather than colonialist looting. It has now concluded an investigation.

The museum has also raised issues related to procurement but, tellingly, those relating to a narrow window of time from the 1930s to the end of World War II. These procurement problems are issues around art theft by the Nazis, who took over many European capitals and thus the objects in them. The British were the 'good' guys in that conflict and so it is convenient for the museum to position itself as a do-gooder trying to repatriate items back to European capitals following the consequences of Nazi looting.

Of course, one would like to ask about Britain's long presence in the subcontinent and the thousands of objects that were looted either from excavations or directly from various royal kingdoms. British officers had access to some or other bit of subcontinental history and took it back with them where it hangs in the drawing rooms of their great

grandchildren as the proud spoils of the time when they ruled India.

For those who may worry that returned objects may be stolen again if they are returned to countries from where they came there is little to be concerned about. This sort of theft is already underway at the British Museum itself, as indicated by the launch of its website enlisting the public's support for the recovery of precious items. Some months ago, the curator for Greek and Roman art at the museum was fired over allegations of theft. The question of the past has left an imprint on the present. While the return of certain objects may only be symbolic, it matters because it represents at least a tacit admission of the fact that colonialism was by and large a looting enterprise which sought to steal the wealth and treasure of one part of the world for the enrichment and enjoyment of another. All the objects that are in question, from the Kohinoor diamond to the Benin Bronzes to the Ishtar Gate, represent this truth. -- Courtesy Dawn

Decolonising the museum

How nations succeed



Touqir Hussain

Many of us write articles from time to time suggesting that Pakistan learn from other countries how they achieved their miraculous success. China, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore are the most cited examples.

The reality is that it is neither necessary nor possible, or even desirable, to follow any other national example mechanically. Countries have their own models of development based on their historical experience, national vision, value system, identity issues, social structure, and security challenges.

And their own strengths and weaknesses including, among others, population, resources, geopolitics, and economic potential, that assist or resist their efforts to progress.

There are thus diverse

paradigms of success achieved through different political systems that are hard to replicate given the unique context that hosts them. Yet there are certain minimal universalized criteria or means of success across political systems and ideologies that can serve as a guide to aspiring nations. Which examples will be most relevant? There are advanced democracies, found largely in the West or in Western-oriented systems like in Japan, Australia and New Zealand. And there are growing democracies, and semi-authoritarian and authoritarian systems, found mostly in the non-Western world.

Only examples from amongst the non-Western world, especially of countries that had suffered Western colonialism, imperialism or domination, will be relevant for Pakistan's purposes. Most of these countries started their journey of development while facing varying degrees of state- and nation-building challenges that could only be addressed by strong action. Such action could successfully have been taken only by a strong leader.

In a non-democratic system, a strong leader

would be someone who derived his/her legitimacy and support from a perform a n c e - b a s e d authoritarianism, based on some ideology, honed as part of a nationalist struggle, revolution or civil conflict. And in a supposedly democratic system it would be someone who was elected with overwhelming public support in a country that enjoyed national consensus on where it was headed, had no rival organizing ideas or ideologies, and no competing centers of power.

Examples of both these models are very few because of the uniqueness of their circumstances and historical experience. China is the leading example of the first model. And Nehru's India came close to the latter example. But after Nehru the story of India's democracy and its contribution to national development has been inconsistent. Under Indian Prime Minister Modi, democracy has diminished but India has continued to rise—though unevenly. So in growing democracies it is hard to find a correlation between democracy and progress. Both models thus hold little relevance for Pakistan.

Focusing our attention only on Asia (excluding the oil-rich economies of the Middle East) we notice that countries that succeeded have struggled with development and finally found the right path with a mix of political systems. Regardless of the diversity of their strategies, there are certain minimal universalized criteria or means of success across political systems and ideologies. They can help guide us. First is the quality of self-discipline in a nation. Nations are like individuals. Only a life well planned with a sense of purpose and serious mindedness in pursuit of certain objectives, backed up by requisite qualifications and hard work, can succeed. An irresolute or conflicted personality lacking a sense of purpose and at war within will fail.

How do you define a successful nation? There are different definitions for different countries but here is what is common. Success for a nation means success both for itself and its people. That means a growing or prosperous economy, political stability and a sense of security, and a people who enjoy human security and are confident

about their future. Basically, a country needs to invest in its people so that they can invest in the country so that it serves them well. Equality of opportunity and recognition of merit were critical to achieving this mutually productive relationship. Education, healthcare, justice system, a job creating economy, and peace in the region are at the centre of this paradigm. Finally, good governance is central to a nation's rise and affects as well as reflects other means of progress.

Singapore is the supreme example but is relevant. It shows us that economic development and political stability are co-dependent; both need a strong foundation of national unity and purpose and an inclusive and progressive organizing idea. On this foundation stands an edifice of educated and disciplined human resources and the uncompromising rule of law. Human resource development was most critical to superior levels of progress for which quality education that provided a platform for higher learning in science and technology was the key.

The security dominated and elite-led organiz-

ing idea of the country, blended with 'democracy', has created a three-way struggle for power among the army, feudal-business coalition, and religious right. Not to mention the inter-party power competition among political parties. This has set in motion a never-ending political struggle which has become a perfect enabling environment for political instability, entrenchment of status quo, and resistance to reforms. This article is not an argument against democracy. Nor is this advice for us to try authoritarianism. If we have come this far, we have to move forward rather than go back. We have the potential to change. But we must remain aware that the creation of a true democracy is a revolutionary struggle. And it must begin with the realization that the 'democracy' we have will not solve our problems regardless of who is in power. We cannot also bank on this 'democracy' to become democracy by itself. Finally, we have to ask ourselves what good is this democracy if it has neither helped the nation become strong nor served people's happiness. -- Courtesy TheNews

Weasel words



Mahir Ali

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

It has been patently obvious for decades that fossil fuels are the chief culprits in global warming. Reports prepared for some of the biggest offenders pointed this out as far back as the 1950s. They were covered up, obviously. And varieties of greenwashing have been the norm since the world woke up to the challenge 30 years later.

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

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

COP28 was deemed a step forward in calling out fossil fuels, but precious little was specified in terms of transcending them as the

primary source of energy. The requisite sound and fury were absent from the 'UAE consensus', which effectively signifies nothing. The worst polluters can step up their activities without violating the meaningless Dubai injunction.

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

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

Another petrostate will host the next COP, and doubts about whether these conferences serve any useful purpose have steadily been mounting. More than 2,400 fossil fuel lobbyists were accredited to the farce in Dubai, an exponentially higher figure than their numbers in Glasgow and Sharm el-Sheikh. The numbers in Baku may be even higher. They needn't worry too much, though—the biggest polluters will make sure that next to nothing is agreed that just might salvage the planet. And even if by some miracle a consensus were to be achieved on phasing out fossil fuels, it would mean very little

without an enforcement mechanism — which doesn't exist. Sure, Saudi output, for instance, would be set back if all other nations stopped buying its oil. But, seriously, what are the chances?

After all, as George Monbiot points out, "more carbon dioxide from fossil fuels has been released worldwide" since 1992, when climate negotiations began, than in all of human history. He compares the oil and gas lobbyists' presence in Dubai to "allowing weapons manufacturers to dominate a peace conference". Mind you, one hardly hears of a peace conference these days, whereas they were ubiquitous between the end of World War II and the 1980s.

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

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

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

South Asia's smog



Jamil Ahmad

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

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

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

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

In Pakistan, due to air pollution, life expectancy

has been reduced by four years compared to the global average reduction of 2.3 years. In the worst-affected urban areas, such as Peshawar and Lahore, residents are expected to lose as many as five years of their lives as a result of unhealthy air.

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

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

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

Land use management regulations are another area warranting immediate attention.

Pakistan's urbanisation rate is the highest in the region. Half of the country's population will be living in cities by 2025. In the process, unsustainable and often unregulated urban sprawl is taking place, mostly at the expense of green cover, depriving the cities of natural air filters. This exacerbates air pollution significantly.

Conversion of agricultural land or forested areas into housing schemes must be regulated to ensure the provision of sufficient green spaces around cities.

This is also important to safeguard natural habitats

for wildlife and biodiversity, and thus essential for a balanced ecosystem.

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

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

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

Engaging communities and local bodies will be helpful to monitor air quality in a systemic manner and propel swift and sustained action at ground level through stringent regulatory frameworks.

Citizens all over are increasingly raising concerns about the impact of air pollution on their lives. Their calls for clean air must be heard and answered. -- Courtesy Dawn

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

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

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

Earlier the minister approved all the minutes of the 8th Syndicate meeting. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Masood Sadiq also presented a report on the implementation of the decisions of the 7th Syndicate meeting. During the Syndicate meeting, 100 per cent implementation on the Lahore High Court's orders about quality and

performance SOPs was emphasized. It was decided to approve the status of the UCHS and send them to the chancellor for final approval through the department. All the decisions of the finance and planning committee of the 8th syndicate meeting were approved. During the meeting, the ongoing progress on the complex under construction of the UCHS was also reviewed in detail. The officials of Infrastructure Development Authority Punjab gave a briefing in this regard during the syndicate meeting. Approval has been given for the upgradation and repair of the lifts of the Children's Hospital Emergency and OPD and apart from this, equipment for the new department has also been approved.



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

Minister inaugurates newly constructed 'Business Centre'

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

The newly constructed Business Centre at Kohat Road, Small Industrial Estate is comprised of display halls and showrooms for the exhibition of the products manufactured by the manufacturers of the estate.

Besides, the Managing Director (MD) SIDB, Ghazanfar Ali, Deputy Managing Directors Sahibzada Zulfiqar and Noman

Fayaz and other officers, officials and employees were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the caretaker minister termed the project as of high importance and directed amendments to the business model of the board for its financial stability, uplift and to bring improvement as per requirements of the modern era.

He said that starting a new project is used to be a hard task for any organization. However, he said that with the passage of this phase, the board has made a remarkable achievement. He said that now the sustainable development management of the board should take more such useful measures.

He directed the management of the board to take forward the concept of a profitable and business approach and adoption of result-oriented short-term business model to arrest the expenses of the organization in future.

Ban on airing Imran speeches: LHC seeks affidavit from chairman PEMRA

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has sought affidavit from chairman PEMRA to the effect that he has not imposed restriction on TV channels from airing former chairman PTI statements and interview.

The court remarked chairman PEMRA should file this reply too that who has imposed ban.

The petitions filed against ban on airing the speeches of former chairman PTI Imran Khan by T V channels despite court's orders came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Shams Mehmood Mirza Wednesday.

Lawyer Ahmed Pansota appeared in the court on behalf of former chairman PTI. The court sought affidavit from chairman PEMRA. The court remarked chairman PEMRA should file affidavit that he had not imposed ban on airing

statements and interviews of former chairman PTI by TV channels. Chairman PEMRA should also file this reply who has imposed this ban.

The court has directed Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) to file written reply. The court adjourned the hearing of the case till next week. The petitioner had taken plea in the petition that former chairman PTI was shut along with his voice. Giving air time to political parties on the basis of equality is legal requirement. LHC had suspended the notification related to ban on airing and broadcasting former chairman PTI speeches. Despite court's orders the TV channels are being barred from airing speeches of former chairman PTI.

It is pertinent to mention here PEMRA had imposed ban on live casting the speeches of former chairman PTI.



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



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar ul Haq Kakar in a group photo with senior member doctors of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA) at the 46th Winter Khyber Medical College Convention organized in collaboration with APPNA on 20 Dec 2023.

Naqvi orders land allocation for smart police stations

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has issued directives for the allocation of land dedicated to Smart Police Stations.

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

smart police stations in Lahore, while an additional 17 will be strategically located in other districts.

Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, in setting a stringent deadline for the Smart Police Station project, emphasized the phased conversion of conventional police stations into smart ones throughout the province. The meeting scrutinized the construction, repair, and rehabilitation initiatives encompassing a total of 737 police stations. A comprehensive

review of the progress on the Smart Police Station project and an evaluation of the facilities integrated into these stations took place during the briefing.

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

The meeting also addressed the project involving the construction of 313 houses for police officers and employees.

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



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with Association of Pakistan Physicians of North America during their visit to Governor House.

MoPDSI, UNICEF to launch early childhood nutrition drive in AJK

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives (MoPDSI) has launched a special drive for scaling up early childhood nutrition aimed to provide equal opportunity of growing to full potential to every child in the country.

Scaling up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in collaboration with UNICEF Pakistan had an insightful two-day workshop here on Tuesday and Wednesday on Early Childhood Development (ECD) working group to discuss crucial aspects of holistic child development attended

by experts, government officials, and partners to delve into key tools including ECD Standards & Index, optimization of Key Family Care Practices (KFPC) and Parenting Package. This workshop generated valuable insights and recommendations that will be incorporated in the documents, said Dr. Saba Shuja, ECD Manager adding that the SUN Movement Pakistan was committed to fostering a supportive environment for ECD, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential. The workshop was

attended by the representatives of line departments and development partners. Secretary P&DD AJK welcomed the distinguished guests and appreciated SUN unit along with collaboration with UNICEF for organizing this important activity. He said that ECD was a priority area for the AJK government and expressed his commitment to support ECD initiatives.

Dr Saba Shuja, ECD Manager Pakistan, and Uzma Bukhari from UNICEF oriented the session on UNICEF ECD Vision, provincial background.

Two drugs convicts sentenced to different terms

ATTOCK (Online): Two drugs peddlers were sentenced to different terms by two different courts in Attock on Wednesday. In the first case, a special court for the Control of Narcotic Substances (CNS) in Attock sentenced a convict identified as Najeib Ullah- a native of Waziristan to 9 years' imprisonment besides imposing fine over him for smuggling two kilogram of hashish from KP to Punjab and was arrested at Attock Khurd check post during this year. The judge of the special CNS court additional session Judge Attock Shoukat Ali.



KARACHI: Council General of UAE Bakheet Ateeq Al Remeithi cut the Christmas cake along with others during ceremony at UAE Consulate in Provincial Capital.

Environmental shifts Seminar to tackle health challenges in KP held

PESHAWAR (APP): Addressing the growing impact of climate change on public health, Evidence for Health in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized a comprehensive one-day seminar for health managers here on Wednesday.

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

Dr. Shaukat Ali underscored the vulnerability of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to climatic variations, emphasizing the adverse effects on public health. The seminar

shed light on the surge in influenza-like diseases, waterborne infections, and pneumonia, all attributed to the changing climate.

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

During his address, Dr. Shaukat Ali stressed the need for the establishment and activation of primary health centers, including rural and basic health units. Despite economic constraints, he assured that no district would face shortages of essential medications and funds.

All parties have expressed confidence in ECP: PML-N

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Deputy Secretary General Attaullah Tarar has said all political parties have expressed confidence in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), as there is no doubt about its credibility and transparency.

Talking to the media, along with PML-N leader Malik Ahmad Khan at Model Town on Wednesday, he said some elements had pointed fingers at the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the ECP just for nothing, adding that free and fair elections should be conducted in the country on the given time and his party wanted to take forward the matter

smoothly toward the elections. Attaullah Tarar said the individual imprisoned in Adiala Jail is enjoying every facility and comfort in the jail, adding that walk, exercise and all recreational activities are going on in Adiala Jail. He said that everyone gets Toshakhana gifts, but no one had sold out those gifts in the black market to gain 'black profit'. He said that those gifts were the pride of the country and not meant for sale or gaining profit. He said that if anyone had committed any crime, he could not get freedom just for contesting elections. Malik Ahmad Khan told the media persons the Constitution had bestowed authority on the ECP to conduct free and fair elections.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement Pakistan (MQM-P), Senior Deputy Convener, Syed Mustafa Kamal submit nomination papers to contest for the upcoming general elections at Regional Offices in Provincial Capital.

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

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

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

He was accompanied by caretaker Information Minister Ahmad Shah. Mithi RO Plant: The Chief Minister visited the solar desalination plant complex, Mithi. The project, the RO plant, gave him an abandoned look. On inquiries, he was told that the plant had been non-operational for the last eight years and mostly the solar plates installed on the

roof top were missing. The CM was told that Asia's largest solar desalination plant complex, Mithi, was run by the Energy Department and Inaugurated in January 2015. The plant had to provide drinking water in addition to producing one megawatt of electricity, benefiting the people of Mithi city besides the other 10 villages.

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



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presides over the meeting regarding matter related to Data Darbar Hospital.

LHC seeks report on cases against Omar

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday sought a report from Punjab police and other departments on a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan seeking details of cases registered against him.

The single bench comparing Justice Ali Baqar Najafi heard the petition filed by the PTI secretary general for provision of details of cases.

The petitioner's counsel argued before the court that his client wanted to participate in upcoming general elections and would file his nomination papers by Friday.

Syed Faiz, Arshad part ways with PTI

GUJRAT (Online): Former MNA of PTI Syed Faiz ul Hassan Shah and MPA Chaudhry Arshad have parted ways with party. Syed Faiz ul Hassan Shah was elected member of National Assembly from NA-70 on PTI ticket while Chaudhry Arshad was declared successful from PP-34 on PTI ticket. Syed Faiz ul Hassan Shah who defeated PPP's Qamar Zaman Kaira and PML-N's Jaffar Iqbal has announced his separation from PTI and said that he condemns the event of May 9.

Those who are responsible should be punished. While saying good bye to PTI, Ch Arshad said that he announces retirement from politics and will not participate in any next election.

Pak Army equips computer lab in WDC Miran Shah

PESHAWAR (APP): Pak Army has installed all the needed equipment and software in the computer laboratory of Women Degree College Miran Shah and made it fully functional for girls students.

The lab has been operationalized as part of Pak Army efforts to promote education and provide all the needed facilities to girls.

It is worth mentioning that girl students at Miran Shah Degree College were facing difficulties getting computer education due to the unavailability of

modern equipment and electricity to run computer systems.

Pak Army has also installed a solar system besides modern computers in the lab for the facilitation of girl students.

The college administration has appreciated the efforts of the Pak Army to promote girls' education and said that the continuous efforts of the Pak Army would help promote education among girls, enabling them to play a role in the development and progress of the country.

Married woman committed suicide

By Tanveer Soomro
MIRPUR MATHELO: A married woman committed suicide by consuming a large amount of narcotic pills after a young man held her hand in a crowded market. According to the details, a married woman, Sadia Soomro, committed suicide by taking a large amount of narcotic pills in Imam bargah Mohalla of Daharki city.

An influential young man, Abdul Hameed Chachar, held hands in the crowded market and pressured the woman and her husband to be friends, which scared the woman and her husband.

Later, the accused used his influence to send the policemen to her house and pressured and harassed her. Two days ago, Sadia Soomro appealed to the higher authorities to

provide protection along with her mother on the social media website, but they did not provide her protection. Narcotic pills were taken which made her condition worse, which was immediately shifted to the hospital but she could not survive. On the other hand, the relatives kept the body of Sadia Soomro in front of Daharki Police Station, SSP Ghotki Muhammad Anwar Khetran immediately took notice of the incident and ordered the arrest of the influential accused Hameed Chachadar and an FIR was filed, while DSP Ubauaro Qalandar Bakhsh Soomro has been appointed as the Inquiry Officer and ordered to investigate the incident. Has been given so that legal action can be taken against the responsible police officials.

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

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries, Dr. Ejaz Gohar on Wednesday unveiled his vision to increase Pakistan's exports to China up to US \$25 billion to engage in trade between the two neighbours.

The newly appointed Economic Counsellor of China to Pakistan, Mr. Yang Guangyuan paid a courtesy call to the Commerce and Industries Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz, said a press release issued here.

The meeting followed two successful visits to China by Dr. Ejaz which are a part of the intensified interaction between the two countries in the field of trade.



LAHORE: Secretary Transport Punjab Ahmed Javed Qazi drives Electric Rickshaw before launching E-Rickshaws.

PML-N to address economic issues: Nasir

ISLAMABAD (Online): PML-N leader Nasir Butt said that his party has experienced persons to manage the economy and if voted to power, PML-N has plans to address the key economic issues of the country.

He said that the PML-N government had achieved many economic milestones for Pakistan during its previous tenures.

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

He said this while talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his visit to ICCI.

Nasir Butt said that the business community is the backbone of the economy and PML-N would finalize economic policies by taking them on board to achieve win-win outcomes.

Dr Iqar says: Climate changes aggravating agri diseases, pests attack

FAISALABAD (INP): Climate changes coupled with other factors are aggravating the issue of agricultural diseases and pests attack. Hence, the entomologists must pace up their efforts to overcome this issue for ensuring healthy crop and increase in the productivity.

This was stated by Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) while addressing the annual function of the Department of Entomology UAF here on Wednesday.

He said that the agriculture sector is facing multifaceted challenges in the present era for which it is important to adopt modern techniques in addition to transferring a

extended warm congratulations to Dr. Ejaz for his successful visit to China, emphasizing the positive initiatives taken to foster economic cooperation between the two nations.

Minister Ejaz conveyed the warmth and hospitality extended by the Chinese officials during his visit to China.

Dr. Ejaz highlighted that the primary purpose of his recent visit to China was to witness first-hand the remarkable progress China has achieved on the one hand and to seek new market segments for Pakistani exports on the other hand.

He unveiled an ambitious 5-year vision to boost trade between Pakistan and China, setting

a target of \$ 25 billion for Pakistan's exports.

Mr. Guangyuan welcomed the Minister's positive sentiments for increasing bilateral trade and economic cooperation and expressed China's commitment to stand with Pakistan, emphasizing the deep-rooted friendship between the two countries as "iron brothers."

He conveyed China's goal to increase its trade volume from the current \$27 trillion to \$32 trillion in the coming years, affirming China's willingness to include Pakistan in its trade expansion. Dr. Ejaz emphasized his vision for Pakistan's economic progress through "trade not aid," resonating with Mr. Guangyuan's sentiments.



ISLAMABAD: PIDE Vice-Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque giving his remarks on the eve of launching of its latest research report titled "The State of Commerce in Pakistan-International and Domestic," highlighting challenges and opportunities.

PIDE report highlights challenges, opportunities in commerce sector

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

"As a premier institution dedicated to fostering economic development, PIDE's report serves as an invaluable source of

information and statistics on the state of commerce in Pakistan," a news release said. In his opening remarks, PIDE Vice-Chancellor Dr Nadeem ul Haque said his institution had compiled the report for the Ministry of Commerce and Industries so that it could explore all facets of internal and external trade in Pakistan. "The primary objective is to gain a profound understanding of markets, growth and international and domestic trade."

He emphasized that despite the vibrant sector,

it faced challenges stemming from the various governments' indifference, regulatory problems, and various other problems.

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

Pakistan's regional exports increase 16.29% in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 16.29 per cent in the first five months of the financial year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding months of last year. The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$1855.996 million, which is 14.83 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$12510.845 million during July-November (2023-24), State

Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives. Pakistan's exports to China witnessed an increase of 39.44 per cent to \$1223.532 million in five months of this year from \$877.444 million last year while exports to Afghanistan also surged to \$232.697 million from \$213.282 million.

Exporters get training on E-Commerce

MULTAN (APP): Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), in collaboration with Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) arranged a 'training seminar titled "National Exporters Training Programme and E-Commerce 101" on Wednesday.

The session held at MCCI was attended by more than 90 participants encompassing the trade community, women entrepreneurs and budding exporters. Deputy Manager, TDAP, Ms. Afshan Uroos, covered a range of topics including

Export Procedures and Documentation, how to become an exporter, using trade map tools and INCOTERMS.

Assistant Director, SBP, Ms. Kiran Amjad, made a detailed presentation on export financing schemes and payment methods while Adil Mukhtar, Assistant Director, TDAP, dilated upon E-Commerce Revenue Models, Types of E-Commerce and Pakistan Trade Portal etc. The session ended with the questions and answers session followed by the vote of thanks.

FTO coordinator felicitates Shahid

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator to Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis has felicitated Dr Shahid Hassan on his appointment as Russian Federation Ambassador to Pakistan for Education and Science, in recognition of services for promotion of quality education.

In a letter, shared with the media here on Wednesday, he said it was an honour that the Government of the Russian Federation had nominated Pakistan origin Dr. Shahid Hassan, chairman Association of Pakistani Graduates from Russia and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), which would cement friendly relations between the two countries.

Gold rates up by Rs 900

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 900 and was sold at Rs 218,500 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs 217,600 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 771 to Rs 187,328 from Rs 186,557 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 171,718 from Rs 171,011, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.20 to Rs.2,650.

Sohrab stresses strengthening of collaboration with ILO for Pak Workforce Dev.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik, held a significant meeting with Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Gilbert Houngbo on the sidelines of the Global Labour Market Conference (GLMC) in Riyadh on Wednesday.

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

The meeting was a significant step towards fostering international collaboration to enhance the skills and employability of the Pakistani workforce in line with the ILO's best practices. Both

parties acknowledged the importance of aligning national policies with global standards to ensure the welfare and prosperity of the workforce.

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

SAPM, Jawad Sohrab reaffirmed that the Government of Pakistan is committed to working closely with the International Labour Organization to implement effective strategies that benefit the Pakistani workforce.



KARACHI: Women with children purchase shoes at a roadside stall ahead of Christmas.

Livestock minister promises pure milk provision to consumers

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provisional Livestock Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad said on Wednesday that provision of unadulterated milk to consumers should be the first priority of the Livestock and Dairy Development Department (L&DD).

Chairing a meeting with L&DD board members at the new minister block here, he said the department's board would utilise its already available 500-litre milk pasteurisation capacity with private investors.

In the meeting, installation of pasteurising plant was reviewed, while

the minister was told that the focus would be on Lahore in the first phase. He directed that L&DD board would present its pasteurisation model to milkmen/farmers having 200 plus animals and Lahore chamber of commerce.

He further directed that the board and the department to start a joint awareness campaign regarding silage and pasteurisation awareness. He gave a six week target to L&DD board for 8 to 10 per cent silage production across the province through awareness campaign and private investors.



MUZAFERABAD: Workers are busy in packing the walnuts art shop at local bazaar in City.

Edible oil, vegetable ghee output grew by 26.80% and 2.95%

ISLAMABAD (APP): Domestic production of edible oil and vegetable ghee during first four months of current financial year grew by 26.80 percent and 2.95 percent respectively as compared to the output of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-November, 2023 over 206,250 metric tons of cooking oil manufactured locally as compared to the manufacturing of 162,661 metric tons of the same period of last year, according to the data of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

As compared the

month of October, 2021, the output of edible oil grew by 18.39 percent in October 2023 and 51,225 metric tons of cooking oil were produced locally as compared to the production of 43,268 metric tons of same month of last year.

Meanwhile, 496,668 metric tons of vegetable ghee manufactured in last four months as compared to the production of 482,445 metric tons, which was up by 2.95 percent when it compared with production of the same period of last year, it added.

During the month of October, 2023 about 129,888 metric tons of vegetable ghee produced in the country as compared



ISLAMABAD: Vendors displaying seasonal fruit oranges to attract customers at Islamabad Fruit and Vegetable market.

Speakers for removing bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers for removing bottleneck to harness hydropower, RE potential in country Speakers at 3rd International Hydropower Conference while terming the hydropower and renewable energy (RE) crucial for sustainable future of the country on Wednesday stressed the need to remove bottleneck in harnessing the hydropower and RE potential for provision of affordable electricity to the people and industry.

The third International Hydropower conference themed "Hydropower: A Renewable Energy Source for a Sustainable Future" was organized by the

Energy Update in collaboration with Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and International Hydropower Association (IHA).

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

Speaking on the occasion, Caretaker Minister for Power Muhammad Ali lauded the Energy Update for organizing the conference and said that it would help us to improve the policy framework in the energy sector.

He said enhancing RE and hydropower share in energy mix was the government top priority as it was the only way to reduce the power tariff besides provision of affordable energy to the people. Currently, the share of hydel and RE in total energy mix stood at 31 per cent adding that the government has embarked on ambitious plan to enhance it to 61 per cent by 2030, he said.

He said Pakistan has tremendous potential of wind, solar, and hydropower. We could alone generate around 64,000 megawatts (MW) from hydel and only tapped 11,000 MW so far. Hydropower considered

cheapest source of electricity in the world, he said. He said hydropower projects could also generate employment opportunities.

He said work on 4200 MW Dasu hydropower, 800 MW Mohmand dam and 4500 MW Diamer Basha dam was being carried out. However, financing was a big issue for such mega projects, he added.

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

efficient fans across the country. A sum of \$ 1 billion could be saved annually through energy conservation, he said.

The minister Earlier, Managing Director Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) Dr Shahjan Mirza said hydropower projects were equally beneficial for environment and economy. Hydropower plants were the cheapest sources of green and clean energy, he added. He said the government was making better policies for promotion of hydropower in the country. The provinces should also come forward in hydropower sector, he added.



MULTAN: Vendors are displaying handmade items for domestic use to attract customers at roadside setup.

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

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

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

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

sary to stick to active defenses they are doing so, and we are improving our positions where it's needed."

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

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

of our armed forces and the potential of our military industries," Putin said.

During the counteroffensive that began in early June, Ukrainian forces have failed to make any significant gains as they faced multicheloned Russian defensive lines, including sprawling minefields. Speaking at the same meeting, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said that the Russian minefields spread for 7,000 kilometers (more than 4,300 miles).

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



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy holds a press conference, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Bangladesh opposition calls for poll boycott as PM Hasina kicks off campaign

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Bangladesh's main opposition party urged voters on Wednesday to boycott what it called a "one-sided dummy election" due in January, as Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina kicked off her campaign for a fourth consecutive term.

With its top leaders either jailed or in the exile, the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has been calling for Hasina to resign and for a neutral authority to replace the

government and oversee the Jan. 7 polls, which the BNP is not contesting.

Hasina has repeatedly rejected opposition calls to step down and has blamed the BNP for instigating anti-government protests that have rocked Dhaka since late October and in which at least 10 people have been killed.

"Boycott the dummy election on January 7. Don't participate in the monkey game on January 7."

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

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

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

The laws cover screening irregular migrants when they arrive in the European Union, procedures for handling asylum applications, rules on determining which EU country is responsible for handling applications and ways to handle crises.

Migrant arrivals in the European Union are way down from the 2015 peak of more than 1 million, but have steadily crept up from a 2020 low to 255,000 in the year to November.

Nicaragua upgrades ties with China, seeks financial support amid Western sanctions

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and Nicaragua upgraded their bilateral ties on Wednesday, setting the stage for the Asian giant to provide more economic support to the sanctioned Central American state and furthering Beijing's strategic ambitions in the United States' backyard.

Beijing and Managua re-established diplomatic ties in 2021 after Nicaragua broke off relations with Chinese-claimed Taiwan, which US officials attributed to the allure of the prospect of fresh investment from China after

Western countries sanctioned President Daniel Ortega's government over human rights abuses.

"I am willing to work with President Ortega to take today's announcement of a China-Nicaragua strategic partnership as a new start, to push relations between our two countries forward to build a model of solidarity, cooperation and mutual benefit," Chinese President Xi Jinping told Ortega during a call to mark the second anniversary of the resumption of diplomatic ties, Chinese state media reported.

China's Xi says strong Russia ties a 'strategic choice'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping said Wednesday that maintaining close ties with Russia is a "strategic choice," calling for deeper bilateral cooperation during a meeting with Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin in Beijing, state media reported.

The strong relationship between the two nations, which has endured despite Russia's military invasion of its neighbor Ukraine in early 2022, has faced pointed criticism from Western leaders in recent years.

"Maintaining and developing China-Russia relations is a strategic choice made by both sides based on the fundamental interests of the two peoples," Xi told Mishustin on Wednesday in Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

Ukrainians prepare for first wartime Christmas on new calendar

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainians are gearing up to celebrate their first Christmas according to a new calendar, another step towards erasing all traces of Russian influence as their military fend off a Kremlin invasion.

Most Ukrainians are Orthodox Christians and the country's main church agreed this year to move away from the traditional Julian calendar, which is used in Russia and celebrates the holiday on Jan. 7.

Moscow's February 2022 attack rallied the nation

in defence and sparked many Ukrainians to reject the Russian language and culture, among other historical ties to Kyiv's former ruler.

"Everything that was related to Russia, and everything that Russia did the same way we did, provoked disgust among people," said Mykhailo Omelian, an Orthodox priest in Kyiv. Ukraine has also signalled its interest in joining the European Union, and many here see membership as a crucial affirmation of what they believe is their country's historical place in Europe.



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

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

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

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

known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action in 2015.

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

The sharp exchanges came at the Security Council's semi-annual meeting on the implementation of its resolution endorsing the 2015 nuclear deal.

Hamas leader visits Egypt

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: The leader of Hamas made his first visit to Egypt for more than a month on Wednesday, a rare personal intervention in diplomacy amid what a source described as intensive talks on a new ceasefire to let aid reach Gaza and get hostages freed.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who normally resides in Qatar, typically intervenes in diplomacy publicly only when progress seems likely. He last travelled to Egypt in early November before the announcement of the only agreement on a ceasefire in the war so far, a week-long pause during which more than 100 hostages were released.

India's Modi willing to 'look into' US assassination plot claim

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he will investigate any evidence provided regarding an alleged plot to kill a Sikh separatist in the United States, the Financial Times reported on Wednesday.

The US Justice Department last month charged an Indian citizen with plotting to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader on US soil, alleging an Indian government official was also involved in the planning.

"If someone gives us any information, we would definitely look into it," Modi said in his first comments on the issue.

"If a citizen of ours has done anything good or bad, we are ready to look into it. Our commitment is to the rule of law," he added.

India's foreign ministry had earlier said it set up a "high-level" inquiry committee "to look into all the relevant aspects of the matter".

On November 29, the US Justice Department unsealed murder-for-hire charges against Nikhil Gupta, 52, "in connection with his participation in a foiled plot to assassinate a US citizen" of Indian origin in New York City, it said in a statement.

Biden looks to secure Black support in visit to Wisconsin

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden will announce a Black-owned business coalition could win funding to revive downtown Milwaukee on a visit to Wisconsin on Wednesday, as he looks to shore up support in a state that may prove pivotal to his reelection chances in 2024.

Biden will visit the Milwaukee Black Chamber of Commerce to discuss what the White House called a boom in Black-owned small businesses.



Rescuers work amid the rubble at Shiyuan village following the earthquake in Jishishan county, Gansu province, China.

Colorado court blocks Trump from presidential primary ballot

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump is ineligible for the US presidency because of his involvement in the January 2021 assault on the Capitol, Colorado's supreme court ruled on Tuesday, setting off a political earthquake that could upend next year's election.

The stunning legal decision — which Trump's campaign said it would appeal — drew immediate condemnation from Republicans across the spectrum, and looked set to light a fire under the former reality TV star's claim to political persecution.

The ruling, which only applies to the Colorado primary ballot, is the first of a number of legal actions across the country to successfully invoke the US Constitution's 14th Amendment, which bars from office anyone formerly sworn to protect the country who later engages in insurrection.

Ukraine to produce a million FPV drones next year - minister

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Kyiv plans to produce a million FPV (first-person-view) drones, widely in demand on the front line, and more than 11,000 medium- and long-range attack drones next year, Ukraine's minister for strategic industries said on Wednesday.

Ukraine intensively used FPV drones - small drones originally for personal civilian use, but modified for the battlefield - since the first days of the Russian invasion in 2022 as a cheap but effective option for reconnaissance.

Philippines rebukes China over South China Sea claims

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippine defense minister rebuked China on Wednesday for accusing his country of provoking tension and stirring trouble in the South China Sea, saying only Beijing believed what it was saying.

"Truth and in fact, no country in the world, none, supports unequivocally their claim to the whole of South China Sea," Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said as both nations have exchanged accusations over recent collisions in the waterway. China claims almost the entire South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of commercial shipping annually, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

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

Following the incidents, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr said on Saturday a "paradigm shift" was needed in how his country deals with the South China.

India's Manipur state buries victims of ethnic clashes

Monitoring Desk
GUWAHATI: More than 80 people killed in ethnic clashes in India's northeastern Manipur state over the past seven months were laid to rest on Wednesday, officials said, as sporadic violence continued in the region. At least 180 people have died since fierce fighting broke out between members of the majority Meitei and minority Kuki communities in May, following a court order suggesting privileges granted to Kukis also be extended to Meiteis. Earlier efforts to carry out the last rites of the deceased were marred by conflicts between the communities.

US may yet back 'mild ceasefire' for Gaza

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The emergency UN Security Council meeting on the Gaza situation was adjourned on Tuesday, with discussions entering into informal consultations as hopes rise of a slight flexibility in Washington's otherwise staunch support for Israel. The council's meeting, which started on Monday for a vote on UAE's resolution calling for a sustainable cessation of hostilities in Gaza, was postponed due to US concerns over the draft's phrasing.

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

This shift in stance

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

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

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

France's Macron faces cracks in his government over migration law

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

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

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

Health Minister Aurelien Rousseau told Le Monde daily he would resign in protest against the new law.

"It's not possible for me to defend this text," Le Monde quoted Rousseau, a former communist, as saying.

The tougher rules - including migration quotas, making it harder for immigrants' children to become French citizens, and delaying migrants' access to welfare benefits - were added to the bill to win the support of right-wing lawmakers for its passage.

The bill makes it easier to expel illegal migrants, while watering down plans to loosen curbs over residency permits for workers in labour-deprived sectors.

Hospital doctors in England start new strike over pay

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Hospital doctors in England begin their longest strike action yet on Wednesday in a move that health bosses fear will pile pressure on services at the busiest time of year.

Junior doctors — those below consultant level — join picket lines from 0700 GMT to the same time on Saturday in a major escalation of their long-running pay dispute. Six more days of industrial action are planned from January 3.

The strike comes at one of the busiest times of

the year for the state-funded National Health Service (NHS), as it faces increased pressure from seasonal respiratory illnesses.

The strike has drawn criticism from UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and hospital leaders who have described the lengthy walk-out as their "worst fears realised". "We would encourage junior doctors to consider carefully the extremely significant impact striking at such a challenging time will have both on the NHS and for individual patients."

Congo holds presidential vote after fraught campaign

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: Voters in Democratic Republic of Congo took part in a general election on Wednesday after a chaotic campaign marred by opposition allegations of impending fraud, electoral violence, and logistical setbacks that could prevent many from voting.

In Bunia, in the restive eastern Congo, local resident Serges Mukamira was the first to cast a vote. In several towns in the region, and in the capital, Kinshasa, the process kicked off with

delays as election kits had not arrived at some polling stations.

In Goma and Beni, in eastern Congo, some voters struggled to find their names on voter lists, which were only made available at their polling stations on Wednesday morning, according to Reuters witnesses. "The last (election) wasn't like this. We could find our names following an alphabetical order. But this time trying to verify your name is a headache for some of us who did not study."

Egypt says talks over Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam have failed - statement

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Egypt said on Tuesday that the latest talks over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) have failed, but it will closely monitor the process of filling and operating the dam and reserve the right to defend its water.

"Egypt reserves its right, in accordance with international charters and accords, to defend its water and national security in case of any harm," Egypt's ministry of water resources and irrigation said in a statement.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said in July that they would aim to finalise a deal over the disputed dam within four months. Years of stop-start talks have proved unsuccessful.

Egypt has long op-

posed the project because of worries about its future supplies of water from the Nile, on which it is heavily dependent. Sudan, another downstream country, has expressed concern about the regulation and safety of its own water supplies and dams. Ethiopia, which argues that it is exercising its right to economic development, said in September it had completed its final phase of filling a reservoir for a massive hydroelectric power plant at the dam on the Blue Nile.

"The meeting was unsuccessful due to Ethiopia's persistent refusal ... to accept any of the technical or legal compromise solutions that would safeguard the interests of all three countries," the Egyptian statement said. There was no immediate comment from Ethiopia.



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

PM announces upgradation of KMC, AMC to medical universities

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here on Wednesday announced upgradation of Khyber Medical College (KMC) Peshawar and Ayub Medical College (AMC), Abbottabad as public sector medical universities.

The prime minister made the important announcement while addressing the 46th annual meeting of Association of Physicians of Pakistan Descent of North America (APPNA) organized by the alumni of Khyber Medical College Peshawar at Governor House. On the request of members of APPNA and its President Dr Arshad Rehman, Prime Minister Kakar said that practical work on upgradation of KMC and AMC as public sector medical universities should be initiated within 35 hours by the respective authorities. Commending APPNA's rich services for ailing humanity and continued long connection with people of their home country, the prime minister di-

rected the Governor and Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to give practical shape to upgradation of KMC and AMC to a full fledged medical universities keeping in view of people and APPNA demands.

While lauding services of students of both these medical colleges in healthcare services in the country as well as abroad, the prime minister said that Pakistani doctors serving in United States and others foreign countries were like an ambassador of Pakistan and their medical and surgical services besides philanthropy contribution during earthquake, floods and other natural calamities in Pakistan was highly praised worthy.

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

He said that Pakistani doctors have proved their

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

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

On the request of APPNA President, the prime minister announced to recommend name of Dr Umar Taimur Atique, for Nishan-e-Imtiaz, the first non-American President of the College of Physician of America for his great services for Pakistan. Dr Umar Atique was the graduate of KMC Peshawar. The prime minister recalled his memories of spending time with friends at CEENA Hall hostel of KMC at Peshawar, saying that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's unique culture.



JORDAN: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamsah Mirza called by King of Jordan King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussain at Jordan.

IT ministry develops mobile app to digitize Hajj operation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hajj operations for pilgrims have been digitalized as Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications has developed a mobile app in record time to facilitate Hajj Pilgrims.

Caretaker Minister for IT Dr Umar Saif and Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed jointly launched the application developed by the National Information Technology Board (NITB) on Wednesday, said a statement issued here.

Chief Executive Officer NITB Babar Majeed Bhatti briefed the participants about the application in the welcome address.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, the Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Dr. Umar Saif said that the process of digitalization has been accelerated in the country under the directions of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). The launch of Hajj application was a milestone in this connection, he said.

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

He said pilgrims can view and update their per-

sonal information, including contact details and identification information. The application will enable Pilgrims to view their Hajj application status i.e (submitted, successful, unsuccessful, refunded) real time updates, he said.

He said the application will provide information that is collected from application form i.e personal information, group information, Mehram information, helper information, additional facilities, Hajj dues, nominee information, and applicant's bank account details. Dr. Umar Saif further said that Pilgrims can access information about their Hajj group, including group members' details.

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

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, who is on an official visit to Jordan, called on King Abdullah II, Ibn Al Hussain.

Jordanian King Abdullah Ibn Al Hussain conferred the medal 'Order of the Star of Jordan' on CJCS General Sahir Shamsah Mirza in recognition of his meritorious services.

During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed various areas of interest,

including bilateral politico-diplomatic and military co-operation and the prevailing regional security situation, according to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release issued here Wednesday.

The CJCS also held separate meetings with Major General Yousef Ahmed Al-Hnaity, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and Brigadier General Muhammad Hyasat, Commander of the Royal Jordan Air Force.

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

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

Murtaza argued that political parties need more time to distribute tickets to candidates at both the na-

tional and provincial levels. He proposed adding three days to the nomination paper receipt period to facilitate this process.

To compensate for the extended nomination window, Murtaza suggested reducing the time for scrutiny of nomination papers from seven days to four days. He believes this adjustment would still allow elections to be held on the scheduled date of February 8th. Meanwhile the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) has demanded the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Raja Sultan to extend the deadline for filing of nomination papers for the general elections.



Judicial Assistants of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a group photo with Mr. Justice Athar Minallah at the Federal Judicial Academy Islamabad.

Submission of nomination papers for 2024 elections kicks off

ISLAMABAD (INP): Submission of nomination papers for participation in general elections kicked off on Wednesday.

According to schedule issued by Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the desiring candidates could get and submit the nomination papers till 4:30 pm December 22.

On December 23, preliminary list of the candidates will be released while scrutiny of nomination papers will be held from 24th to 30th December.

As per the schedule, electoral symbols will be allotted to the candidates on January 13 and polling for the general elections will be held on February 8.

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

The ECP said that nomination papers can be

submitted from December 20 to 22.

The fee for obtaining the nomination papers is fixed at Rs.100.

A candidate can submit a maximum of five nomination papers with different endorsements.

The fee for the candidate of the National Assembly seat is Rs30,000 (non-refundable) while the fee for the candidate of the Provincial Assembly seat is Rs20,000 (non-refundable).

The candidate shall attach the income tax return documents of the last three years with the nomination papers.

The basic qualification for the candidate is to be a citizen of Pakistan and not less than 25 years of age.

As per ECP, contestants for National Assembly seats must be voters of any place in Pakistan.

19th convocation of BUITEMS due to be held today

Independent Report QUETTA: The 19th annual convocation of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS) is scheduled to be held today (Thursday) here in it's Takatu campus.

According to the programme, the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar would be the chief guest at the convocation.

He would award degrees to the graduates and postgraduate students of the university.

Performance of DHOs & MSs of hospitals to be strictly monitored: Secretary

Independent Report QUETTA: The Secretary Health Department, Abdullah Khan has stated that the performance of District Health Officers of all districts and Medical Superintendents of the public sector hospitals would be strictly monitored all over the province.

The Secretary Health also vowed to make the primary healthcare structure more organised and effective and there would be no compromise in this regard.

He was presiding over the zoom meeting of divisional directors, DHOs and Medical Superintendents here on Wednesday.

Also present in the meeting were Special Secretary Health, Mubeenur Rehman Qambrani, Director General Health Services, Dr Farooq Hoth,

Additional Secretary Health, Arif Khan, Additional Secretary Health, Hameed Zehri, Section Officer, Tahoor Khan, Director Safe Blood Transfusion, Professor Dr Hanif Mengal, Director Emergency and Monitoring Dr Fahim Khan, Additional Director MSD Dr Shoab Akram and other concerned high ups.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health said that majority of the people depend on the government hospitals for treatment in the rural areas. He asserted that no excuse would be tolerated in provision of the medical treatment and medicines in the hospitals.

The Secretary said that improvement is being brought in availability of the medicines and other healthcare facilities.

Illegal structures demolished in Quetta

Independent Report QUETTA: Illegal structures in different parts of the provincial capital were demolished on Wednesday by the staff of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation in a drive launched against encroachments.

Following the directions of Abdul Jabbar Baloch, Administrator, Quetta Metropolitan Corporation, staff of QMC launched anti encroachment drive under the supervision of Ali Raza Durrani, Incharge, Anti, Encroachments in different areas of Quetta.

During the drive, several illegal structures were demolished in different areas of Quetta, including Liaquat Bazar, Mecong Road, Usman Road, Abdul Sattar Road and Archer Road.



QUETTA: Former Caretaker Provincial Minister Agha Umar Bangalzai meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Muhammad Zubair Jamali.

ADOWA demands posting of officers of attachment deptt. against key positions

Independent Report QUETTA: Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association, has demanded of the authorities to post officers of attached departments against the key positions of line departments instead of posting of BCS and BSS officers.

It was stated by Abdullah Khan Durrani, President, Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association in a statement issued here on Wednesday.

Balochistan Civil Services (BCS) and Balochistan Secretariat Services (BSS) officers were being promoted against the

posts of attached departments, said he, adding that posting of BCS and BSS cadre officers were not acceptable to Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association.

He said that a delegation of the Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association would call on Chief Secretary Balochistan for redressing the grievances of field officers, adding that if demands of Federation of the Attached Departments Officers Welfare Association were not addressed, protest movement would be started besides adopting legal option.



KARACHI: Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozezai talking with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori.

DC Ziarat chairs meeting to improve health facilities for patients

ZIARAT (APP)-Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ziarat Hamad-ur Rehman on Wednesday chaired a meeting of District Health Committee meeting to improve quality of health facilities for patients of the area.

District Health Officer (DHOs) Dr. Badar Nadeem Ansari, DSM PPHI Faridullah Panizai, MS Dr. Irfanuddin participated in the meeting.

In the meeting, important decisions were taken regarding the appointment

of Dr. Paramedical staff on duty and the provision of facilities in hospitals.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Hamad-ur Rahman said that Doctors are the messiah of the nation, they should treat the people better and fulfill their duties honestly.

He said that strict action would be taken against those absentee doctors and paramedical staff in order to improve functional of hospitals in the area.

351 more power connections disconnected; 64 tempered meters removed

Independent Report QUETTA: In all 351 more electricity connections of the defaulters of utility bills and arrears were disconnected and 64 tempered and shunt meters were removed during last 24 hours in all operation circles of Quetta Electricity Supply Company (QESCO). According to the spokesman of QESCO, the drive against defaulters and power pilferers is continued all over the province. The QESCO has managed to collect over Rs. 320 million on account of the detection and fine from the power pilferers in the province.

SFA technical team visits BFA labs

Independent Report QUETTA: A technical team from the Sindh Food Authority (SFA), led by Director Technical Dr. Ahmed Ali Shaikh and Technical Advisor Dr. Seema Ashraf, recently visited the newly established laboratories of the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA). This visit took place at the invitation of the BFA and under the direction of DG SFA Agha Fakhar Hussain.

The primary objective of the visit was to provide guidance, assistance, and testing facilities to the BFA laboratories. The SFA team aimed to enhance the capabilities of the BFA in chemical analysis and microbial analysis.

During the visit, the SFA technical team offered consultations and guidance to the staff of the microbiology lab at BFA. They provided valuable insights on the analysis of loose or unpacked oil/ghee samples, harmonizing the procedure,

and implementing uniform strategic Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) followed by the Sindh Food Authority.

Furthermore, the SFA technical team extended their consultation and support to the BFA in chemical analysis. They provided expertise in food grade and non-food grade color analysis, powdered and infant formula milk analysis, as well as bakery and confectionery item analysis.

This collaborative effort between the SFA and BFA aims to strengthen the food safety infrastructure in Balochistan and ensure that the highest standards are maintained in the production and distribution of food products.

By sharing knowledge, expertise, and resources, both authorities are working towards the common goal of safeguarding public health and promoting consumer confidence in the food industry.

Customs foils major bid of smuggling of foreign currency & gold

Independent Report QUETTA: The Pakistan Customs foiled major bid of smuggling of foreign currency and gold from alleged smugglers at Pak-Afghan border on Wednesday.

According to the spokesman of Customs, the Customs carried out operation against the smugglers in collaboration with the Frontier Corps (FC) at the Pak-Afghan border.

During the seizure, a total of 826 grams of gold and around 200,000 foreign currency (Saudi Riyal) were recovered from five alleged smugglers.

The smugglers were arrested and further legal action has been started against them.

According to the Customs spokesman, the worth of smuggled currency and gold is over Rs. 3 crore.



FAISALABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Siraj ul Haq is addressing the Tahiya Palestine Convention at Al-Fateh Sports Complex.

Hashmi underscores media's role in highlighting successes of China-Pakistan ties

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi on Wednesday underscored that media collaboration has a vital role in highlighting successes and solidify the mutual trust which is the bedrock of China-Pakistan relationship.

He made these remarks while speaking via online at the 8th CPEC Media Forum "Next Decade of CPEC: Opportunities and Learning from Past Decade" held in Islamabad to celebrate the completion of the first decade of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Ambassador Hashmi highlighted that the 2nd phase of CPEC is poised to focus on the socio-economic development of our peoples. The key CPEC projects promise to improve the lives and livelihood opportunities, including for those in the remote areas. He said enhancing bilateral industrial cooperation between Pakistan and

China remains pivotal. In the next phase of CPEC, both sides would endeavour to accelerate implementation of 2022 Framework Agreement on industrial cooperation to develop industrial parks and special economic zones in Pakistan. Ambassador Hashmi said with CPEC's increased focus on green projects, such as hydro power generation and solar parks, we are determined to achieve the target of 60 percent renewables in our national energy mix by the year 2030.

He noted that CPEC symbolizes the combined efforts of two countries to bring their economic and trade ties at par with their robust political partnership.

He underlined that the seamless connectivity between Xinjiang and Gilgit Baltistan is key to facilitate trade, promote people to people exchanges and solidify geopolitical ties between our two countries.

Pakistan, Brunei hold inaugural round of bilateral consultation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The inaugural round of Pakistan-Brunei Bilateral Consultation and Cooperation (BCC) was held virtually on Wednesday wherein the two sides engaged in extensive discussion on bilateral relations, regional developments and multilateral issues of mutual inter-

est. The inaugural round was co-chaired by Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Ambassador Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brunei, Pengiran Norhashimah Binti Pg Mohd Hassan, a Foreign Office press release said.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat presiding over meeting of local bus owners and rickshaw union.