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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on Prime Minister's Youth Program.

## Protestors were not involved in violence, confirms minister. Govt releases women and children after crackdown on Baloch protesters

Police crackdown on Baloch protesters aimed at avoiding 'catastrophe': Interim ministers; 90% of the men arrested during the crackdown have been released

ISLAMABAD (INP): The interim government announced on Thursday that all women and children detained during the police crackdown on Baloch protesters had been released.

This was announced by Privatisation Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad while addressing a press conference in Islamabad, accompanied by Information Minister Murtaza Solangi and Jamal Shah.

"At the prime minister's direction, a decision was made to release all women and children without exception. Additionally, all identified men have

also been freed," stated Fawad Hasan Fawad.

The Islamabad police had detained numerous Baloch men and women during a demonstration against enforced disappearances and extrajudicial killings.

Videos circulating on social media depicted security forces using water cannons and tear gas on the protesters, forcibly dragging Baloch individuals into police vans, and using batons against them.

Furthermore, the police dismantled protest camps

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## Governor calls IGP Islamabad; discusses about arrests of women & children of BYC

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar called the Inspector General of Police Islamabad and discussed about the matter of arrests of women and children belonging to Baloch Yekjehti Committee there in Islamabad on Thursday.

Speaking to the IGP Islamabad, Governor stressed on finding peaceful solution to the issue immediately.

The IGP Islamabad apprised the latest situation and informed that all the arrested women and children have been released. However, other protesters of BYC are in the police custody and would be produced in the court of law. It may be mentioned here that the Governor would proceed for Islamabad in this regard.

## Individuals involved in May 9 riots mustn't hold any public office, opines PM Kakar

LAHORE (INP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar opined on Thursday that individuals involved in the violent events of May 9 should not hold public office.

In an interview with a private news channel, PM Kakar stated that no political party should be prevented from participating in electoral activities.

"If any party is hindered, it constitutes an illegal act which must be investigated."

Kakar clarified that there was no policy to prevent the PTI from holding rallies. He also emphasised that caretakers did not impose any restrictions on featuring the photo of the PTI founder in the media.

The PM pointed out that during electoral campaigns, political parties often targeted each other with criticism, and allegations were not only against the caretakers, but also against all past governments.

PM Kakar further stated that a strong coordination existed between the caretaker government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) for holding transparent elections.

He assured that the caretaker government would fulfill all responsibilities for fair elections in the country.

Kakar also noted that the individuals involved in the violent events of May 9 were currently facing the law.

## Door opens for others as well Caretaker CM welcomes all militants who surrender and join national mainstream

ISLAMABAD (INP): The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardaan Khan Domki has welcomed all the militants of the banned organization who surrendered and joined the national mainstream the other day.

He said that we welcome all 70 militants who surrendered and joined the national mainstream the other day by giving up the armed struggle against the state.

In an official statement issued here on Thursday, the Chief Minister appreciated the practical efforts made by the tribal jirga held during the current month in this regard.

The Chief Minister

said that positive impacts of the tribal jirga have started coming in. He said that we invited all the angry Balochs to play their role by joining the national mainstream with open heart.

He said that while 70 anti state militants joined the national mainstream the other day, it is hoped that more would also come.

He said that the state is like a great mother and kind father and there's nothing in the anti-state movements.

He said that the solution of issues lies in the mutual talks and we have to find out the ways and means to resolve the basic issues being faced by the people of the province.

## IHC rejects plea for immediate stopping cipher case trial

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notice to Attorney General (AG) and FIA on the petition filed by PTI founder Imran Khan against in-camera trial in cipher case.

The court rejected the plea for immediate stopping the trial of cipher case.

The case came up for hearing before single bench

of IHC led by Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb here Thursday.

Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb remarked we want to hear AG on this matter.

Expressing his surprise over giving deadline of four weeks by Chief Justice (CJ) IHC for completion of trial

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QUETTA: Members of Baloch Yekjehti Committee are holding protest rally for recovery of Baloch missing persons as soon as possible, held at Assembly Chowk in Quetta.

## Baloch demonstrators have 'constitutional right' to protest: IHC

IHC orders Islamabad IG to submit report today of number of Baloch protesters arrested, in judicial remand

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Aamer Farooq Thursday warned the capital city's top cop against any hindrance in the protest staged by the Baloch marchers, saying that they have the constitutional right of demonstration.

The remark came during the hearing of a case pertaining to the "illegal" arrests of Baloch long march

participants in Islamabad. Islamabad Inspector General (IG) Akbar Nasir Khan appeared before the IHC bench upon being summoned by the CJ after the court took up a plea against the arrest of Baloch protesters — earlier in the day.

The long march participants were detained by authorities during a demonstration in Islamabad

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## Pak demands probe into banned TTP acquiring advanced weapons

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has demanded a probe to determine how the banned out-fit Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan acquired advanced weapons, used in recent terrorist attacks in the country.

The demand was placed by Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram to UN Security Council during a debate on the situation in Afghanistan. He said TTP and its affiliates have carried out a series of organized cross-border terrorist attacks on Pakistan's soil.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation &amp; Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination Fawad Hasan Fawad addressing a press conference along with Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi and Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage &amp; Culture Jamal Shah

## CPEC Balochistan Forum to equip journalists in under-developed areas

ISLAMABAD (INP): The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Media Forum Balochistan Initiative was launched on to equip the journalists in under-developed areas of Balochistan with information of the Chinese investment in the region and its positive impacts.

In an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said that the CPEC Media Forum Balochistan Initiative will equip the local journalists of Balochistan with the right information about CPEC projects.

He said, "CPEC starts from Gilgit-Baltistan to Gwadar, and it cannot be completed without the development of Balochistan, especially Gwadar.

We should encourage more journalists to join the media industry especially focusing on the region's de-

velopmental projects and will give them the right information to encounter the negative propaganda against the corridor."

On asking about the availability of media education at the University of Gwadar one of the University students Samaa who was present at the forum told the correspondent that journalism has not been introduced at Gwadar University as yet, and introducing media education at the university level will help youth play their role in this field. Adding to the role of the media industry in Balochistan Chairman Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed elaborated that the local media channel journalists from print as well as electronic media should be supported by both Chinese and Pakistani governments to convey the right information to the locals.

## Pakistan deeply concerned over India's terrorism: FO

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan has said it is deeply concerned over Indian terrorism adding Modi government is spreading terrorism in all over the world including South Asia.

"Blasphemy law is not discriminatory law against anyone. Pakistan does not use this law against any minority. Action is taken indiscriminately as per law.

All the minorities enjoy equal rights in the country. Army Chief Gen Asim Munir is on official visit of US and he has held important meetings with the authorities therein. Pakistan will participate in conference

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## Sanjrani announces to participate in Elections

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani has also announced to participate in general elections.

Sadiq Sanjrani will contest elections of both National and Provincial constituencies. Chairman Senate will participate in general election from Chaghi.

Sadiq Sanjrani has obtained nomination papers for contesting elections of national and provincial assembly.

## 5 killed as bus carrying wedding guests overturned into ditch in Duki

DUKI (APP): At least five persons including women were killed on the spot while other several injured when a speeding van carrying wedding guests has overturned into ditch near Nana Sahib of Tehsil Duki in Balochistan on early Thursday morning.

According to details, Rescue sources said that the accident took place in Duki area of Balochistan where an ill-fated van was returning from after attending a wedding ceremony overturned and claimed five lives, a private news channel reported.

Police said the deceased included women and children, adding, after being informed rescue teams rushed to the spot and bodies were shifted to a nearby hospital.

## Directs Governor to reach Islamabad over issue: BNP chief condemns torture on participants of BYC & arrests in Islamabad

QUETTA: The President of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal has strongly condemned the torture on the peaceful participants of Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC) and the heirs of missing persons besides their arrests in Islamabad the other day.

He said that he has directed the Governor Malik Abdul Wali Kakar to reach Islamabad immediately and resolve the issue and speak to the concerned authorities for release of those arrested in the federal capital.

The BNP Chief asserted that if the arrested persons were not released then the Governor would tender his resignation there.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal was addressing a hurriedly called press conference on Thursday. Also present on the occasion were other se-

nior leaders of the party. Addressing the presser, BNP Chief said that the baton charge and shelling on the participants of Long march of BYC and protest sit-in is condemnable. He also slammed the arrests of the protesters made in Islamabad.

He alleged that the state is trying to suppress the voice of people through force, which would yield worst consequences.

He demanded of the rulers to conduct inquiry into the incident through judicial commission.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that we used to call the caretaker government as the undertaker, and it's testified now. He said that we informed the Islamabad walas about the issues of Balochistan. He said that the issue of Balochistan is purely political and it can be resolved politically.



HYDERABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari speaking at 9th Ayaz Melo organised by Khanabadosh Writers Cafe in collaboration with Culture &amp; Tourism Department Sindh at Sindh Museum.

## Bilawal reiterates imperative to end politics of hatred, division

HYDERABAD (INP) – Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Thursday reiterated the imperative to end the politics of hatred and division, asserting, "Unity leads to victory, not division".

Speaking at the Sheikh Ayyaz mela [a public event] here, Bilawal acknowledged the presence of individuals promoting division and hatred, and stressed collective efforts to confront all these threats.

The ex-foreign minister asserted that a united youth was the key to defeating those involved in divisive politics.

Voicing concern over prevalent oppression in Pakistan, Bilawal stated that the gravest injustice was not solely the loss of popular leaders, but also the suppression of history, culture and language.

The PPP leader called for a societal shift, encouraging a transition from a culture where youth wielded guns to one where they held pens, aiming to showcase Pakistan's rich history and culture. Bilawal, while recognising the progress made towards curbing extremist mindsets, cautioned against political parties labelling each other as traitors or infidels.



19th Annual convocation of BUITEMS held: Governor exhorts students to utilize potential for development &amp; prosperity of country

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has exhorted the students to utilise their potential for development and prosperity of the country and Balochistan.

He said that the future of the country and province is linked with youth.

The Governor said that the real objective of life is to help others. He also

urged the youth to take wholehearted part in the development and reconstruction of the country.

The Governor was addressing the 19th annual convocation of Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS) here at its main Takatu campus on Thursday.

The caretaker provincial ministers, government

high ups, Vice Chancellor of BUITEMS, Professor Dr Khalid Hafeez, Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan and others were present.

Malik Abdul Wali Kakar congratulated all the graduates on their successful graduation. He also congratulated the parents and teachers of the students on their graduation and

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### Khalid Khursheed disqualified from heading PTI GB

GILGIT (INP): Former Gilgit-Baltistan chief minister Khalid Khursheed has been disqualified for life from heading the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) GB chapter. Earlier on July 4, the Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Court disqualified Khalid Khursheed Khan as chief minister GB in a fake degree case. Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) GB in a verdict released on Thursday, disqualified Khalid Khursheed for life from heading the party.

A three-member bench announced the verdict on a petition filed by a member of the GB Assembly Shahzad Agha against the chief minister. The petitioner had argued that Khursheed's law degree was fake and he should be disqualified under Articles 62 and 63.

## Efforts in collaboration with mosques vital to educate out-of-school children: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday stressed the need for making all possible efforts in collaboration with the mosques to educate around 28 million out-of-school children in the country.

The president, chairing a meeting to discuss the role of mosques in promotion of education, said the mosques could be used for promotion of literacy in the country.

Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs, education ministers of Sindh and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, provincial education secretaries, and representatives

of Aqaf and Religious Affairs departments attended the meeting. In the meeting, the president was briefed about the Accelerated Learning Program.

It was told that over 70,000 out-of-school children in Islamabad were enrolled in the schools. The Accelerated Learning Program Model envisages the provision of five-year education within 24 to 30 months and enrollment of the out-of-school children. The meeting was told that the grown children, who were deprived of education, could benefit from the said program.

It was told the said

program was flexible, focused and low-cost initiative which could also be implemented at the places provided by the community, religious seminaries and second shifts in schools.

Religious Affairs Minister Aneeq Ahmed said the federal government would extend all possible facilities to educate the out-of-school children. The participants of the meeting agreed to formulate a policy paper to utilise the platform of mosques for the education purpose. The draft of the policy paper would be presented before the federal cabinet for approval.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on role of Mosques in Education, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



LAHORE: Quaid of PML (N) Muhammad Nawaz Sharif presiding over Parliamentary Board meeting.

### China, Pakistan sign MOU on biodiversity conservation

BEIJING (APP): China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation (CBCGDF) and Raptor Centre for Conservation and Rehabilitation Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on biodiversity conservation.

The two parties have agreed to enhance their cooperation in building community-level biodiversity conservation networks and raising awareness about the conservation of raptor biodiversity.

They also aim to improve in-service training and speciality courses on raptor identification, conservation, and habitat assessment, as well as to assist in the capacity building of professionals.

In accordance with the guiding principles of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), the parties will formulate a multi-species action plan for raptors, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

They will also establish essential facilities for

the rescue, rehabilitation, and breeding of raptors, and devise a plan to raise awareness about raptor conservation.

These efforts will significantly contribute to preventing the extinction of raptors.

An advance party of China and Pakistan have long shared prosperity and adversity, supporting each other in coping with major challenges such as natural disasters. CBCGDF responded promptly and initiated cooperation with Pakistan and its scientific community.

It has participated in the "Monitoring and Assessment of Desert Locust Plagues in Asia and Africa" project of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, conducted remote sensing monitoring of biodiversity in Pakistan, and offered early warning of invasive species to assist Pakistan in safeguarding food security.

Under the Memorandum, the two parties will collaborate to initiate a new approach to global biodiversity governance that is fairer and more equitable.

### Pakistan deeply concerned...

*Continued from page 1*  
ence on Palestine which is scheduled for December 23 in Tehran. Pakistan will continue to extend support to Kashmiris at political and diplomatic level, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at weekly press briefing here on Thursday.

Pakistan has called for holding Israel accountable for its actions and urged the United Nations Security Council to take immediate effective action to impose a ceasefire and lift the inhumane siege against Gaza.

She said we strongly condemn Israel's ongoing war on hospitals and its barbarous bulldozing of tents in the courtyard and vicinity of the Kamal Adwan Hospital in Gaza that crushed to death numerous Palestinians including women, children and wounded patients under treatment.

She said the crimes against humanity in occupied Palestine are a haunting stain on the conscience of humanity.

The Spokesperson said Pakistan is also deeply concerned over the recent statements made by senior Israeli officials, rejecting the creation of a viable and independent Palestinian state.

She said such statements, especially the comments on the "Oslo Accords", reflect the true intentions of the Israeli occupation authorities, their disregard for International law and commitments and rejection of a just resolution of the Palestinian question.

Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan firmly believes that the only just solution to the Palestinian

question is the creation of an independent, viable, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State along pre-June 1967 borders with Al-Quds-Al-Sharif as its capital.

Replying to a question, the spokesperson said Pakistan is deeply concerned about use of sophisticated arms and ammunition by a terrorist organization like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan.

She said collaborated actions by the international community are required to deal with the TTP threat.

Answering another question, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan expects from the Afghan authorities to take effective measures against terrorists groups, especially TTP, operating on Afghan soil.

She added that Islamabad is also concerned over Indian involvement in supporting and fanning terrorists and their activities inside Pakistan.

The Spokesperson said Indian network of terrorism has now been expanded globally beyond South Asia.

She said Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism, emanating from individuals and entities supported by Indian intelligence agencies. The arrest of Indian officials like Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav is a bright example of Indian involvement in espionage and subversive activities inside Pakistan.

To another question, the Spokesperson said Pakistan remains committed to provide security to all foreigners and foreign investments in the country, including Chinese nationals, who are contributing a lot in the development and progress of Pakistan.

### Baloch demonstrators...

*Continued from page 1*

against the enforced disappearances of Baloch missing persons. The march began in Turbat and was heading towards the Islamabad Press Club when the police intercepted them late Wednesday night.

An advance party of Baloch Yakjehti Council (BYC) Wednesday reached Islamabad through the Motorway, but the police intercepted it at Chungi No. 26 and barricaded all the main and artery roads, including Kashmir Avenue, leading to the Red Zone.

"Two groups of BYC arrived unscheduled Wednesday evening but the authorities deployed police to block the mob as their motorcade reach Chungi No. 26," police sources said, adding that one group comprising about 50 protesters had joined the BYC protesters already sitting in front of the National Press Club, however, the remaining protesters who reached by busses were cut off at Chungi No. 26.

Police sources said the law enforcement agencies were trying to clear the blocked roads by forcing the protesters away from the main road.

Human rights lawyer Imaan Mazari represented the protesters in the plea filed by long march organisers Sami Baloch and Abdul Salam.

### Governor exhorts...

*Continued from page 1*  
achievement of a milestone in their academic career.

The Governor noted with pleasure saying that it is a matter of pride for all of us on completion of 20th year of the university.

He said that the sapling planted around 20 years in the name of BUITEMS has grown up as a towering and strong tree.

He said that thousands of youngsters have benefited from the fruit and shadow of that tree.

He believed that future of the country is youth like BUITEMS students.

He particularly appreciated the Vice Chancellor of BUITEMS Dr Khalid Hafeez and his team on the tremendous contribution in the field of higher education.

Justice Miangul

### IoU dialogue on rethinking urban development extends Youth Eco-Entrepreneurship opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Institute of Urbanism (IoU) dialogue on Thursday extended a unique opportunity for Eco-Entrepreneurship to the youth working on innovative solutions to rethink urban development in the country through sustainable and environment-friendly solutions. The Institute of Urbanism and the School of Leadership Foundation with the support of the U.S. Embassy under the Green Urban Development programme organised the crucial dialogue titled "Rethinking Urban Development in Pakistan: The Potential of Youth for Eco-Entrepreneurship".

The dialogue convened members of civil society, academia, experts, civic

agencies' representatives from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and journalists with the aim to undertake a critical assessment of current and future urban trends, incorporate sustainability principles in urban development and unite thinkers and implementers to co-create solutions. In recognition of the significant role of youth and its exponential share in the country's total population, the forum focused on empowering them to contribute actively to environmental protection. The Quaid-i-Azam University students' four groups participated in the contest to fetch the grant for their start-ups to be scaled up for urban development.

### HEC record history, taking 3rd position in National Athletics Meet

PESHAWAR (APP): The Men and Women athletes of the Higher Education Commission showed excellent performance in the National Athletics Championship held in Attock, on which the Higher Education Commission awarded the third position.

Talking to APP, former international athletes and the Director of General Sports University of Peshawar Bahre Karam appreciated the Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Muhammad Saleem for extending sup-

port to the athletes. He said the Vice Chancellor University of Peshawar Professor Dr Muhammad Saleem got a special congratulatory letter after the HEC teams gave outstanding performances. Coordinator and Manager HEC Team Athletics Championship and former international athlete Bahre Karam, said that the players made their hard efforts by winning third position.

According to the results, the HEC team won the third position in the women's competition.

### IHC rejects plea for immediate

*Continued from page 1*

of cipher case remarked we don't give four weeks time in general cases.

Suleman Akram Raja counsel for petitioner said the court announced the decision of holding in-camera trial on the request of prosecution. It wrote in the decision there will be ban on coverage of cipher case too because relations with friendly countries can be affected due to reporting of court's proceedings. Ban has been imposed on media and social media to publish proceedings of cipher case.

The family members of the accused are conditionally allowed to sit in trial. But they have been made bound that they cannot talk about court's proceedings.

The court inquired how it is direction case. Suleman Akram Raja told the court single bench while rejecting Shah Mehmood Qureshi bail directed to complete the trial within 4 weeks.

The judge while expressing surprise said it is really correct that 4 weeks time has been given. We don't give 4 weeks time for common cases.

Suleman Akram Raja requested the court to issue stay order on trial of cipher case.

The court remarked we are issuing notice to AG. Let us hear him first.

Later the hearing of the case was adjourned.

Hassan inquired had court issued notice on the application for in-camera proceedings. When the accused were indicted.

The court remarked on problem is coming in this case. One lawyer is dealing with trial while some other lawyer is filing appeals.

Suleman Akram Raja told the court Mr Punjotha is here who is dealing with trial. He has told that the indictment was made on December 14. Notice was issued for December 14 on December 13 application for in-camera trial. Hearing is being held in the court on day to day basis being direction case.

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## Majority of Pakistanis perceive CPEC positive for Pak economy: Report

BEIJING (APP): As 2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the launch of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a report titled Perceptions on CPEC in Pakistan, was revealed in the 8th CPEC Media Forum, hosted by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and organized by China Economic Net and Pakistan-China Institute.

Data from the report indicate that there is widespread agreement among Pakistanis that CPEC will help revive economic activity in Pakistan.

The report draws its insight from 350 individuals, encompassing key stakeholders including 62 government employees, 22 parliamentarians, civil sector representatives, private sector professionals, journalists, members of academia and students from Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit.

Based on the report, 65% of the respondents view Chinese professionals as friends of Pakistan who will help revive the country's economy and socio-economic well-being.

ing.

This means a majority of Pakistani people strongly believe that CPEC will prove to be beneficial for the country and its people. About how CPEC will help Pakistan, 93.5% of the respondents view CPEC as a project that will significantly help Pakistan through investment in various sectors while also opening avenues for businessmen.

And, 75.1% of the respondents agree that through CPEC, local businessmen will get access to international markets.

Moreover, 61.1% of the respondents believe that CPEC will help economically vulnerable groups such as women, which signals positive segments among the Pakistanis with regard to how CPEC is slowly revolutionizing the economy by improving the socio-economic well-being of the people.

Additionally, 66.9% of the respondents think that investment under CPEC can significantly improve the agricultural industry of Pakistan, and 72.7% of the respondents

believe that CPEC has helped develop state-of-the-art infrastructure in the country.

Looking into the future, 54.2% of the respondents think CPEC should focus on business opportunities more, followed by education (13%), health (5.9%), IT (2.3%), etc. Overall, the majority of the respondents perceive CPEC positively as a game-changer for Pakistan economy.

Furthermore, the second highest responses for the questions were "neutral" which stems from the idea that while CPEC is fast progressing and its fruit is visible some people lack a good understanding of this corridor and its influence regarding different development phases.

Statistics from the Embassy of China in Pakistan exhibit that by the end of 2022, CPEC had brought direct investment of \$25.4 billion to Pakistan, creating 2,36,000 jobs, building 510 kilometers of expressways and 886 kilometers of national grid, and adding 8,000 MW of electricity.



HUB: Baloch Yakjehti Committee holding a rally against arrest of protesters in Islamabad

### Govt releases women and children...

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and loudspeaker setups outside the National Press Club.

Following the outcry, the caretaker government formed a negotiation team led by Solangi, Fawad, and Jamal Shah to engage with the protesters' families.

During the briefing, Fawad addressed the situation, indicating a clash between police and protesters.

He mentioned that the Islamabad police chief, Akbar Nasir Khan, presented facts before the Islamabad High Court (IHC), stating that the protesters were already present and not the instigators of the chaos.

Fawad also noted the presence of individuals who had covered their faces and seemed prepared for certain actions.

Responding to a question, the minister said that Islamabad police had been directed to release all the women and children.

"Some of them are yet to be identified," he said, adding that 90% of the men arrested during the crackdown have been released.

"The matter of those nominated in the FIR is in the court." He further said that the government would comply with the court's order in letter and spirit.

To another query, the minister said that the negotiation committee would present their recommendations before the PM and the caretaker cabinet.

APP adds: The government on Thursday pointed out that some unidentified

masked local persons tried to hijack the peaceful protest of Baloch people which led to the unruly situation on Wednesday resulting into arrest of protesters.

A peaceful protest was a right of every citizen and the people from Balochistan had been on a peaceful protest outside the National Press Club for the last 23 days but none of the law enforcement forces did not take any action against them, caretaker federal ministers Fawad Hassan Fawad, Muratza Solangi and Jamal Shah told a joint press conference.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar formed a committee comprising Federal Minister for Privatization Fawad Hassan Fawad, Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Muratza Solangi and Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah to negotiate with the protesters.

Fawad said that the government had offered the protesters to stage their sit-in either at F-9 Park or in Sector H-9 keeping in view their security. However, the Baloch people camped outside the NPC to record their protest peacefully.

The minister said it was reported that some unidentified persons wearing masks were participating in the protest. As per intelligence reports, such people did not belong to Balochistan, rather they were locals. When the police on Wednesday took ac-

tion against the masked people, they started pelting stones at the personnel, which had to arrest the protesters, he added.

The minister said after scrutiny, 90 percent of the innocent and peaceful protesters, including women and children, had been released while the unidentified men were still under detention.

Information Minister Muratza Solangi said Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar had formed the committee to address the issues of protesting Baloch people.

The committee had held negotiations with the protesters and especially met children and women, he added.

From the government side, he said, Fawad Hassan Fawad was leading the negotiations with the protesting Baloch.

He said the committee had taken steps for resolving the existing situation and needful would be done to address their issues.

To a question, Solangi said there was no hurdle in holding the general elections in accordance with the schedule issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

Culture Minister Jamal Shah said that the prime minister had entrusted them with the duty of negotiating with the protesters. He said that the issues of protesters had been resolved amicably. Some elements tried to take advantage of the current situation, but they would not be allowed to succeed, he added.



QUETTA: Members of Secretary Welfare Officers Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, outside Chief Secretary's office in Quetta.



## Protesters breaching Red Zone to face legal consequences: ICCPO

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan on Thursday warned that the protesters attempting to breach the Red Zone would face legal consequences.

Taking to the media here at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), he said that on Tuesday night, some individuals concealed their identities and tried to enter the Red Zone while carrying sticks. He said that the action against the law violators including the use of water cannons was the responsibility of the government as well as a requirement to maintain law and order as the Red Zone housed the Parliament, government offices and residences of diplomats.

Dr Akbar Nasir highlighted that the use of water cannons was not perilous if managed responsibly and that there were no women and children among the protesters on the site.

ICCPO said the protesters were told to gather at H-9 or F-9 Park to make it easier for the administration to provide security cover to the venue.

He said that the pro-

testers were urged to uphold the rule of law and express their dissent in a non-violent manner, recalling last year's tragic incident where a police officer sacrificed his life to neutralize a potential suicide bomber.

"We remain committed to preventing any loss of life, whether due to protests or unforeseen circumstances. Regardless of one's stance on protests, everyone shares the responsibility of respecting the law," he added. He said that it was also the responsibility of the protesters' leadership to hold protest gatherings as per planning to ease the management as well as the residents.

ICCPO said that the protesters also resorted to violence against the police-men which also compelled the police to act accordingly.

Quoting the recent incident in which a police officer and his son were martyred, he said that the criminals involved in the heinous crime were not from Islamabad as some accused were arrested from Bannu and Waziristan.

Earlier, addressing the participants at ICCI while celebrating the 148th Birthday of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing the 7th meeting of the Senate of National Skills University Islamabad, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Dr Nadeem calls for addressing antimicrobial resistance

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr Nadeem Jan on Thursday called for galvanizing efforts to deal with the critical issue of addressing and containing antimicrobial resistance in Pakistan.

Addressing a closing ceremony of the Fleming Fund Country Grant Pakistan, the minister called for a narrative on antimicrobial resistance which was digested and palatable to political leaders, health professionals, and communities.

Dr Nadeem said there was a need for revising the

National Action Plan on AMR. He added that all stakeholders should be consulted for revising the plan.

He requested commitment of all stakeholders in updating the national plan on AMR.

The minister suggested forming a high-level taskforce on AMR, which should serve as the coordination platform for efforts and initiatives on addressing antimicrobial resistance.

He said the most crucial factor in containing AMR was the change in behaviour towards the use of antibiotics.

In this regard, he recommended a comprehen-

sive communication strategy on AMR.

The Fleming Fund is a UK-funded programme focusing on controlling antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in more than 25 countries, including Pakistan, across Africa and Asia.

Managed by the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Fleming Fund supports governments through country and regional grants and fellowship schemes to implement AMR strategies globally, especially in low-income countries where AMR has a disproportionate impact.

Since 2019, Pakistan

has come a long way in terms of addressing AMR under the One Health approach.

The Fleming Fund has actively supported the initiatives to implement Pakistan's National Action Plan on AMR.

This cooperation at the federal and provincial levels will continue in the second phase of the grant.

Dr Qadeer Ahsan, Team Lead of the Fleming Fund, gave an overview of the grant's four-year work in Pakistan.

He said the silent threat of AMR should be understood at all levels from the policymakers to the people.

## Jordan's Ambassador explores collaborative initiatives with COMSTECH

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhry, in a comprehensive meeting with the recently appointed Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan, Dr. Maen KHREASAT at COMSTECH Secretariat here Thursday, discussed the establishment of a joint Water Resource Management Center and launch of a young scientists exchange program.

During the meeting, Prof. Iqbal highlighted the ongoing collaborative efforts between COMSTECH and Jordan, revealing that COMSTECH had spent around \$1.5 million in various active projects with Jordan to date.

Dr. Iqbal further briefed the Ambassador about the existence of two COMSTECH-affiliated organizations in Jordan, namely the Islamic Academy of Sciences (IAS) and the Inter-Islamic Network on Water Resources Development and Management (INWRDAM).

In a groundbreaking proposal, the CG COMSTECH demanded the establishment of a joint Jordan-Pakistan Water Resource Management Laboratory under COMSTECH's auspices at the Panjwani Hissa Water Institute (NED University). He also recommended the initiation of a young scientists exchange program between COMSTECH and Jordan, for scientific collaboration and knowledge exchange.

Dr. Iqbal also informed the Ambassadors about 500 free scholarships for Palestinian students by COMSTECH and Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) Ambassador KHREASAT expressed Jordan's commitment to sustaining cooperation with COMSTECH, emphasizing Jordan's role as a technology hub in the region.

He envisioned joint programs with COMSTECH to explore new technological frontiers and enhance higher education initiatives.



ISLAMABAD: Candidates for National Assembly Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar talking to media persons after submissions of nomination papers to contest in upcoming general elections at ECP Offices.

## PM's program to empower skilled youth key pillar to prospers country: NAVTTC

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) Muhammad Aamir Jan Thursday said that the Prime Minister's Youth skilled program is key pillar to empower them with the necessary tools and innovative skills, which will grow globally.

The skills were linked with international certification.

PM's youth empowerment programme aims to promote youth employment by reducing young women and men's vulnerability and exclusion through a three pronged approach of jobs & economic empowerment, social engagement and education and skills development, he added.

This program aims to empower hundred thousand marginalized and excluded youth across the country, he said.

He also advised parents to allow their children take up vocational skills pending when academic activities resumes, adding, media should play proactive role to aware people at the grass-root to encourage vocational education training programs.

ED said that a skilled human resource was essential for running industrial units constantly.

Caretaker government was empowering youth through imparting skilled and vocational training programs to provide them better employment opportunities within the country and abroad, he said while talking to PTV news channel.

Amir Jan explained the program that over 4.5 million people in the country entered the labor stream every year with only 1.5 people having proper skills.

He said the objective of the programme was to provide skilled training to 56,000 people all across the country and mentioned that



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Associated Press of Pakistan, Muhammad Asim Khichi along with Christian employees cutting cake in connection with Christmas celebrations.

## Religious Ministry to provide Abaya to women pilgrims this year

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed has said that this year women pilgrims will be given Abaya by the Ministry that will have Pakistan's flag embossed on it.

He expressed these views while addressing the closing ceremony of the Hajj Master Trainers training program for women organized by the Dawah Center for Women of the International Islamic University (IIU). Federal Minister Aneeq Ahmed said on the occasion, that Hajj is a journey from oneself to God.

He said women protect religious values and transfer religion to future generations. He further said that the role of women as mothers and sisters in Islamic society is vital.

He said trainers of International Islamic University's Dawah Center for Women will be utilized in training programs for Hajj

to be organized by the Ministry. He discussed the memories of Hajj and highlighted the importance of Muslim men and women in society. Federal Minister for Religious Affairs said that it is our responsibility to pass on religion to our generations. Addressing the participants, Aneeq Ahmed said that there is a need to strengthen the relationship with Allah and Prophet (PBUH).

He said there is a need to form a society in the light of religious principles. He said that the Ministry and the University will jointly work for Hajj training.

On this occasion, the Rector of IIU, Prof. Dr. Samina Malik said that the services of the Ministry and Dawah Center for Women for the Hajj training program are commendable.

She said that the representation of women from every corner of the country made this program a success.



ISLAMABAD: Special advisor to the prime minister of Pakistan on human rights and women empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick addressing during an event following the celebrations of Christmas at Nazriya Pakistan Council (Trust) Fatima Jinnah Park.

## Senate body directs MoCC&EC to work out better strategy to curb smog

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD: The members of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change on Thursday directed the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) to work out a better strategy to curb smog as the environmental pollution in the major cities of the country was lingering despite all policy and regulatory efforts.

The Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change was held here at the Parliament House with Senator Seemee Ezdi in Chair.

The committee members emphasized the urgent issue of smog in various cities of Punjab.

The committee chairperson initiated the discus-

sion by pointing out that this critical matter is often considered only when it's too late. Officers from the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC) provided a briefing on the factors contributing to air pollution in Punjab's cities.

The MoCC&EC officers explained that a significant portion of pollution is due to traffic pollution.

They presented their legal and institutional framework for smog prevention and control. They also highlighted weaknesses in watch and ward, work prosecution, collaboration, presence, operations, and monitoring.

They admitted some industries in the north of

Lahore violated their standardized procedures. They mentioned their forward strategy involves strengthening field officers, presence, drone surveillance, improved and timely reporting, and daily debriefing sessions.

They initiated the ECO Watch Android app for accurate mapping of irritants, ensuring daily monitoring of actions, and tracking pollutant footprints. They also reported implementing 80% effective emission control to reduce black smoke.

The committee chairperson expressed that, despite these efforts, smog persists in the region, suggesting a possible flaw in the implementation of their methodology.

Officers concluded that local pollutants such as transport, fugitive dust, and uncontrollable dry sweeping contribute to environmental degradation, while industrial contributions to pollution have significantly decreased.

## ECP rejects KP Bar's misinformation on NA seats

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Thursday dismissed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council's claim about the reduction of seats in the National Assembly of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, stating, "It is baseless, contradicts facts, and aims to create confusion among the public."

In a statement, an ECP spokesman clarified that, in 2018, the 25th constitutional amendment merged the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) into Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Following the merger of FATA with the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa province, 12 National Assembly seats in FATA were eliminated, and six seats were added to the National Assembly seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, stated the spokesman.

The spokesman mentioned that the National Assembly seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have risen from 39 to 45, and the Provincial Assembly seats have increased from 99 to 115, with an additional 16 general seats.

He emphasized that determining the seats of the National and Provincial Assemblies is the prerogative of the Parliament.

## MoST to equip NIO with latest facilities: Saif

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Dr Umar Saif Thursday said his ministry will start work to equip National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) with a new marine vessel for ocean surveys, research and global collaborations.

According to a tweet, he said this while chairing the Board meeting of NIO.

He said that the blue economy, ocean surveys, exploration of ocean minerals and oil exploration are significant national issues, often ignored in government priorities.

"We will start work to equip NIO with a new marine vessel for ocean surveys, research and global collaborations, especially for CPEC", the tweet said.

## Hafeez Jalandhri remembered on death anniversary

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 41st death anniversary of creator of Pakistan's national anthem, Abul Athar Hafeez Jalandhri observed on Thursday.

He was born in Jalandhar, Indian Punjab on 14th January 1900, his family migrated from Jalandhar to Lahore after partition.

He was a great poet of song as well as poem and ghazal. His extreme achievement is "Shahnama Islam" which he wrote in poetic form and published in four volumes. Due to this commendable achievement, he was given the title of 'Firdowsi Islam'. The second major achievement of Hafeez Jalandhri was the National Anthem of Pakistan and he will always be remembered for this unique creation.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy in decorate paint wall of Rawal Dam underpass "Let's Get Digital Islamabad" in the Federal Capital.

## Indonesia, Pakistan to collaborate for improving distant learning programs

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the University of Terbuka, Indonesia's leading open university, visited Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Thursday to foster collaboration and discuss opportunities and key challenges in the realm of distant learning programs. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, Executive Director HEC chaired the meet-

ing. Led by its Rector Prof. Ojat Darajat, the University's delegation included faculty members representing various departments and experts in distant learning programs. Dr. Muhammad Latif Gondal, Executive Director (Planning and Monitoring) Allama Iqbal Open University, Awaish Ahmed, Adviser Quality Assurance HEC and other divisional heads.

## 3rd round of 'Infodor Media Salon' held

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (APP): The 3rd round of the "Infodor Media Salon" this time on China-Pak Economic Corridor (CPEC) ICT projects was held at the office of the All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises' Association (APCEA).

The event commenced with an overview of CPEC's progress, the contributions of all stakeholders, and perspectives on Pak-China relations.

The session was attended by representatives from Chinese ICT sector companies including China Mobile Pakistan (CM Pak) Zong, Huawei, Sunwalk, Hikvision, Heroboss, Carcare Services, ZTE Pakistan, said a news release.

Among other partici-

pants were senior representatives from the Embassy of People's Republic of China, Global Silk Route Research Alliance, and COMSATS University China Study Center, said a news release.

The event also had significant from both Chinese media (CCTV, Huashang Weekly, Xinhua News, China Economic Net) and Pakistani media (Pakistan Observer, PTV, Jang Media Group, Daily Ittehad, Pakistan Economic Net, Gwadar Pro, Hum News, APP).

Executive Director Infodor shared Infodor's perspective as a media entity, emphasizing the importance of transparent re-

porting and communication in enhancing the public's understanding of CPEC and Pak-China relations.

He highlighted the specific coverages, challenges faced and various strategies employed to disseminate accurate information.

CM Pak presented its contributions in the energy sector, emphasizing the crucial role of sustainable energy solutions implemented, specific CPEC projects undertaken and enhancing Pakistan's economic development and its effect on Pakistan's economic landscape.

Huawei outlined its significant contributions to the development of 5G infrastructure in Pakistan,

supporting the digital transformation crucial for CPEC's success and enhancing connectivity between the two nations.

They included the technical details, deployment timelines, and the broader societal benefits of Huawei involvement in advancing digital connectivity.

The advancement in smart cities and the role of ICT in facilitating seamless connectivity and communication and had an outstanding performance by Huawei and it's a great initiative taken by Huawei for the youth. Sunwalk mentioned their achievement on fiber network delivery and planning and importance of connection for digital economy.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Seemee Ezdi, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.



ISLAMABAD: A view of accident after a vehicle hit to another at Islamabad Expressway.

## EC reserves judgment in ANP intra party election case

**Independent Report**  
ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has reserved judgment in Awami National Party (ANP) intra party election case.

A five members commission of EC under Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) took up the case for hearing Thursday.

Asfand Yar Wali president ANP was present on the occasion. While DG political finance wing Masood Sherani gave briefing to EC in regard to intra party election of ANP.

The counsel told the EC we were told that six months are given to us. If the election is not completed within 6 months then the election be held again.

CEC said why the intra party elections were not held. Election symbol will

not be allotted to you in this situation. You will not be able to take part in the election.

EC authorities said ANP has sought adjournment in connection with intra party election. 5 years will be completed on May 01, 2024.

Counsel for ANP said constitution says the slots will be for four years but cabinet will continue to work in the event of the polls. It remained confusion in six months if the election are taking place or otherwise.

The CEC said the way you are talking means the election is not needed. What is it that election will be held or not. What is its concern with your party election. Commission has no authority after five years.



Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

Friday December 22, 2023

**Multiple candidacies**

In light of the recent consultative meeting organised by Pildat and UNDP, it is high time Pakistan's political landscape embraced a much-needed reform: limiting the number of seats an election candidate can contest. The practice, while not new, has recently sparked debate, especially following PTI chief Imran Khan's decision to contest from eight constituencies in last year's by-elections. We regret that a private bill introduced last year by a Jamaati-Islami MNA, aimed at restricting candidates to no more than two seats, was not taken seriously. The lack of progress on this front perpetuates an unfair electoral advantage and a financial burden on the nation. Globally, democratic nations have addressed this issue with pragmatic solutions. India, for example, permits a maximum of two simultaneous candidacies, while Bangladesh allows three. Meanwhile, the UK has completely banned the practice of contesting more than one seat. These measures not only ensure financial prudence but also uphold the fairness of the electoral process. In Pakistan, the financial implications of this practice are significant. The ECP estimates a cost of Rs20.7m associated with conducting by-elections in constituencies vacated by winning candidates. These expenses, borne by taxpayers, are hard to justify, especially in a country facing economic challenges.

Furthermore, the ability to contest from multiple constituencies creates an inherent imbalance in the poll competition. It favours those with ample resources, often sidelining capable candidates with limited financial means. This disparity goes against the very essence of a democratic system, which should ideally ensure equal opportunities for all aspirants, irrespective of their economic status. The matter also has a direct impact on voter sentiment.

When elected representatives vacate seats to choose another, it can lead to a sense of disenfranchisement among the electorate. This practice not only necessitates costly by-elections but also weakens voters' trust in the democratic process. In the interest of these concerns, a mutual agreement must be reached among political parties to limit the number of constituencies from which a single candidate can contest. This self-regulation would be a significant step towards ensuring fair play and financial responsibility in the electoral process. Thereafter, it is imperative that the next government, irrespective of its political alignment, takes definitive steps to amend Article 223 of the Constitution. This amendment should aim to limit candidates to contesting from no more than two seats, in line with international practices. The need for reform in Pakistan's poll system is clear. Political parties must collectively work towards implementing these changes. Such an initiative would not only enhance the fairness and integrity of elections but also demonstrate a commitment to responsible governance. We hope that with mutual understanding and collaboration, Pakistan can move towards a more equitable and financially sustainable electoral system.

**Ali Tauqeer Sheikh**

Several important opportunities at COP28 have set the direction of Pakistan's climate journey for the year ahead. Pakistan was able to seize at least five possibilities. The additional emergency opportunities can help Pakistan further deepen climate relations with China, the EU, Britain, the US and some Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, to finance low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

Pakistan's participation at the climate summit in Dubai was active and full of energy. It reflected a level of inter-ministerial collaboration hardly witnessed before. The ministries of climate, foreign policy, planning, finance, and trade and commerce combined efforts to carve out space and expand policy linkages.

They, together with the governments of Punjab and Sindh, showcased initiatives undertaken for climate resilience. The private sector and civil society, particularly with the robust participation of the youth, infused energy, innovation and creativity into the proceedings.

Pakistan was elected to the founding Board of the Loss & Damage Fund (LDF), and secured positions on four important committees of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): the Technology Executive Committee (TEC); Paris Committee on Capacity-Building (PCCB); Advisory Board of the Santiago Network (ABS); and the Standing Committee on Finance (SCF). These committees will work to address various aspects of climate change, including technology, innovation, and finance, to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Being a member of these committees will offer Pakistan strategic opportunities to leverage their workings for their synergistic impact and advantages for Pakistan. Let's first look at

the opportunities Pakistan captured proactively at COP28.

LDF is a financial mechanism that aims to help vulnerable nations rebuild necessary physical and social infrastructure. One of the few concrete decisions of COP28 was the creation of this fund. The exact scope of the LDF still has to be clearly defined, and its financing is something that needs to be ironed out.

Pakistan was elected to become a member of the founding board. The role of the board is to oversee the fund's operations, including financial allocations and the management of the fund's resources. The World Bank will serve as a trustee and host of the fund for now.

TEC promotes technology development, providing an overview of technological needs, and catalysing the development and use of technology. Its operational arm, Climate Technology Centre and Network promotes the accelerated transfer of environmentally sound technologies for low-carbon and climate-resilient development. The TEC and CTCN jointly undertake activities

on such common areas such as national systems of innovation, industry, and the water-energy-food nexus.

PCCB supports developing countries in building their capacity, including institutional strengthening and policy development, to effectively tackle climate change in various sectors and meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement.

ABS was set up to catalyse technical assistance for the implementation of activities related to loss and damage. The Advisory Board is designed to connect developing countries with providers of technical assistance, knowledge, and resources. The Santiago Network is seen as the technical arm of the UNFCCC's mechanism for addressing loss and damage.

SCF's work is aimed at improving the understanding of the current status of climate finance flows, and to enhance efforts to identify ways to improve the effectiveness of finance in the context of the ultimate objective of the climate convention. The SCF Forum brings together representatives

from governments, financial institutions, private sector, and civil society to discuss and exchange information on climate finance.

These fora are clearly linked to each other and can help reinforce each other's work. Three of these five forums are directly linked with loss and damage, but all are committed to what Pakistan needs the most: capacity-development, technology, and climate finance. It will be in Pakistan's interest if an interministerial working group is constituted to coordinate their work and Pakistan's positions.

While Pakistan has benefited from its active engagement in the negotiating processes, it also stands to benefit from some of the failures of COP28. The climate summit failed to reach clear, timebound agreements on carbon trading and phasing out coal and fossil fuels. The Just Energy Transition Partnership, led primarily by Germany, the EU, Japan, Britain, and the US, has signed large agreements with South Africa, Indonesia and Vietnam. The aim is to help these

countries comply with the Paris Agreement and support their transition to a low-carbon economy.

South Africa signed the first JETP in 2021, receiving \$8.5bn in public and private finance over three to five years, with additional funding of almost \$3.5bn. Indonesia and Vietnam secured \$20bn and \$15.5bn in JETP deals in 2022. These partnerships have begun to accelerate the deployment of renewable energy, capping total power sector emissions, and establishing goals to reach net-zero emissions in the power sector.

China was not part of these deals. Indonesia has expressed interest in seeking China's help for renewable energy and infrastructure projects, and any partnership with China would run parallel with the JETP. Pakistan has thus far not undertaken any costing for phasing out coal but the under-construction Gwadar coal power plant can still become a model project for hybrid energy that combines hydrogen and off-shore wind energy. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Beyond the election****Kamila Hyat**

The question of whether elections will be held strictly on time in early 2024 continues to be debated in the country, and the same question recently made its way through the courts.

For some people, elections are complex: they see it as an exercise which is in many ways crucial to national interest but also acknowledge that in many ways this exercise means nothing at all.

People have become so disenchanted with democracy that many say they have no intention to vote, and others argue that there is no candidate worth putting in their vote. Some also say that the situation in the country is such that elections hold no meaning and carry no weight.

We all know the reasons for this pessimism.

One government after the other has failed people and their interests. No government has met the promises it made and the dreams it held up for people to believe in. This then is the rather sad history of a country that somewhere along the way lost its direction and also lost a large part of what it was in 1947 (the year of its birth).

The reason why people say elections are meaningless is easy to understand given the manner in which one political party after the other has let them down and failed to carry out the promises it made during its election campaigns.

But at this point in time, we need to remember that democracy is the only way forward. And elections stand at the centre of democracy, and they need to be free, fair and transparent if they are to hold any weight for the people. We have not had a fair election for a long time, controversy marring much of what goes on. The last few transfers to power have been democratic and peaceful until the events which began with the no-confidence move against the Imran Khan-led government.

For this election, we

do have some good contestants: people who have done really good for their country and seem honest in their desire to do more. In Lahore, Amar Ali Jan, a social and political activist as well as an academic, is standing for a provincial seat from Chungi, an area which houses many poor colonies, along with posh estates.

His Haqooq-e-Khalq Party has worked in the area, setting up water pipelines and talking to people about their issues. But it is obvious that this will not be enough to bring Jan to power. The same problems were experienced in the past by civil activists contesting the 2018 election. In that election, Jibril Nasir ran for two seats from Karachi and managed to secure only a few thousand votes on each seat. Overall he finished in fifth position behind other candidates with far less standing in terms of goodwill and work done.

But politics in the country is all about political power and clout rather than about what people do and how they achieve this. This is a pity. But there is no route for us to follow other than the democratic

one. For too many years in its 75-year history, Pakistan has been ruled by autocrats. This has inflicted on it a great deal of harm. The change can come only if the democratic process continues year after year and decade after decade.

Yes, this will be a painful process. Failures will come. There will be an outcry from us, as in the past, against politicians. But it is necessary to go through this process in order to come up with leaders who carry real worth and are able to deliver something to the people. This will take years and a considerable level of patience.

But we must remember that even in countries like the US, which boasts that it is the bastion of democracy in the world, leaders it has thrown in the political ring do not impress. At the present moment, US President Joe Biden, is quite obviously struck by a lack of understanding of the global political situation, and in the eyes of the press in his own country is approaching age-related issues of one kind or the other. Donald Trump was hardly any better, certainly not any wiser. We

see much of the same in the UK and a great many other countries, including those in the immediate neighbourhood.

This should make us think about why we are so quick to criticize our political leaders. They after all are not guilty for everything. They need time to produce a class of people who are truly able to deliver and add a new veneer of goodwill and stability to the politics of Pakistan. How long it will take for this to happen is unclear and depends largely on how those who hold clout and use it at will, act and what they do.

The waiting process is difficult, but it has to be endured and we must go through it one step at a time. No matter how long it takes, only democracy will eventually produce new leaders.

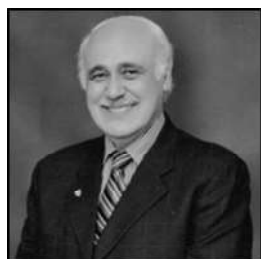
It is also important that other clauses in the constitution such as those which set up local governments, be respected and followed by the parties and by the provincial governments which so often act to crush local governments in order to gather more power for

themselves. This will only crush democracy.

Local governments are vital so that ordinary people can approach their councillors and ask for help in solving their problems. They cannot do so if the representative nearest to them is an MPA or MNA. These people are unapproachable most of the time. Those who win at the level of union or tehsil councils are far easier to reach and should be dealing with problems such as supplying water to communities or mending roads rather than leaving this task to politicians who see them essentially as a photo opportunity.

It is true that there are many flaws within Pakistan's democracy. These have been discussed extensively by analysts and commentators of all kinds. The flaws and cracks in the system will not be fixed immediately. And for the system to recover, we need patience and time.

Only if we allow this time to pass and for the peaceful transfer of democracy to become an established reality can Pakistan move forward. -- Courtesy TheNews

**That elusive cell****F.S. Aijazuddin**

Dr Azra Raza's name — a playful anagram — is nevertheless one of the most universally respected in oncology.

Pakistani by origin, she graduated from Dow Medical College, Karachi, in the 1970s. There, treating a victim dying of cancer — “the emperor of all maladies” — she decided to make that disease her specialisation.

Like many talented Pakistanis who found local institutions a useful springboard only to discover that the pool of future options was empty, Dr Raza migrated to the United States where she joined the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo (New York) in 1977. Its motto, composed by a Dr Grace, gripped her: “If I had a choice between a walk on the moon and saving one life from cancer, I would never look at the moon again.”

Rather like Dr Raza, whose husband Harvey Preisler would in time himself die from cancer, it took a personal tragedy — the death of his two-year-old son Jimmy from leukaemia — for Dr Grace to realign his priorities. Dr Grace too made it his mission to find a cure for cancer. He discovered to his chagrin though that the US government committed 400 times more money to the military than to cancer research. (Which country doesn't?)

Dr Raza has compressed her research over the past 40 years in cancer prevention and treatment into a moving, readable

(even for a layman) book titled *The First Cell: And the Human Costs of Pursuing Cancer to the Last* (2019). She lectures extensively, drawing attention to her lonely quest to identify and isolate the first cell — in essence, “finding cancer before it finds us”.

She summarises her book in one pithy sentence: “The future is in preventing cancer by identifying the earliest markers of the first cancer cell rather than chasing after the last.”

Synthesizing her experience in the field since 1984, she found that “while there has been little progress in cancer research, there has been even less improvement in treatment”, some of it unchanged since the 1970s. She makes this startling observation: “Since 2005, 70 per cent of approved drugs have shown zero improvement in survival rates, while up to 70 per cent have been actually harmful to patients.”

She notes that in 1977, the survival rate of cancer patients was 26pc. Over 40 years later, despite the billions of dollars spent on research, it has improved only marginally to 28.5pc.

Having seen death too often and too closely, she is qualified to assert: “Dying is not a failure. Denying death is.” It is not shared nihilism that draws her close to the Afro-American writer the late James Baldwin, who mused: “It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the fact of death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life [...] It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return.”

Dr Azra borrowed Baldwin's telling phrase as the title of her recent Yohsin lecture at Karachi's Habib University: *Confronting with Passion the Conundrum of Life*.

During her lecture, she

explained the uniqueness of her approach. She identifies patients with a high risk of cancer and then monitors them, looking for that first tell-tale symptom. She has analysed that the major causes of cancer are age and stress. According to her, 60pc of cancers diagnosed are cured, mostly by surgery, chemotherapy and radiation. The remaining 40pc are diagnosed but are at too advanced a stage to be salvaged.

Her medical library consists of a tissue bank she created that contains over 60,000 specimens drawn from cancer patients. Her pioneering effort in this type of specialised documentation is now being given the re-cognition (bela-ted-ly) it deserves.

In her inimitable, often bilingual presentations, Dr Azra weaves science with poetry, in English and in Urdu. She does not need to search for the appropriate quotation: Rainer Maria Rilke, W.H. Auden, Shakespeare, Allama Iqbal, Faiz and Ghalib wait impatiently to be summoned. She honoured Ghalib particularly by co-authoring a book on him with Sara Suleri Goodyear titled *Ghalib: Epistemologies of Elegance* (2009).

At a small gathering in Lahore on Dec 11, Dr Azra discussed how the life span of humans has lengthened. Whereas previous generations had a life expectancy of 50-60 years, then 70-80 years, now 80-90, our elders reaching 100 or more, she suggested, should no longer come as a surprise.

“Will a human being live up to 150 years?” she was asked. “Why not?” she replied. “In fact, I suspect that the first person likely to live 150 years has already been born.”

Dr Azra should herself have been born more recently. She would have had at least a century of vital life-saving research ahead of her. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Climate resilience****Naseer Memon**

The screening of development projects through the lens of climate resilience requires a paradigm shift in development planning and budgeting. The International Monetary Fund wants Pakistan to introduce this shift through the FY2024-25 budget. Prodding the ministries of finance and planning, the IMF has prescribed making budget documents more explicit on the nexus between the budget and climate-related action. It has put emphasis on advancing green budgeting, including budget tracking, publishing information on climate-related spending and aligning the next budget with climate change adaptation.

The overall mainstreaming of climate change in development planning involves myriad intricacies. Prioritising the most promising investments in the public sector with a strategic focus on addressing climate concerns requires a wise approach. This entails development planning and financial allocations to pre-empt climate woes through diligently designed adaptation and mitigation projects.

Last year's floods inflicted losses and damage to the tune of \$30 billion on Pakistan. A deeper scrutiny of the factors that triggered this devastation reveal climate-insensitive planning and misplaced priorities. The logical cure to perpetual disasters is removing the bugs from the development process that worsen the impact of extreme climatic factors. The latter can convert hazards

into calamities, and removing developmental defects is a prerequisite for averting disasters and mitigating loss and damage.

Climate-sensitive budgeting and mainstreaming of climate change adaptation is often misconstrued as financial allocation for the relevant ministries and departments. In reality, the concept transcends budgets. International expert on climate change adaptation Richard Klein explains the concept as “the integration of policies and measures to address climate change into ongoing sectoral planning and management, so as to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of sectoral and development investments”.

This approach underscores the need for developing a climate lens to development projects. Sectoral policies should focus on adaptation that can be infused into sectoral plans and eventually trickle down to the project level. Applying climate filters at the project level requires an in-depth dissection of every development project with a climate knife and not just marking a perfunctory tick box in the PC-1 pro forma.

Another possibility could be to broaden the scope of the environmental impact assessment to climate impact assessment. This can climate-fence projects. The EIA is mandatory for large-scale, complex and environmentally sensitive projects but has been reduced to a ritualistic drill these days. The process has been trivialised to the extent of circumventing the EIA altogether or conducting it mid-course only to observe a formality. The environmental protection agencies have been rendered spineless. At times, they take a compromised position when projects involve special interests for powerful people.

Once the development process is made cli-

mate-proof, setting the right priorities is the next goalpost. Water conservation, disaster mitigation, resilient agriculture, efficient irrigation systems, reducing emissions in brown sectors, renewable energy sources, preventive public health systems, sanitation, storm drainage, and afforestation are some of the key priority areas of the investment portfolio. These sectors need integrated strategies to create synergies, with adaptation agendas in line with the Pakistan National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Plan 2023-2030.

A silver lining is that the glass is not half empty. The Climate Public Expenditure Review, 2017, for Pakistan shows that the country is already spending a sizeable proportion of its budget on sectors contributing to offsetting the impact of climate change. Nevertheless, a significant financial gap still persists as the average costs for annual adaptation to climate change have been estimated at \$10.70bn per annum over the next 35 to 40 years.

The provincial governments have to lead from the front as all these subjects fall under their ambit. The provinces are equipped with locally contextualised climate change policies. Climate-sensitive planning and budgeting will have an enduring advantage for the provinces. A robust climate mitigation and adaptation plan will reduce their vulnerability to hydro-climatic disasters, and thus create fiscal space for other developmental needs that are often compromised due to climate-induced torments. Investment in such projects will have multifarious benefits, including disaster mitigation, ecosystem restoration, the greening of the economy and the creation of resilient communities. -- Courtesy Dawn



## Punjab governor awards 29,456 degrees at Sargodha University convocation

**Independent Report**  
SARGODHA: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman conferred degrees upon 29,456 students at the 10<sup>th</sup> convocation of the University of Sargodha (UoS), held on Thursday.

The ceremony was significant as it marked the graduation of around 64.5 per cent girl students, out of the total student population.

The ceremony was presided over by Chancellor Muhammad Balighur Rehman, accompanied by Chairman Higher Education Commission Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Vice Chancellor UoS Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas and deans of eight faculties at the convocation venue.

As many as 81 PhD degrees, 1098 MS/ MPhil/

MSc (Hons)/ LLM, 12,713 MA/MSc, 4741 BS/ BSc (Hons)/ BBA and 10,823 BA/ BSc/ ADP degrees were awarded to students from the faculties of Agriculture, Arts and Humanities, Computing and Information Technology, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health Sciences, Pharmacy, Science and Social Sciences. Moreover, 277 students with distinctions were honoured with medals.

Governor Balighur Rehman extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduates and scholars, stating, "Today is a day of joy and success for the students." He expressed hope that the graduating students, through their unique research capabilities, would contribute significantly to

the dignity of institutions, teachers, and the value of degrees earned."

He emphasised the fortune of Pakistan, boasting a large youth population, stating that the youth are the most valuable asset for any nation. Furthermore, the governor highlighted the imperative use of fact checking in era of disinformation to counter the exposure of youth with false narratives across digital platforms. He applauded the efforts of University of Sargodha in skill development of the students. He appreciated efforts of the Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Qaisar Abbas to promote academic culture with emphasis on commercialization of the ideas generated by students.



SARGODHA: Chancellor University of Sargodha Punjab, Mohammad Baligh-Ur-Rehman and VC University of Sargodha Pro Dr Qaisar Abbas distributing degrees during 10th Convocation of the University.

## Governor KP highlights rule of law for social, economic development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Thursday said that supremacy of rule of law was prerequisite for economic development of a country and establishing society on firm foundations.

He was addressing a ceremony in Centre for Learning Law and Business (CLLB). The ceremony was also attended by Advocate General, Amir Javid, Secretary Higher Education Regulatory Authority, Sajid Inam, lawyers, students and faculty members.

On the occasion, the

Governor was informed that the center is affiliated with University of London and the students of CLLB would be issued degree from the University.

Addressing the ceremony, the Governor highlighted the significance of rule of law and said that it was the prerequisite for social and economic development.

He said that the role of lawyers community in our judicial system could not be undermined and added that law students should also be informed about their role in existing judicial system.

He urged the students

to further polish their abilities and skills and play role to improve status of country among world nations. Youngsters are assets of the country and they must work in cohesion with a purpose for country's development, he expressed.

The KP Governor said that justice, peace, knowledge and conscious were the factors that derive strength from justice and supremacy of law in a society. He also lauded the administration of CLLB for organizing the co-curricular activities and assured his cooperation to faculty members.

## Punjab CM gives approval to construction, repairing of 2600km roads

**Independent Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi has given approval to the building and repairing of 2,600-kilometre roads in Punjab.

More than 105 roads of best quality will be constructed, repaired and expanded in different districts.

A report on road's rehabilitation project was presented in special meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister said that construction of roads, rehabilitation and completion of expansion projects are indispensable needs of the people. He said that the construction, repair and maintenance of roads will not only ease the traffic but also flow in the traffic.

In the meeting, Secretary C&W Sohail Anwar gave a briefing on the progress on road construction and rehabilitation. It was briefed that about 104 road construction, repair and

maintenance projects were pending.

In less than a year, 104 roads projects will be completed with excellence. The construction, expansion and maintenance projects of 104 roads of the province will cost around Rs150 billion.

A special committee is monitoring in each district and division to ensure the construction quality of roads.

Nine projects of construction of important roads in different districts of Punjab have been completed while 33 highways of different districts are under fast completion and will be completed soon.

It was briefed that provision of additional funds for 39 more roads is being reviewed and 6 projects of roads will be completed under PSDP.

Provincial Local Government Minister Aamir Mir, Additional Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development Board, Secretary Finance, Secretary C&W and other officials were also present.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with the Faculty members and students of center for learning Law and business (CLLB).

## Written order on hearing of Imran Khan petition against jail trial issued

LAHORE (Online): Written order in connection with previous hearing of petition filed by PTI founder Imran against his jail trial has been issued.

A 3-member bench of Lahore High Court (LHC) presided over by Justice Alia Neelam issued interim order in regard to previous hearing of Imran Khan petition.

According to court's order counsel for Election Commission (EC) presented notification of December 8 jail trial. The counsel requested for making

amendment in the petition.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case till January 22. The court rejected PTI founder Imran Khan plea against jail trial remarking Adiala jail is in Rawalpindi and the jurisdiction of this court relates to Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The court has issued notices to EC and others besides seeking reply on next hearing.

It is pertinent to mention here former chairman PTI had challenged proceedings of contempt of EC case and jail trial in LHC on December 9.

## Sharjeel Memon files nomination papers for PS61

HYDERABAD (APP): The process of receiving and submitting nomination forms continued on the second day from the candidates who wanted to participate in the upcoming general elections.

Former provincial minister and PPP leader Sharjeel Inam Memon submitted his nomination papers to the RO office to contest the election of provincial assembly constituency PS61, on Thursday.

A large number of party workers also accompanied him on this occasion. Apart from this, former provincial minister and People's Party leader Zahid Ali Bhurguri also submitted nomination forms for national assembly constituency NA-219.

The process of receiving and submitting nomination forms from candidates belonging to different political and religious parties in the respective RO offices was underway.

## May 9 cases: ATC issues non bialable arrest warrants of 51 PTI leaders

LAHORE (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Lahore has issued non-bailable arrest warrants of 51 leaders of PTI including Murad Saed, Hammad Azhar, Farrukh Habib and Ali Amin Gandapore in May 9 cases.

The court has issued arrest warrants in attack on Gujranwala cantt and May 9 siege and arsons cases on the request of police.

The police told the court that the accused are nominated in case and are absconding to avert arrest. The court summoned report on December 23 for further proceedings.

## GB gov't forms committee to address the issues of journalists

GILGIT (APP): The government of Gilgit Baltistan has formed a high-level committee under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Syed Sohail Abbas to enact comprehensive legislation on the pattern of other provinces to protect the rights of journalists and solve their main grievances. A notification has been issued in this connection. The high-level committee form on the special orders of the Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan

Haji Gulbar Khan. The committee included representatives of the media industry of Gilgit-Baltistan and the Provincial Special Assistant for Information, Secretary of Information, and Secretary of Information.

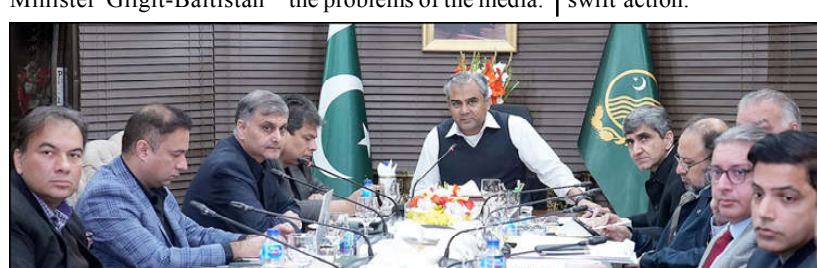
With the special instructions of the CM of GB Haji Gulbar Khan and the special efforts of the Special Assistant for Information and Secretary of Information, the committee was established to ensure the resolution of the problems of the media.

## Police seized smuggled petrol, diesel

PESHAWAR (APP): Saddle Police in a successful operation has seized a significant quantity of smuggled petrol and diesel. The seized fuel, suspected to be non-custom paid, was illegally transported from Iran.

Saddle Police Station has effectively cracked down on the smuggling of Iranian diesel and petrol. During the operation, three suspects were captured while attempting to smuggle 40,000 liters of petrol and 8,000 liters of diesel in two tankers.

Police have taken swift action.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi presides over the special meeting to review progress on Roads Projects.

## Czech Republic envoy visits city, explores cultural heritage

PESHAWAR (APP): The Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, Ladislav Steinhübel along with his spouse, embarked on a captivating journey to Peshawar, leaving an indelible mark on their visit to the city on Thursday.

The purpose of their visit was to delve into the rich cultural heritage of Peshawar. Their sojourn in the city allowed them to explore various historical and cultural landmarks, encompassing significant sites such as Masjid Mahabat Khan, the famed antiques market at Asamai Gate adjacent to Sarafa Bazar, Qissa Khwani Bazar, Tehsil Ghor Gathri, and Sethi House.

As guests of the Honorary Consulate of the Czech Republic for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, His

Excellency Ladislav Steinhübel and his wife expressed immense delight in immersing themselves in the rich history and heritage of Peshawar. Their visit to Masjid Mahabat Khan included a warm reception by the Son of Maulana Tayyab Qureshi, the caretaker of the mosque. Here, they were presented with a bouquet and savored the local hospitality with a refreshing cup of green tea, a cherished tradition among the people of Peshawar.

The Ambassador and his spouse were enchanted by the antique jewelry displayed at Sarafa Bazar. A special cultural exchange involved the presentation of traditional caps and rings to both the Ambassador and his spouse.

## ATC grants bail to 3 accused in Askari Tower attack case

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Thursday granted post-arrest bail to three accused, allegedly involved in Askari Tower attack case.

The court granted bail to Muzzamal Rehman, Ayaz Talat and Huzafa Zia, and ordered them to submit surety bonds of Rs 200,000 each for availing the relief.

ATC Judge Abher Gul Khan heard the post-arrest bail pleas of the accused and announced the verdict after hearing detailed arguments of the parties.

The Gulberg police had registered a case against the accused and other leaders and workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on the charges of attacking Askari Tower during May-9 violence.

Meanwhile, another ATC also granted post-arrest bail to Ayaz Talat and Huzafa Zia.

## Minister chairs meeting to review Tourism Dept's initiatives, future plans

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Culture, Tourism, Archeology and Museum, Barrister Firoze Jamal Shah Kakakhel chaired a review meeting at the office Secretary Tourism here Thursday.

The meeting focused on evaluating the performance of the Tourism Department, ongoing projects and the road map for future endeavors.

During the meeting, Secretary Tourism, Mutahir Zeb gave a detailed briefing, shedding light on the progress of Integrated Tourism Zones and the identification and development of new tourist destinations within the province.

Senior officials from the Tourism Department participated in the discussions.

The minister underscored the urgency of completing the amendments for the welfare of artists.

facilities for visitors. He highlighted the commitment to the welfare of artists, announcing plans to revise the Artist Welfare Endowment Fund Act Rules. He stressed on more effectively on proposed amendments to address challenges faced by artists in the province.

The meeting revealed that the amendments, once approved by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet, would significantly enhance support mechanisms for artists encountering financial difficulties.

## KMU holds seminar on SDGs for maternal, child health in Islamic world

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Medical University (KMU) here on Thursday hosted a significant event focusing on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for maternal and child health in the Islamic world.

The aim of this lecture was to shed light on the progress made, identify existing obstacles and explore potential avenues for improvement in achieving the SDGs related to maternal and child health. It was emphasized that fostering positive change was not only a necessity but a shared obligation among the member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The focus was underscored on championing the cause of reproductive, maternal, child and adolescent health, deeming it a pivotal priority for overall development.

provoking lecture on the challenges and opportunities associated with the SDGs for maternal and child health in the Islamic world.

Renowned public health scientist, Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar A. Bhatta was the keynote speaker and chief guest at the seminar.

The ceremony attended by Advisor for Health KP Prof. Dr. Riaz Anwar, Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Ziaul Haq, Prof. Dr. Hafeezullah (former VC KMU), Registrar KMU Inamullah Khan Wazir, faculty members, administrative officers, dignitaries and large number of students.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Dr. Bhatta delivered a thought-

## Hashoo Foundation, UNHCR's organize employer's meet up

PESHAWAR (APP): The Hashoo Foundation, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)'s LIVE HMT project, orchestrated a groundbreaking event, "Hospitality Connect: Employer's Meet up & Job Fair," here at Serena Hotel.

The event garnered significant attention and participation, serving as a pivotal platform for approximately 30 Afghan

beneficiaries specializing in the hospitality sector.

This remarkable event facilitated interactive discussions between the beneficiaries and industry experts, fostering a mutually enriching experience and offering unparalleled opportunities for engagement.

Distinguished guests and officials from various organizations, including United Nations agencies, government officers, and renowned industry leaders.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Pakistan, Ladislav Steinhübel along with others take keen interest historical Masjid Mahabat Khan during visiting in Peshawar.

## Civil Society demands complete ban on vapes in Pakistan

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, alongside the local Non-profit organization Blue Veins on Thursday called for an immediate ban on vapes and e-cigarettes in Pakistan.

This urgent plea aligns with the recent directives by the World Health Organization (WHO), which has recommended that governments should treat e-cigarettes similarly to traditional tobacco products and enforce a complete ban on all flavors, they told a press

conference here at Peshawar Press Club.

The spotlight of the conference was on the unregulated sale of vapes and e-cigarettes, particularly highlighting their detrimental impact on Pakistan's youth.

The speakers said that despite common misconceptions that vaping is a safer alternative to smoking, the WHO has highlighted the necessity for "urgent measures" to regulate these products, adding that recommended actions include the prohibition of flavoring agents like menthol and the implementation of rigorous tobacco control measures,

such as high taxes and usage bans in public places.

Qamar Naseem, Program Manager of Blue Veins, demanded, "The Federal and provincial governments must act swiftly to impose a complete ban on vapes and all forms of e-cigarettes in Pakistan. The potential health hazards, especially to our youth, are too significant to overlook. We must choose public health over industry profits."

Dr. Qazi Shahbaz, Chairman Provincial Doctors Association, a leading voice in tobacco control, emphasized, "The imperative to ban vapes in Pakistan is clear. It's about

protecting public health and preventing a new generation from falling prey to nicotine addiction and its harmful consequences. We cannot allow the vaping industry to undo the progress made in tobacco control over the years."

Dr. Ihtisham, Chest Specialist LRH said, "Vaping, often perceived as a safer alternative to traditional smoking, is a growing concern in the medical community. There is a lack of convincing evidence to support the idea that vapes are effective tools for quitting smoking. On the contrary, the use of vapes introduces

a new set of health risks, including respiratory issues, which must not be overlooked.

They observed that in Pakistan, vapes are sold with minimal regulation, making them easily accessible to the public, including the youth. Their designs are often sleek and modern, deliberately appealing to a younger demographic.

These e-cigarettes come in a variety of flavors like bubblegum and strawberry, specifically targeting children and teenagers, making them more enticing than traditional tobacco products.



KARACHI: Participants are holding awareness walk in connection of Polio Eradication Campaign organized by Health Department District West, held at Orangi Town area in Karachi.



## FTO can take action against FBR, President Arif Alvi

ISLAMABAD (Online): President Arif Alvi has said that Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has full authority to initiate an investigation into the alleged misconduct of any FBR official under suo motu notice.

President Arif Alvi has rejected 6 documents presented by Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and confirmed the orders of Federal Tax Ombudsman regarding investigation against tax officials.

According to media

report, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) has directed FBR to take steps in the light of information issued by office of Federal Tax Ombudsman regarding results of immediate investigation regarding 6 cases. Chief Commissioner LTO Islamabad has been directed to identify and point out the officers responsible for reduction in collection due to unnecessary and unjustified delay.

FTO Secretariat was informed with evidence

that lack of proper follow up by FBR officials, frequent transfers and changes in scope were not achieving the desired results.

An analysis by FTO Secretariat revealed that FBR has adopted all modern methods including proper data base and web portal. However adequate steps have not been taken regarding comprehensive communication and coordination with officers deployed and mobilized for tax collection.

It has been also stated that FBR headquarters and other formations have not arranged tracking system under modern IT facilities to regularly review the performance of officers.

In most cases, adequate performance is not possible. FTO Secretariat also comes to know that investigation reports and case studies of few cases of alleged tax evasion were prepared and shared by directorate related to Broadening of Tax Base (BTB).



Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif visited Frontier Works Organization (FWO) Headquarters in Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, International Growth Center (IGC) and Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR) hosts a seminar in Islamabad, featuring Dr. Sadiq Khan, Vice Chairman of the Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh. The event, organized by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Mohammad Jahanzab Khan, focused on the "Development Journey of Bangladesh and Lessons Learnt for Pakistan."

## Seminar held on development journey of Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Thursday held a seminar titled "Development Journey of Bangladesh: Lessons Learnt for Pakistan" in collaboration with International Growth Center (IGC) and Consortium for Development Policy Research (CDPR).

Country Director International Growth Center (IGC) Dr Ijaz Nabi, Chief Economist Zafar ul Hassan, Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman, representatives from think tanks, economic institutions, academia, private sector, civil society and various government organisations participated in the seminar, a news release said.

Vice Chairman of Policy Research Institute of Bangladesh Dr Sadiq Khan gave a comprehensive presentation covering Bangladesh's early challenges, including quantitative restrictions, economic deregulation, banking reforms, trade with India, sectorial policies, special bonded warehouse systems, raw material imports, and strategies for food self-sufficiency and private investments.

He emphasised the pivotal role of GDP growth, citing a remarkable average of almost 6 per cent per year from 2001 onward. Discussing Bangladesh's inclusive growth strategy, Dr Sadiq highlighted the importance of job creation.

## EXIM Pakistan launched to catalyze global trade

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr Shamsud Akhtar here on Thursday formally launched the Pakistan's Export-Import Bank (EXIM), marking a significant stride towards fortifying external trade, attracting investments and propelling broader economic growth in the country.

"EXIM's operationalization is a proud moment and a major milestone for us today. It will augment the banking and trade finance landscape as we know," the finance minister remarked while speaking at the inaugural

ceremony of the bank. The minister highlighted the global impact of EXIMs, citing that these institutions disbursed a staggering \$2.5 trillion in trade finance last year, substantially fostering exports across over 60 countries and boosting export investments. Detailing the diverse portfolio of products offered by EXIMs, Dr Akhtar emphasized the significance of export credit loans, which provided competitive-rate financing to exporters.

The minister said as the EXIM of Pakistan grew and matured it would shape Pakistan's trade finance, promoting it

principally through a proper institutional framework backed by effective policies and regulatory framework. However, she said it would need to be accompanied by streamlining export policy frameworks further because together both would be able to contribute to balance of payment sustainability that in the past had been hurting of low levels of export earnings. Dr Akhtar highlighted EXIM's potential to enhance Pakistani exporters' competitiveness globally through provisions like lending, credit insurance, and guarantee services.

## IAP, SDPO agreed to take joint steps to facilitate business community

PESHAWAR (Online): Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) president Ayub Zakori and Sub-Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Hayatabad Peshawar, ASP Nayab Moiz agreed to take joint steps to improve security situation in the estate and resolution other issues, besides provision of facilities to the business community through PAL on priority basis.

According to details, the SDPO Hayatabad Peshawar, ASP Nayab Moiz held a meeting with IAP president Ayub Zakori in the association office, said in a press release here on Thursday.

The meeting was attended by IAP executive member Malik Niaz, Zarak Khan, Adeel Rauf, Haris Mufti, Shayan Imtiaz, secretary general Muqtasid Ahsan and member Saad Khan Zahid.

The Estate Manager KPEZDMC and SHO Hayatabad were also present in the meeting.

Participants of the meeting thoroughly discussed overall security measures in the estate, especially progress on setting up of a dedicated police station, shifting of drug addicts to rehab centres, regular police patrolling, vigilance, additional force deployment of entry and exit points and provision of facilities to the business community through PAL on priority grounds.

Earlier, the association chief Ayub Zakori while speaking on the occasion emphasized the case of a dedicated police station should be taken up with police high ups and provision of all resources to be ensured in this regard.

He urged police to actively engage with ANF in formalising a plan for drug addicts. The IAP chief said regular police mobile, Ababeel force and Traffic beat patrolling to be ensured in industrial estate Hayatabad.

## Senator says: PML-N endeavors to move people towards solarization

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Afnan Ullah Khan said on Thursday that his party, after taking the reins of the government, would shift people towards clean and cheap energy through solarisation.

Under the plan, cheap solar products would be introduced with easy instalments for the lower middle class to reduce their dependency on high-cost electricity, he told PTV News.

The senator said this move would cut the country's circular debt payments and help generate low-cost and environmentally friendly electricity.

Similarly, he said PML-N was the only party with a strong economic team that pushed the country back towards the development path.

## NPO to organize webinar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will conduct a webinar on 'critical thinking and problem solving' on December 27 (Wednesday).

Problem solving and critical thinking refers to the ability to use knowledge, facts, and data to effectively solve problems, according to an NPO document shared here.

The workshop is aimed at evaluating, analyzing and synthesizing key concepts and experiences, and applying diverse perspectives to find creative solutions to problems concerning human behavior, society and the natural world.

The workshop will provide information about thinking fundamentals, logical reasoning and fallacies, problem-solving strategies, and practical applications and case studies.

The webinar has been designed for senior management, middle management, team leaders and supervisors

## Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves reach \$12.068 billion

KARACHI (APP): The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 12,068.4 million while the reserves held by the central bank reached \$ 6,904.8 million in the week ended on December 15, 2023.

The State Bank of Pakistan, in a statement issued here on Thursday, informed that SBP's reserves decreased by \$ 136 million to \$ 6,904.8 million due to debt repayments during the

week under review. Meanwhile, net foreign reserves held by commercial banks remained \$ 5,163.6 million, it added. Total liquid foreign reserves held by the country, in the previous week ended on December 08, 2023, were \$12,206.4 million. Among them, foreign reserves held by the central bank were \$ 7,040.8 million while net foreign reserves held by commercial banks were \$ 5,165.6 million.



LAHORE: Women in the provincial capital shopping in Dhrum Pura Bazar for the upcoming Christmas celebration.

## Dr Iqar says: UAF chickpea has production potential of 25 maunds per acre

FAISALABAD (APP): University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has introduced new variety of chickpea for irrigated land, which has the potential of 25 maunds per acre production, said Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).

Addressing a 16-member delegation of 34th Senior Management Course, National Institute of Management (NIM) Lahore during their visit to UAF, he said that Pakistan spends billions of rupees on the import of chickpea

and other pulses but now UAF variety would play its active role to trim down its import bill.

He said that in the current situation, the cultivable land for chickpea in rain-fed areas has decreased due to various reasons.

He said that 5 billion dollars are spent on edible oil imports and 1.5 billion dollars on soybeans.

He said that the UAF in collaboration with the Washington State University has also introduced new types of wheat that are resistant to climate change.

## Commissioner directs authorities to ensure supply of fertilizers at govt rates

RAWALPINDI (APP): Director Chaudhry Mohammad Jafar, Deputy Director Agriculture (Extension) Rawalpindi Sadia Bano, Deputy Director Attock Shakeel Ahmed besides representatives of fertilizer dealers from across the division participated in the meeting.

Solid steps should be taken to promote the cultivation of oilseeds, especially groundnuts and olives, and their products in the Potohar region, the commissioner added.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta here on Thursday directed the authorities concerned to ensure the supply of fertilizers at government rates in Rawalpindi division.

Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta presided over the meeting of the Divisional Agriculture Advisory Committee and Divisional Agriculture Task Force.

## Iranian envoy meets FBR chairman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Wednesday held a meeting with Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana. During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters pertaining to customs, cross border trade and management for smooth flow of bilateral trade between the two countries, said a FBR news release.

They agreed to remove the irritants in the barter trade for increased economic activities between the two neighbors.

The two sides also agreed on early operationalisation of gate at Rimdan-Gabb crossing point for facilitation of traders and enhanced cross border trade. The Iranian ambassador said that expansion of parking area on Taftan side would facilitate Iranian trucks.

He also requested to allow free movement of Iranian trucks at least up till Quetta. Chairman FBR apprised the ambassador of the legal hurdles in this regard, however, he assured to look into the matter.



ISLAMABAD: An aerial view of the flea market at Golra area as due to the un bearable inflation, common people start visiting such places instead of visiting branded shops and markets.

## Authorities directed to remove obstacles in setting industrial estate

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamer Abdullah has directed the concerned authorities to immediately remove the obstacles in the establishment of new small industrial estate in Havelian Abbottabad at his office here Thursday.

The meeting was attended by Managing Director SIDB Ghazanfar Ali, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal, Deputy MD Nauman Fayyaz and relevant officers of Revenue Department.

regard on emergency basis so that the work of demarcation of the said industrial can started as soon as possible.

He issued these instructions while chairing a meeting to review the issues faced in the construction work of the new industrial estate in Havelian Abbottabad at his office here Thursday. The meeting was attended by Managing Director SIDB Ghazanfar Ali, Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Khalid Iqbal, Deputy MD Nauman Fayyaz and relevant officers of Revenue Department.

## Fertilizer output increases 8.91% in four month of FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): Fertilizer production in the country during the first four months of the current financial year increased by 8.91 per cent as compared to the output of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period from July-October 2023 over 1.17 million metric tons of Nitrogenous fertilizers were locally produced as compared to the output of 1.05 million 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.

However, during the period under review, the local output of Phosphate fertilizer decreased by 9.22 per cent as compared to the production of the same period of last year, it added.

During the period under review, about

250,315 metric tons of Phosphate fertilizer were manufactured in the country as compared to the manufacturing of 275,746 metric tons in the same period of last year, it added.

Tractor assembling in the country during the first four months of the current financial year increased by 55.58 per cent as compared to the assembling of the corresponding period of last year.

Meanwhile, about 17,259 tractors were locally produced as compared to the production of 11,093 tractors in the same period last year. As compared to the corresponding month of last year, tractor production in the country during the month of October 2023 grew by 80.74 per cent as 5,536 tractors were locally assembled as against the assembling of 3,063 tractors of the same month of last year.



ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in arranging after unloading vegetable (cauliflower) from delivery truck at Vegetable Market.

Crop Reporting Service Divisional

## PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 245 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) turned around to bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 245.56 points, a positive change of 0.39 percent, closing at 62,693.57 points against 62,448.01 points the previous trading day.

A total of 812,383,481 shares valuing Rs.16.687 billion were traded during the day as compared to 1,187,368,881 shares valuing Rs. 26.038 billion the last day. Some 358 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 251 of them recorded gains and 93 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 14 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 209,399,163 shares at Rs.5.60 per share.

## VEON presents digital operator success story at investor conference

ISLAMABAD (APP): VEON, a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and online services, recently participated in an investor conference organized by New Street Research and Boston Consulting Group in New York, highlighting the achievements of its digital operator strategy.

According to VEON Group CEO Kaan Terzioglu, VEON had a tailored digital operator approach in each of its markets, going beyond traditional telecommunication and providing digital experiences that are locally relevant.

"This results in not only the growth of our market share in our

industry but also the expansion of our overall wallet share in terms of the value generated in adjacent verticals. We are happy to see that investors understand and appreciate VEON's track record of success based on this model and the future opportunities that this transformation brings," he said, according to a news release.

At the NSR/BCG conference, VEON provided a case in point for its digital transformation by highlighting the journey of Jazz, Pakistan's largest mobile operator which has successfully evolved its business model into being a provider of digital experiences.

Aamir Ibrahim, Chief Executive Officer of Jazz.



## Israeli aggression, martyrs cross 20,000, all northern Gaza hospitals inactive

GAZA/New York (Online): The number of Palestinian martyrs has reached 20,000 in the brutal attacks of Israel on Gaza since October 7.

All hospitals in northern Gaza became inactive. According to the officials of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, 20,000 Palestinians, including 8,000 children and 6,200 women, have been martyred by Israel's continuous bombing of Gaza.

According to foreign media, Israel's attacks continue on Gaza. 46 people were martyred in one day due to the Israeli bombardment on the Jabalia refugee camp. 66% of Palestinians have also lost their jobs due to Israeli brutality.

Meanwhile, Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the political office of Hamas based in Qatar, arrived in Cairo, the capital of Egypt, for negotiations on a new ceasefire in Gaza, where his talks with the Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamil and others are scheduled.

It should be noted that Ismail Haniyeh also met Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian in Doha before arriving in Cairo, in which the situation in Gaza and the West Bank was discussed.

On the other hand, voting on the resolution submitted to the United Nations (UN) regarding the provision of humanitarian aid to Gaza was postponed

for the third time. Voting on the resolution was postponed due to the fear of the US vetoing the resolution in favor of Israel.

On the other hand, the World Health Organization (WHO) has confirmed that all hospitals in northern Gaza have become inactive due to continuous Israeli bombardment, cut off of fuel supply, lack of staff and supplies.

Palestinian Red Crescent said that Israeli forces are continuously seizing charity ambulances in the Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza.

According to the Red Crescent, intense shelling and sniper firing by the Israeli army is also ongoing in the area.



NEW YORK: A view of meeting of Security Council regarding Afghanistan at UN Office.

## Modi says India is 'ready to look into' plot to kill Sikh leader in US

NEW DELHI (INP): In what seems to be the acceptance of India's involvement in international terrorism, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India will investigate any evidence provided regarding the plot to kill a Sikh leader in the US.

The US Justice Department last month charged an Indian citizen with plotting to assassinate a Sikh leader on the US soil, maintaining 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 a Financial Times interview published Wednesday, 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."

Modi's comments come after the White House said it was treating an alleged plot to assassinate a Sikh leader in the US with "utmost seriousness," and had raised the issue with the Indian government.

## Food assistance of UN's WFP suspended in parts of Sudan temporarily

SUDAN (INP): The food assistance of the United Nations' World Food Programme (WFP) has been suspended in temporarily in some parts of Sudan's state of Gezira as fighting spreads south and east of Sudan's capital Khartoum. The statement issued by WFP said that around 300,000 people have fled Gezira in a matter of days, since clashes erupted last week on Friday.

WFP has put food deliveries on hold in some locations in Gezira, said Eddie Rowe, WFP's representative and country director in Sudan.

## Biden looks to secure Black support in visit to Wisconsin

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 re-election 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.

## China starts erecting temporary housing units after earthquake destroyed 14,000 homes

Monitoring Desk BEIJING: Hundreds of temporary one-room housing units were being set up Thursday in northwest China for survivors of an earthquake that destroyed more than 14,000 homes and killed at least 135 people, according to state media reports.

Twelve people remained missing in an area hit by mudslides that inundated two villages, the reports said. Search teams were using excavators to dig out a thick sea of mud that covered roads and encased and blocked entry to buildings.

State broadcaster CCTV showed footage of cranes lifting white, box-like housing units and lining them up in an open field in Meipo, a village in Gansu province. About 260 had been erected, and the total in the village was expected to reach 500 across nine sites by Friday morning.

The arrival of the pre-

fabricated units was a sign that many of the more than 87,000 people resettled after the Monday night earthquake may be homeless for some time. Many have been enduring temperatures well below freezing in flimsier tent-like units with blue plastic sheeting on the outside and a quilted cotton lining inside.

An assessment of the houses in a village visited by the AP on Wednesday found that 90% weren't safe to live in, experts told CCTV in an online report. Some of the homes in Yangwa village appear OK, but they have structural damage that makes them unsafe, the experts said. For those that can be repaired, the work may have to wait until next year, because the soil is frozen.

The death toll included 113 people in Gansu and another 22 people in neighboring Qinghai province. Nearly 1,000 were reported injured.



GAZA: People busy in relief activities after air strike by Israeli forces in Rafah.

## Trump cases thrust SC into US election fray

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The US Supreme Court played a critical role in deciding the 2000 presidential election when it halted a vote recount in Florida with Republican George W. Bush holding a razor-thin edge over Democrat Al Gore.

The stage is set for the nation's highest court to figure prominently again in a White House race as it mulls a pair of cases involving Donald Trump, the frontrunner for the 2024 Republican presidential nomination.

The Colorado Supreme Court ruled on Tuesday that the former president had incited an insurrection—the January 6, 2021 attack on the US Capitol by his supporters—and was therefore ineligible to hold the office again.

The ruling is likely to end up in the Supreme Court, which is already considering whether to examine a claim by Trump's lawyers that he has "absolute immunity" from prosecution for actions taken while he was in the White House.

## Taiwan to 'handle' spate of Chinese balloons based on threat level

Monitoring Desk TAIPEI: Taiwan will "handle" Chinese balloons flying nearby based on threat assessments, though officials believe the current wave is for weather purposes, driven by the prevailing winds at this time of year, the defence ministry in Taipei said on Wednesday.

The potential for China to use balloons for spying became a global issue in February when the United States shot down what it said was a Chinese surveillance balloon. China said the balloon was a civilian craft that accidentally drifted astray. Taiwan is on high alert for Chinese activities, both military and political, ahead of Jan 13 presidential and parliamentary elections. Taipei has warned that Beijing may try to interfere to get voters to pick candidates China may prefer.

## Thousands rally across Slovakia to protest the government's plan to amend the penal code

Monitoring Desk BRATISLAVA: Thousands returned to the streets of major cities across Slovakia on Tuesday to continue their protests against a plan by the new government of populist Prime Minister Robert Fico to amend the country's penal code.

The changes proposed by the coalition government include a proposal to abolish the special prosecutors' office, which handles serious crimes such as graft, organized crime and extremism by mid-

January. According to the proposal, those cases will now be taken over by prosecutors in regional offices, which haven't dealt with such crimes for 20 years.

Michal Simecka, head of the liberal Progressive Slovakia party, said the changes "would result in amnesty for mafia and corrupt people."

"We have to show them that we'll defend justice," Simecka said.

## India's debt may exceed 100pc of GDP: IMF warns

NEW DELHI (INP): The International Monetary Fund has warned India that its government debt may exceed 100% of its gross domestic product, or GDP, in the medium term.

The IMF also cautioned that long-term debt sustainability risks are high due to the significant investment required to meet India's climate change mitigation targets, Indian media reported.

The IMF in its annual Article IV consultation report said, long-term risks are high because considerable investment is required to reach India's climate change mitigation targets and improve resilience to climate stresses and natural disasters. This suggests that new and preferably concessional sources of financing are needed, as well as greater private sector investment and carbon pricing or equivalent mechanism, it said. "A sharp global growth slowdown in the near term would affect India through trade and financial channels.

## China threatens Philippines serious consequences on maritime violations

BEIJING (Online): China has warned the Philippines not to "misjudge" the situation in the South Seas and not to do something that would only make it suffer the consequences.

According to the World News Agency, this threat from China was given by Foreign Minister Wang Yi to his Philippine counterpart on the telephone.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Philippine counterpart that being neighbors, we should discuss any conflict that may arise and I think that handling the current maritime situation is the most important task at this time.

He also warned his Philippine counterpart that if you misjudge the maritime situation or unintentionally collide with external forces, China will respond strongly in self-defense.

## Ukraine's citizen army struggles with a hidden enemy: combat stress

Monitoring Desk DONETSK REGION: Psychologist Oleh Hukovskiy stands beside a white board in a makeshift classroom in eastern Ukraine and addresses a group of soldiers attending a session on how to cope with the stress of war.

The former psychiatrist joined the armed forces about six months after Russia launched a full-scale invasion in February 2022, and now runs a psychological support group attached to the 67th Separate Mechanised Brigade in the direction of the ruined town of Lyman.

The classes cover basic psychological theory and coping techniques including breathing exercises. While the dozen soldiers attending are responsive to questions and suggestions, Hukovskiy is aware he can only do so much in the time provided.

"They have obligations and have to return to the frontline," he said of the troops, some of whom are being treated for light wounds and battle stress at a medical aid centre whose location the Ukrainian military requested not be disclosed.



MEXICO: A view of damaged buildings due to Hurricane Otis made landfall near Acapulco.

## Raiffeisen, Strabag in deal to weaken Russia ties

Monitoring Desk F R A N K F U R T : Raiffeisen Bank International (RBI.VI), one of the banks in Europe most exposed to Russia, plans to take a nearly 28% stake in Austrian construction group Strabag (STR.VI) via a deal with sanctioned Russian businessman Oleg Deripaska.

The deal comes as RBI studies an exit of its Russia business and Strabag looks for ways to reduce Deripaska's stake. If successful, the

transaction could help to achieve these goals.

Russia has tightened exit requirements since thousands of Western companies started leaving soon after Moscow began what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022. Executives say navigating these rules is becoming harder.

The transaction is subject to the approval of Russian authorities and a review by both companies for possible sanctions breaches.

## New version of COVID rapidly spread in India, hundreds new cases emerged

NEW DELHI (Online): New type of corona virus JN1 has spread panic in India. 358 new cases have been reported in last 24 hours, out of which 21 are related to the new type.

According to the national news agency, 3000 new cases of corona virus have been reported across the country so far.

In view of the increasing gravity of the situation, states have been directed to be vigilant.

In a statement issued by the Indian Ministry of Health, it has been said that the first case of the new type of corona virus, JN1, was reported in the southern state of Kerala. Three deaths have been reported

in Kerala. Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are among the states that have reported cases of JN1.

Statement further said that the number of deaths due to corona virus in India is 5 lacs 33 thousand, 327.

Number of Indian citizens affected by different types of corona virus has now reached more than 4 crore 44 lacs 70 thousand.

The recovery rate is 98.81 percent.

The statement said that all states were urged to remain alert so that the new type of corona virus does not take a dangerous form.

## US and Venezuela swap prisoners, 'Fat Leonard' as tensions ease

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): The United States released an ally of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in exchange for 10 American detainees and a fugitive dubbed "Fat Leonard" in a sweeping prisoner swap deal between the rival governments Wednesday.

US President Joe Biden made the "extremely difficult decision" to free Alex Saab, the onetime confidant of socialist leader Maduro, who is accused by the United States of money laundering for Caracas, US officials said.

## 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.

## Yekaterina Duntsova to contest presidential election against Vladimir Putin

MOSCOW (INP): Yekaterina Duntsova, former TV journalist flexes muscles to contest Russian presidential election against Vladimir Putin, being held in March. Putin was expected to be victorious with clear majority.

In an interview last month, 40-year-old Yekaterina Duntsova called for an end to the conflict in Ukraine and the release of political prisoners including opposition leader Alexei Navalny. To formally enter the election, she submitted documents to officials at the Central Electoral Commission. Putin's victory is widely seen as a foregone conclusion by supporters and opponents alike.

She now faces a major hurdle to obtain 300,000 signatures in support of her candidacy, from all across Russia, by Jan. 31. But Yekaterina

Duntsova corrected a reporter who asked her if she thought the authorities would actually allow her to stand.

"Why are we talking about permission if this is my right according to the law and I have that possibility and have the necessary qualities to put myself forward?" she replied. "We are just moving according to the formula prescribed by federal law, and for that we don't need anyone's permission."

Putin, 71, has been in power as president or prime minister since 1999 and is seeking another six-year term. With Navalny serving prison sentences totalling more than 30 years and other leading Kremlin critics either behind bars or outside the country because of the risk of arrest, there is no established opposition figure to challenge him.

## HIOJK HC orders Indian Defence Ministry to pay rent of land occupied by Army

SRINAGAR (INP): The High Court of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir has directed the Indian Ministry of Defence to settle pending rental dues of Rs 2.49 crores for twenty-four families whose land is under illegal possession of Indian Army.

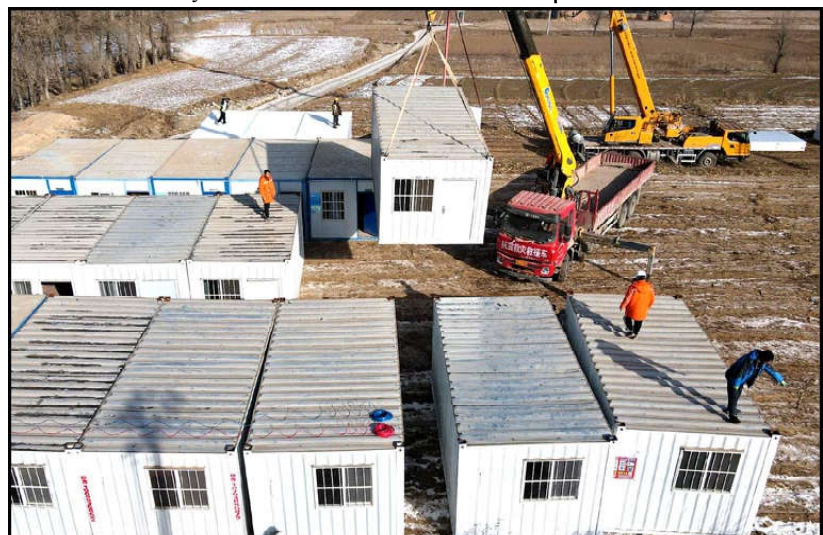
According to Kashmir Media Service, the Indian army had forcibly taken over the land of these families, consisting of Displaced Persons from Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), in 1978 without proper legal procedures and compensation.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal stated that the Indian Army had occupied the land allotted to the displaced persons in 1953 unlawfully, without due process and without compensating the owners since 1978. The court emphasized that once land is allocated for rehabilitation, it cannot be taken away without proper legal procedures or compensation. The court declared that

the Indian government's acquisition of the land was illegal and unconstitutional. It said if the government wishes to retain the land, it must follow legal procedures, including paying compensation. The Union of India was deemed legally obligated to pay the rental compensation determined by the administration of occupied Kashmir to the petitioners.

The judgment, pertaining to a batch of petitions by descendants of AJK displaced persons, highlighted that the Indian Army took over their land in 1978. Committees were formed over the years to determine compensation, and Rs 2.49 crores were agreed upon for the period from January 1, 1978, to March 31, 2009, but the payment was never made.

The High Court, in its decision on December 14, 2023, affirmed that the Indian government had been in unauthorized occupation of the land since 1978, violating the basic rights of the petitioners.



Movable plank houses for earthquake victims are set up in Meipo Village, Jishishan County in northwest China's Gansu Province.



## Govt. fully committed to ensure peace, equal rights for all communities: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has reiterated that the government is fully committed to ensure peace, tranquility and equal rights to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed and religion as enunciated in the Islamic teaching, pronounced by Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah and laid down by the Constitution of Pakistan.

He said that being an Islamic welfare state, it was their duty to safeguard the basic rights of all religious minorities and reassured that their all rights would be completely protected at all costs as the successive governments had been making

strenuous efforts in this regard.

Addressing a ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in connection with the celebrations of Christmas, the president said Prophet Isa (AS) was an embodiment of peace and affection and these values were much needed in today's world shaken by strife, conflicts and wars.

He said that teachings of Islam as well as by almost all religions laid emphasis upon the value of human life and when its value was reduced, it gave rise to conflicts. "Wars and carnage are no solutions. My message to the world

is; wars must end," he stressed.

The ceremony was arranged by the ministry of religious affairs and inter-faith harmony was attended by parliamentarians, religious leaders and members from different faiths, members of diplomatic corps and a large number of Christian families.

The president referring to atrocities in Gaza, said contrary to the religious teaching of peace and tolerance, the scenes in the world were topsy-turvy. About 19,000 precious human lives in Gaza had been lost but the human hearts had not melted, he added.

He opined that de-

spite the United Nations' calling for immediate ceasefire and a denunciation by the Pope himself, the carnage of Palestinians including Christians continued where churches besides, mosques were razed to the ground.

The enlightened world advocating the tenets of democratic values was so oblivious to the humanitarian woes in the conflict, he added.

He said when Pakistan Resolution was passed during 1940, a simultaneous resolution over Palestine was also adopted and reaffirmed that the two-state was the only solution to the issue.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi cutting a cake at the Christmas Celebration Ceremony 2023 at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani in a meeting with the Director General of International Organisation of Migration Ms. Amy Pope.

## Committee proposes amendments in Judicial Commission's rules

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Committee constituted to Review Judicial Commission of Pakistan rules 2010, has proposed amendments in various areas.

The meeting of the Committee was held on 16th December, 2023, under the co-chairmanship of Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice (Retired) Manzoor Ahmed Malik with mandate to propose such rules of procedure for the Commission in making appointments of the Judges of the Constitutional Courts of the country, that comply with the collegial and inclusive decision-making process enshrined in Article 175-A of the Constitution, said a press release issued on Thursday.

The important areas of consideration for proposing amendments in the 2010 Rules includes, process for convening meetings of the Commission and making decisions therein, initiation of nomination(s) in the Supreme Court, initiation of nomination(s) in the High Courts, adequate representation of the District Judiciary and the Bar for elevation, diversity, criteria for selection for appointment of Judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts, confirmation of Additional Judges in the High Courts and establishment of a Secretariat of the Commission, appointment of the Secretary and other staff thereto.

## Sherry says: No possibility of seat adjustment with JUI-F

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman said on Thursday that there was "no possibility of seat adjustment with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazal (JUI-F), as it did not want general elections to be held on time."

"The JUI-F was part of the coalition government; however, this time the situation is different, but PPP doors are always open to other political opponents," she told a private news channel.

Sherry reiterated that her party would launch a vigorous electoral campaign from Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

on December 27, on the death anniversary of BB Shaheed.

She said that the PPP was the only party that stresses the need for holding timely elections in the country.

The other political parties in the country are seemingly running away from the polls.

She deplored that different tactics were used in the past to create rifts in her party; their all attempts went in vein, and the PPP raised the slogan 'Pakistan Khappay' (Long live Pakistan). "We would never let anyone break Sindh," said Sherry.



LAHORE: Rear Admiral Javed Iqbal hands over Command Scroll of Commander Central Punjab to Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood during Change of Command ceremony held at PN War College Lahore.

## Nawaz Sharif obtains nomination papers from NA-130 in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) leader Nawaz Sharif has received nomination papers from NA-130 constituency in Lahore to contest the February 8 general elections.

According to media reports, PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif will also contest election from NA-123 constituency of Lahore and the provincial assembly seat. Maryam Nawaz Sharif will contest from NA-119, sources added. It stated that Maryam Nawaz Sharif will also contest the election from the provincial constituency.

On the other hand, Hamza Shehbaz received nomination papers from NA-118. Nawaz Sharif had also obtained nomination papers from NA-15 in Manshehra, his son-in-law

Captain Muhammad Safdar told reporters on Wednesday. "Nawaz Sharif will be our election candidate from NA-15 (Manshehra-II). He will become the prime minister as an elected representative of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," Safdar added.

He said Amir Muqam would be the PML-N's choice for KP chief minister, whereas his wife, Maryam Nawaz, is the party's candidate for the Punjab CM office. A formal announcement in this regard would be made later, he added. Mr Safdar, who previously contested polls from NA-15, said he would not contest elections this time as he wanted to become a senator. "I will never decline the party's offer for a Senate ticket," he said.

## DG IOM calls on Secretary Interior

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General International Organization of Migration (IOM) Amy Pope on Thursday called on Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani and discussed issues of mutual interest.

He thanked the DG International Organization of Migration for its outstanding support to the Government of Pakistan and assured full cooperation from NADRA, FIA and, Passport and Immigration Departments at various levels.

He said that the Ministry of Interior will also need IOM's support in border management in future. Both of them reiterated their commitment to full cooperation.

The interior secretary informed DGIMO that the return of foreigners residing illegally in Pakistan will continue and so far, more than 500,000 people have returned to their homeland, out of which more than ninety percent have returned voluntarily.

Durrani said, "We are seeking dignified repatriation of all illegal and undocumented aliens."

The process was being ensured that no harassment of any kind was done against any individual, the Government of Pakistan has a zero-tolerance policy in this matter, he added.

## Canadian HC calls on Jalil

ISLAMABAD (APP): High Commissioner of Canada Leslie Scanlon called on Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Thursday.

During the meeting, they discussed various aspects of Pakistan-Canada bilateral relations and facilitation by the Pakistani government for the resettlement process of Afghan nationals to Canada.

The Canadian High Commissioner thanked the foreign minister for Pakistan's assistance in the resettlement process.

## Recruitment case: Parvez Elahi's judicial remand extended

LAHORE (Online): Judicial remand of former Chief Minister Punjab Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi in case of illegal recruitment in Punjab Assembly was further extended.

Judicial Magistrate of Lahore Local Court Imran Abid heard the case of illegal recruitment in Punjab Assembly against Ch Pervaiz Elahi.

Ch Pervaiz Elahi was not produced in the Lahore court in district Kutcheri after completion of Judicial remand, however the jail authorities submitted the warrant of the accused in the court.

Court extended the judicial remand of Pervaiz Elahi till January 4, 2023 and adjourned the hearing of the case.

## Welfare of youth, government's top priority: PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday terming the young generation as future of the nation, said that the welfare of the youth was top priority of the government.

Chairing a meeting of Prime Minister Youth Programme here, the prime minister directed that the disbursement of loans under the Prime Minister's Youth Program should be done with utmost care and responsibility.

He further directed that the youth of the newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should be given special attention in PM Youth schemes.

The prime minister ordered to evolve a special strategy to achieve the desired results of the skill development schemes. PM Kakar directed that training programmes should also be started for master trainers regarding skill development to increase their capacity and to impart quality training to others. During the meeting, the prime minister was given a detailed briefing regarding the PM's Youth Programme.

It was informed that 550,000 people had been trained under the PM Skill Development Program since 2013 while some 56,000 more people would be trained mostly in high-tech skills in the next phase.

## After JUI-F and MQM-P PML-N also seeks extension in nomination papers filing deadline

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Ishaq Dar says ECP enjoys power to make necessary amendments in election schedule.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Thursday sought a two-day extension in the December 22 deadline to file nomination papers for the general elections scheduled for February 8 next year.

A day earlier, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUIF) and Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) also wrote to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), seeking an extension in date for filing nomination papers by three days.

In a letter written to the electoral authority, PML-N Senator Ishaq Dar said the commission enjoys the power to make necessary amendments to the election schedule without affecting or changing the polling date which for the present election is Feb 8, 2024.

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Met Office has forecast cold weather with partly cloudy in most parts of the province while isolated light rain, drizzle might occur during late night hours in some areas including Lasbella, Khauadar, Dera Bugti, Bolan, Mastung, Quetta Ziarat and surroundings areas during next 24 hours. According to the Met Office, the minimum temperature in Quetta was recorded at -3.5 degree centigrade and -2.6 degree centigrade in Quetta on Thursday.

## Palestine crisis worries global community: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Thursday that the current situation of Palestine was a cause of concern not only for the Muslim Ummah but also for the civilized nations of the world. During a meeting with Jordanian Ambassador Dr. Maen Khreasat who met with him here, the minister said that peace in Palestine was the responsibility of the whole world.

"International community should play a role for an immediate ceasefire in Palestine," Murtaza Solangi said.

Besides, ceasefire between Palestine and Israel, coming elections in Pakistan and Jordan, regional security situation, cooperation

in the media sectors and other important issues were discussed during the meeting. In the meeting, both the minister and Ambassador expressed concern over the tense situation in Palestine.

Expressing complete solidarity with the Palestinian people, Murtaza Solangi said that Jordan's role in aid activities in Palestine was commendable. The Jordanian Ambassador said that a humanitarian crisis was brewing in Gaza due to lack of food. Solangi said that Pakistan valued its relations with Jordan as the two countries had deep ties based on religion, common values and culture. The caretaker minister briefed the Jordanian Ambassador about the progress towards the general elections in Pakistan and Jordan, regional security situation, cooperation

elections would be held across the country on February 8 next year in Pakistan, Murtaza Solangi adding the Election Commission of Pakistan had already released the election schedule. He said all registered political parties were provided 54 days for election campaign.

The Caretaker Government, he said was providing all possible support and facilities to the ECP to ensure the conduct of free, transparent and impartial elections. Murtaza Solangi expressed his best wishes for the successful completion of the election process in Jordan next year. He expressed the hope that a new era of relations between the two countries would begin with the governments established as a result of the electoral process in Jordan and Pakistan.

## Cold, dry weather forecast for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan on Thursday ruled out the statement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) regarding reduction of National Assembly seats in the province. Terming the statement as baseless and contrary to facts, the ECP said it was meant to create confusion in the minds of the people.

The erstwhile FATA was merged in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2018 in light of the 25th Constitutional Amendment, the Commission said adding that 12 National Assembly seats of FATA were abolished and instead six seats of the Lower House were reserved for that area.

The ECP said as per law, it said all the four members of the commission has reposed their unwavering trust in the Chief Election Commissioner.



ISLAMABAD: Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with Jordanian Ambassador, H.E. Maen Khreasat.

## ECP rules out KPBC's statement about reduction of NA seats in KP

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan on Thursday ruled out the statement of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council (KPBC) regarding reduction of National Assembly seats in the province. Terming the statement as baseless and contrary to facts, the ECP said it was meant to create confusion in the minds of the people.

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The ECP said as per law, it said all the four members of the commission has reposed their unwavering trust in the Chief Election Commissioner.

45 seats in the National Assembly. Similarly, sixteen general seats were increased in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly after which the number of seats surged from 99 to 115.

The Election Commission made it clear that increasing or decreasing seats of national and provincial assemblies is not possible without amending the Constitution, which is a sole prerogative of the Parliament. It said the ECP is performing its duties according to the constitution and law without any pressure. Regarding another matter, the ECP also made it clear that it takes all decisions with mutual consultation and as per law. It said all the four members of the commission has reposed their unwavering trust in the Chief Election Commissioner.



KARACHI: Caretaker Health Minister Balochistan Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi meeting with Caretaker Health Minister Sindh Saad Niaz.

## Maryam Nawaz decides to contest elections on NA-119 in Lahore

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President Maryam Nawaz decided to contest elections from NA-119, a constituency in Lahore.

The move placed Maryam Nawaz at the forefront of a politically significant battleground as previously PTI activist Sanam Javed challenged her to contest election against her on a provincial seat of PP-150. Captain retired Safdar Awan, the husband of Maryam Nawaz, confirmed the development.

She received her nomination papers. The initiation

of the nomination paper collection process marked a pivotal moment in the prelude to the elections, with political and social figures actively securing their candidacy forms from the Election Commission offices across the country. In Lahore and various other districts, the PML-N's candidates, including Maryam Nawaz have commenced the formalities of obtaining their nomination papers from the dedicated Returning Officers' offices. Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N Supremo decided to contest elections from NA-15, Manshehra.

## IHC reserves judgment on petition seeking postponement of gen election

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has reserved judgment on the petition seeking postponement of general election.

The petitioner Aftab Alam appeared in the court along with his counsel Malik Akhtar Abbas.

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## DC Kachhi chairs meeting for finalizing of election's preparations

QUETTA (APP) Deputy Commissioner (Kachhi) Kachhi Captain Retired Jameel Ahmed Baloch chaired a meeting of officers in connection with the preparations for the general elections.

District Election Commissioner, Police, Levies and FC officers participated in the meeting, who made security and other arrangements on the occasion of general elections.

In the meeting about the measures, election security, election arrangements, election polling stations, situation in A area and B area were discussed in detail.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Captain Retired Jameel Ahmed Baloch said that security arrangements

should be made on the occasion of general elections, Levies personnel would also be posted in B area saying that all possible steps would be taken to finalize the orders of the Election Commission of Pakistan on the occasion of the election and leave no stone unturned in the polling booth and other arrangements, any preparations regarding the election that have not been made yet should be completed.

He said that on the occasion of general elections, Police, FC and Levies would perform their duties in different areas, so that no deviation of any kind would affect the election process, whatever instructions to be given to us by the Election Commission of Pakistan in this regard.

## Pak to attend conference on Palestine in Tehran on Dec 23

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan will participate in a consultative conference on Palestine being held in Iran's capital Tehran on December 23, the Foreign Office said Thursday.

"We will continue to support international efforts to bring an end to Israel's ongoing campaign against the Palestinian people," Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said at a weekly press briefing.

The FO spokesperson said Pakistan remained deeply concerned over the ongoing campaign of brutality and large-scale massacre unleashed upon the Palestinian people.



QUETTA: Provincial Project Director MSF Ms. Ivy Bojmic meeting with Additional Chief Secretary Home Zahid Saleem.

## Hand grenade attack on former Chief Justice Saqib house, case registered

LAHORE (Online): In the FIR of the hand grenade attack on the house of former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, the Lahore Police has suspected a banned organization.

CTD has registered a case of hand grenade attack on former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar's house in Garden Town area of Lahore on the complaint of Constable Sajjad Hussain. The FIR has been registered under terrorism and other provisions.

In the registered FIR, it has been stated that 3 persons Constable Amir Ali, Khuram Shahzad and Sajjad Hussain were injured in the hand grenade attack.

According to the text of the FIR, the windows of 2 vehicles were broken in the attack. A hand grenade

was thrown at a vehicle parked between the garage and the yard.

The text of the FIR states that the attackers seem to belong to a banned organization.

It is pertinent to say that the former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar's residence was attacked yesterday with a hand grenade, as a result of which 3 people were injured.

According to the police, a cracker thrown by unknown motorcycle-riding accused fell in the garage of the former chief justice and damaged the vehicle parked there. The windows were broken by the blast.

The police said that the family members of the former chief justice are safe.