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Malik Abdul Wali Kakar reaches Islamabad:

Governor calls for taking tense situation and sensitivity emerged due to Islamabad's arrests serious

Independent Report QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has underlined the need to take the tense situation and sensitivity of matter seriously, which otherwise emerged due to the arrests of people of Baloch Yekjehti Committee (BYC) in Islamabad.

The Governor believed that the issues being faced can be sorted out after knowing the same with mutual understanding.

The Governor was speaking to the members of the committee formed led by the caretaker Federal Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad regarding the BYC march in Islamabad on Friday morning.

The committee was comprised the caretaker

Federal Ministers Murtaza Solangi, Jamal Shah and Khalil George.

The Governor stressed that we need to take steps immediately in view of the tense situation of the region just because we can't afford

more hatred and disputes.

He said it is high time that all government func-tionaries as well as political elders, religious leaders, media persons and other other arrested person was informed further.

Why are Baloch protesters being forcefully sent back, IHC asks police chief

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday inquired why Baloch protesters in the federal capital, who were subjected to brutal Farooq on a petition filed Continued on page 2 police action a day earlier, were being "forcefully

sent back to their province. "They can stay in Islamabad, protest or go back home. The choice is theirs," remarked IHC Chief Justice Aamer

leading personalities may

play their wholehearted role

was briefed about the lat-

est situation and informed

that the arrested women and

children have already been

ments are being fulfilled in

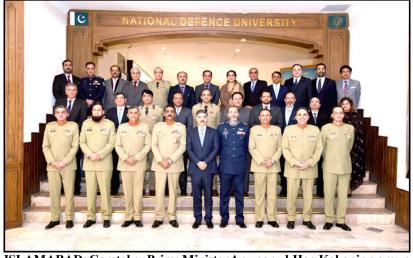
the case of the remaining

other arrested persons, i

While the legal require-

Earlier, the Governor

in the public interest.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in a group photo with the President, Directing Staff of National Defence University and graduating Civil Service officers of National Security Course-2024.

PM dispels doubts about election on Feb 8

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Thursday said there should be no doubt about polls on February 8 as the election process had started with the candidates filing their nomination papers and the political parties busy in building narratives to attract voters.

In an interview with a private television channel. he said it was a constitutional requirement to hold elections which would be held on February 8 after which a new elected government would be formed

To a question, he said the government would provide security to political leaders, including the three time prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Maryam meetings.

Nawaz, Imran Khan, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and

Prominent political leaders could be targeted and the government would be blamed for any lapse in their security, he contin-"It is the responsibil-

ity of the government to provide security to political leaders and voters of He said the caretaker

government would fulfill its responsibility during the holding of elections

It would be illegal to stop the Pakistan Tehreeke- Insaf (PTI) from taking part in the elections, he said and clarified there was no policy to stop the PTI from organizing public



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi addresses the graduation ceremony of 38th MCMC Domain Specific Training and 40th Specialized Training Program at Information Service Academy Auditorium.

Full confidence in EC, elections will be held on time, Solangi

ISLAMABAD (Online): committee. Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi has said that general elections will be held as per schedule. We have full confidence on Election Commission (EC). I cannot comment on internal matters of political parties.

PEMRA act provides job protection to journal-

While talking to media, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi said that legal steps will be taken to protect the

employment of journalists. The demands of protestors from Baluchistan are long standing. Women and children have been released. Most of the men have also been released. Committee is doing its work. Governor of Baluchistan also joined the

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information has further said that today there is also meeting of this committee with Prime Minister. Security is being provided to women and children who have come from Balochistan.

APP adds: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP extended the date for submission of nomination papers by two days on the demand of various political parties. Talking to the Dawn News", he said the ECP had not made any changes in the date of elections, which would be held

on February 8, 2024.

JUI-F chief submits nomination paper

for NA-265 Pishin

QUETTA (APP): Nomination Papers of Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman, Chief of the Jameet Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) were submitted on Friday for NA-265 Pishin for the upcoming general elections.

Provincial Ameer JUI-F Maulana Abdul Wasey, on behalf of the JUI-F central Ameer, submitted the nomination papers at Pishin district of Balochistan.

Senator Kamran Murtaza, Asghar Tarin were prominent among other leadership of the party who accompanied the JUI-F provincial

Ameer. **EC** extends date for filing nomination

papers ISLAMABAD (Online) Election Commission (EĆ)

filing nomination papers for Date has been extended on the pleas of political

has extended the date for

Political parties including MQM, JUI-F, PML-N and Balochistan Awam party had requested the EC to extend the date for filing nomination papers without changing the date for polls

The EC while accept ing the plea of political parties extended the date for filing nomination papers

for two days. EC has said the candidates now can file the nomination papers till December 24. Political parties can file preferential list of re-served seats till December

The scrutiny of papers will be conducted from December 25 to 30.

EC had earlier fixed the date from December 20 to 22 for filing and receiving

nomination papers. The political parties while raising objection over it had demanded of EC to extend the date for filing nomination pa



sation, the prime min-

Haq Kakar on Friday held a telephonic con- President Alvi and disversation wherein they cussed the overall situexpressed concerns over the inappropriate police treatment with the Baloch protestors.
Discussing the situation, both the presiprotestors.

Hold telephonic conversation

President, PM express

police treatment against

dent and the prime minister viewed that the police should not have dealt with the protestors strictly, a President House press release said. During the conver-

ister told the president sized the measures to that the detained proimprove the law and testors were being re- order situation in leased on personal Balochistan.

KHUZDAR: President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal

participating in a protest held against arrest of participants of Baloch Yakjethi

outstanding performance of

Commissioner Quetta, the

Chief Minister presented

The Chief Minister

Needless to mention

him a commendation certificate here on Friday.

also expressed best wishes

here that the Commissioner

Quetta played key role in

completion of different de-

partment projects espe-

cially Sariab and adjacent

five lives, with one worker

jured were shifted to dis-

trict hospital Wana he said

adding that further details

would be shared after the

from Punjab, were identified as Mohammad

Uzair, Baqar Ali, Shehbaz

Ahmed, and Shehzad

The victims, hailing

The bodies and the in-

sustaining injuries.

investigation.

Quetta Development Package roads:

Caretaker CM acknowledges

meritorious services of

Commissioner Quetta

5 laborers killed, one

injured in firing on under

construction police station

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker

Chief Minister Balochistan,

Mir Ali Mardan Khan

Domki has acknowledged

the services and untiring

sioner Quetta, Muhammad

Hamza Shafqaat for the

Quetta development pack-

age and especially for

completion of the Sariab link

PESHAWAR (APP): At least five laborers were

killed and one sustained in-

juries in an armed attack on

an under-construction po-

lice station in Wanna, dis-

trict of South Waziristan,

confirmed Farmanullah,

District Police Officer

The DPO told media

that the attack was carried

out late Thursday night re-

sulting in the tragic loss of

In recognition of the roads.

Badini road.

efforts made by Commis-



Meanwhile Balochistan Governor Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar also called on ation in the province as well as police maltreatment against the Baloch

The governor viewed that the police should show restraint towards the protestors.

In the meeting, the two sides believed that the police should not have acted beyond their limits and powers.
Both leaders empha-



Barrister Gohar announces to knock at court's doors against ECP decision to take away 'bat' electoral symbol

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday declared the intra-party elections conducted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) null and void, withdrawing the party's elec-toral symbol – bat. The electoral watchdog ruled that the party did not

hold the elections in line with its constitution, the Election Act, 2017, and the Election Rules, 2017, and was thus ineligible to obtain the election symbol of

A five-member bench, led by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, gave the decision on the petitions challenging PTI's intra-party elections.

Other members of the bench included ECP members Nisar Ahmed Durrani.

Passport making

for Chaman

people eased to

facilitate in cross

border movement

OUETTA (INP): The

passport making for

people has been eased un-

der One Document Re-

gime to facilitate them in

movement across Pak-

Afghan international bor-

one room of the Passport

Office Chaman, but now

it is expanded and ten

counters have been estab-

lished. Two counters have

been allocated for women

port Office with five

counters has also been es-

tablished in Qilla Abdullah

under One Document Re-

Oilla Abdullah and other

surrounding areas are now

approaching to these of-

fices for making pass-

who were present at the

Regional Passport Office,

lauded

government's initiatives.

have

Residents of Chaman,

People from Chaman,

Similarly, a new Pass-

Earlier, there was only

the petitions filed against PTI's intra-party elections in accordance with the law. In its decision, the ECP observed that "the PTI did not comply with the Commission's directions rendered therein order

dated 23rd November, 2023 and failed to hold intra-party election in accordance with PTI prevailing Constitution, 2019 and Election Act, 2017, and Election Rules, 2017. Therefore the certificate dated 4th December, 2023 and Form-65 filed by the

Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Babar Hassan Bharwana and Justice ® Ikramullah invoked and PTI is hereby declared ineligible to obtain The reserved verdict the Election Symbol, for was announced a day after the Peshawar High Court directed the ECP to decide which they have applied

It may be noted that the ECP rendered the intraparty polls as invalidated hence, Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, who became the the party's chairman, would no longer be the party's top

The development came shortly after the PTI held discussions with ECP authorities, prompted by the Supreme Court's directive for the ECP to allay PTI's reservations regarding lack of a level-playing field. As per the PTI, the ECP assured its delegates that it alleged Chairman, is hereby would redress their grievregretted and rejected ac- ances.

Cipher case: SC approves bail pleas of PTI founder, Qureshi ISLAMABAD (Online): marked speedy trial is right

Supreme Court (SC) has approved bail plea of founder PTI and Shah Mehmood Qureshi against surety bonds of Rs 10 lac each in cipher case.

Justice Athar Minallah has remarked offence has not been proved against founder PTI and he is inno-

Acting Chief Justice of Pakistan (ČJP) Sardar Tariq Masood remarked Shah Mehmood was wise person. He saved himself and asked founder PTI to read

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Acting CJP Sardar Tariq Masood took up the bail pleas for hearing Friday.

Counsel for PTI

founder said trial court has recorded statements of 12 witnesses in haste.

The acting CJP re-

of every accused. Why do you want that trial is not completed speedily.

Justice Athar Minallah remarked foreign ministry informs government about cipher so that help could be sought in foreign policy. Objective of official secret act is only this the sensitive information could not go out to any one.

Counsel Suleman Safdar said we have to see this sensitive information has been shared or otherwise. Justice Athar Minallah remarked the original cipher is in ministry of foreign affairs. If it has gone out then it is offence of ministry of foreign affairs.

Suleman Safdar said former Prime Minister (PM) had said in a public meeting that the letter held by him is evidence of conspiracy



ISLAMABAD: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar calls on President Dr Arif Alvi,

52 nomination papers filed for reserved seats in Balochistan, says Ejaz Anwar Chohan

Independent Report

QUETTA: A total of 52 nomination papers have so far been submitted for the reserved seats of the national and provincial assemblies from the Balochistan province.

According to the Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan, the process of submission of the nomination papers is continued for the seats reserved for the women and minorities.

nomination papers were submitted for the women reserved seats in the Na-

tional Assembly on Friday. Similarly, in all 15 nomination papers were submitted for the seats reserved for women in the provincial assembly.

The Provincial Election Commissioner told 10 papers were submitted for the seats reserved for minorities in the provincial assem-It may be mentioned

here that the Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan has been appointed as the Returning Officer for the reserved seats of the provincial and National Assemblies in the province.

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting

He informed that eight

India making IIOJK as its Hindutva military colony: Report

ISLAMABAD (INP): India is treating its illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir as its colony right from 27 October 1947 when it forcibly landed its troops in Srinagar and occupied the territory against the will of the Kashmiri

A report released by Kashmir Media Service on Friday said that colonization of IIOJK by military policies has been a long-pending dream of Hindutva Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The report pointed out that redrawing of electoral boundaries, the BJP government is using to advance Hindutva's dangerous game plan in IIOJK after abrogation of articles 370 and 35A.

The report said the BJP regime is creating colonial settlements in occupied Jammu and Kashmir on the pattern of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and it removed the barrier to colonize Kashmir by revoking Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted special status to occupied Kashmir.

The report maintained that India illegally changed laws and gave state subjects, lands and settlement entry, to non-Kashmiri people, which damaged the demography of IIOJK in violation of the United Nations resolutions. India is freely violating the international law in Jammu and Kashmir, which is a disputed territory recognized by the United Nations Security Council and the

It said India, by using its more than one million military and paramilitary troops, has converted the disputed

territory into a colony of the stone-age when the people used to be treated as slaves without having the fundamental rights. Earlier, the dirty draft plan of delimitation was part

of India's systematic settler colonialism campaign to subjugate Muslim majority, minimize its role and provide political mileage to the BJP to enable it to form government in the territory so that it could legalize and legitimize the 5th August 2019 controversial decision and the subsequent actions it had taken so far on Kashmir.

The Modi-led Indian regime in its colonial cunningness is hell bent to rob the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their well-bonded brotherhood and create an atmosphere of hatred and animosity between them to further the communal Hindutva agenda of RSS.

The Indian occupation authorities in IIOJK are sealing properties owned by Kashmiris, including those dedicated to educational institutions offering free education to the disadvantaged people.

The only way to lasting peace in South Asia is granting the people of IIOJK their inalienable right to selfdetermination as enshrined in the relevant UN Security



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Mr. Jalil Abbas Jilani, Minister for Human Rights Mr. Khalil George along with Christian, Hindu, Sikh communities and Muslim scholars cutting cake on the eve of **Christmas Celebrations at PM Office.**



ISLAMABAD: Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabir Azad talking with praised caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony

3-day int'l workshop on infectious diseases to kick off on Dec 26

ISLAMABAD (INP): Titled "Outbreak Investigation and Control of Infectious Diseases", a 3-day international workshop will be kicked off at COMSTECH Secretariat on December 26 with the presence of national and international speakers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caught the attention of the global community and rekindled the debate about our ability to prevent and manage outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics.

Keeping in mind the immense importance of the subject, COMSTECH, in collaboration with Pasteur Institute of Iran is organizing this International workshop with several internationally renowned speakers

This workshop will cover several important topics such as Environmental investigation, Laboratory investigation, Data management in outbreaks, Outbreak control measures, Agency roles and responsibilities for outbreak management, case studies etc.

DERA ISMAIL KHAN

(APP): The election fever heated up in DI Khan as

candidates of different po-

litical parties as well as in-dependents rushed to sub-

mit their nomination papers

for the upcoming general

Fazl (JUI-F) Chief Maulana

Fazlur Rehman's nomina-

tion papers were submitted

by his brother Maulana

Obaidur Rehman on NA-44.

Pakistan People's Party

(PPP) Central Information

Secretary Faisal Karim

Kundi, Tehreek-e-Labaik Pakistan's (TLP) Divisional

Ameer Haji Shafiq Qasuria

and Jamat-e-Islami leader

Muhammad Yousaf also

submitted nomination pa-

pers on the same constitu-

ency. Besides, Maulana

Obaidur Rehman also sub-

mitted his nomination pa-

Jamiat Ulema Islam

elections 2024 on Friday.

About the workshop outcomes, the official said that the course is expected to provide training on the most important topics including outbreaks and related concepts, the general framework of the outbreak investigation, evaluation and confirmation of the outbreak, outbreak descrip-

tion, types of studies in the outbreaks, use of Microsoft Excel in outbreak investigation, environmental and clinical surveys and measurements, collection, labeling, and transfer of sample To control infectious and preparing the report for diseases, human, animal, the outbreaks, critical and environmental factors thinking at different stages; need to be considered to- before and during sampling, gether, based on the One analysis, reporting, writing, providing feedback.

The topics will also include technical and cultural issues during the outbreak investigations, risk communications and lessons learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic The onsite speakers of the event would be Professor of Medical Biotechnology at the Department of Virology, Pasteur Institute of Iran, Dr. Kayhan Azadmanesh (Ph.D); Assis-

tant Professor of Medical Biotechnology at the Department of Virology, Pas-

teur Institute of Iran, Dr.

Arash Arashkia (Ph.D);

Assistant Professor of Epi-

to file nomination papers

pers as a covering candidate

to his party chief.
Similarly, JUI-F leader

Maulana Obaidur Rehman,

Sardar Fateh Ullah Khan

Miankhel, TLP leader

Haider Khan Miankhel and

JI leader Muhammad Ejaz

Awan, Sardar Shoaib Nasir

Khan Miankhel submitted

their nomination papers on

ter Asad Mehmood of JUI-

F, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) Candidate Qadir

Betanni, Pakistan Muslim

League Nawaz (PML-N)

leader Sami Ullah Khan

Burki and Pirzada Arshad

Mansoor submitted their

nomination papers for NA-

seats, JUI-F leader Maulana

Obaidur Rehman, PPP's

Makhdoom Aftab Shah.

Makhdoom Ali Raza,

On provincial assembly

43 (Tank).

Former Federal Minis-

demiology at the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Pasteur Institute of Iran, Dr. Fahimeh Bagheri Amiri (Ph.D) and Associate Professor of Epidemiology at the Research Centre for Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Pasteur Institute of Iran, Dr. Sana Eybpoosh

(Ph.D). The other speakers in cluded Head of Bacteriology Department of Pasteur Institute of Iran, Dr. Mahdi Rouhani (Ph.D); Professor, National Institute of Virology, Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, Atia tul Wahab (Ph.D) and Assistant Professor, National Institute of Virology, Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and

Saba Farooq (Ph.D). Healthcare professionals engaged in disease surveillance and control at peripheral levels, including general practitioners, as well as individuals holding a Bachelor's or Master degree in relevant fields car

Saqlain Khan Barakhel

Malik Zaman Rodikhel sub-

mitted their nomination pa-

pers on PK-111 (Paharpur)

JUI-F leader Sami Ullah

Alizai and Abdul Haleem

Qasuria filed their nomina-

tion papers for PK-112

(City-II).
PPP's Aziz Ullah Alizai,
JI's Zahid Muhib Ullah,

Fakhar Dhap, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamen-

tarian (PTIP) leader Malik

Qayyum Hissam, Syed

Rajab Ali Shah Hashmi

submitted their nomination

papers for PK-113 (City-

of PPP, PTIP's Khalid

Saleem Ustrana and JI

leader Sana Ullah Tareli sub-

mitted their nomination

papers for PK-114 while JI

leader Abdul Mateen Babar

submitted his nomination

papers for PK-115.

Qaizar Khan Miankhel

PPP's Ahmad Kundi

Drug Research, Interna-

tional Center for Chemical

and Biological Sciences,

University of Karachi, Dr.

Quaid-e-Azam, Chairman Mao's sculptures unveiled at Pakistan Embassy Beijing

BEIJING (APP):In a sig- Ms. Mao Xiaoqing, niece nificant cultural milestone, striking sculptures of Madame Geng Jing, who Chairman, Mao Zedong and her ancestors had made and Pakistan's founding father, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, known as Quaid-e-Azam were unveiled at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing here on Friday. Pakistan Ambassador

to China, Khalil Hashmi and Mrs. Khalil Hashmi unveiled the sculptures at a befitting ceremony, "Eternal Remembrance:

Honoruing Legacies of Jinnah and Mao," held to celebrate their birth anniversaries in December 2023 and their enduring legacies. As fathers of their re-

spective nations, Chairman Mao Zedong and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Chairman demonstrated inspiring leadership as well as unwavering commitment to the principles of equity and justice. The sculptures, mas-

terly crafted by renowned Chinese artist Yuan Xikun, offer a unique lens, intertwining the aspirations of these eminent leaders and their nations.

The unveiling ceremony was attended, among others, by members

of the diplomatic corps, China.

of Chairman Mao Zedong. profound contributions to Pakistan's development and growth, and Master Yuan Xikun, the world's renowned artisan who had made both the sculptures

were put on display at the event.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Hashmi paid rich tribute to Quaide-Azam and Chairman Mao, remembering them as two of the most iconic figures of the twentieth century who held a common vision of independence, justice, emancipation and self-respect for their na-

The ambassador also commended Master Yuan Xikun for his craftsmanship and dedication, reflected vividly in the high quality of both the sculp-

He added that the presence of Quaid-e-Azam and Chairman Mao's sculptures at the Pakistan Embassy would be an apt manifestation of the iron brotherhood signifying the relationship between Pakistan and

Ghazi Economic Zone launched commercially; work started on 2 units bust commitment to foster-PESHAWAR (APP):Ghazi authorities concerned to ar-

Economic Zone was formally launched on a commercial basis with the laying of the foundation stone of two industrial units on In this connection an

impressive ceremony was held at the economic zone with KP Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Tribal Affairs, Dr. Syed Aamer Abdullah as chief guest on the occasion.

Besides, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Économic Zones Development & Management Company (KP-EZDMC), Javed Igbal Khattak, other senior management of the company and local investors also attended the launching cer-

Addressing the launching ceremony, the provincial minister said that though the period of the caretaker set-up is brief, they will honour all commitments made with the investors and industrialists by the government and no stone would be left unturned in this regard.

On the request of the representative of the cement manufacturing industry, the minister directed the

Why are Baloch...

Continued from page 1

by Baloch protesters

against unlawful detention.

the Islamabad police used

brutal force to disperse and

detain Baloch demonstra-

tors who had converged on

the capital to protest

against enforced disap-

pearances and extra-judi-

cial killings in their prov-

ince. More than 200 pro-

testers were taken into

custody from different ar-

eas of Islamabad. The dem-

onstrators were also met

with tear gas, water can-

strongly condemned by

organisations, politicians

and analysts. Later on

Thursday evening, the gov-

ernment said 90 per cent

of the Baloch men and

women taken into custody

had been released, except

for the men who "could

had a conversation over

this with the police for

stated that the SP had told

them that orders were is-

sued by the prime minis-

ter for the repatriation of

the protesters. "Baloch women were forcefully

filled into buses," he re-

vealed, adding that some

Baloch students studying

forced into the buses

The lawyer further

three hours," he said.

During the hearing, the

The events were

rights

ons and police batons.

human

On Wednesday night,

range a meeting with the management of the cement manufacturing units. He especially welcomed Karachi-based investors for investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and assured them that the provincial government will play be their ambassador in making efforts for resolution of their problems.

He urged the plot allottees of the zone to start work on the establishment of their enterprises as soon as possible.

Otherwise, he said the policy of the government is very clear in this regard.

He also distributed allotment letters of plots in investors of the zone and shields among the proprietors of the under-construction units.

The occasion also marked the groundbreaking of two enterprises i.e Art Line Packaging Industry, investing PKR 400 million and creating 250 direct jobs, and Blanc Fixe Minerals, investing PKR 334 million and generating 25 direct job opportunities.

Ghazi Economic Zone has successfully attracted a substantial investment, totaling approximately PKR 4 billion showcasing a ro-

ing economic development.

This noteworthy achievement underscores the region's growing prominence as an attractive investment destination.

Diversifying its economic portfolio, Ghazi Economic Zone encompasses key industrial sectors, including marble, pharmaceuticals, printing and packaging, as well as food and beverage industries.

Strategically positioned at the confluence of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, GEZ sprawls over 89 acres, having leasable area of 72 acres, all meticulously developed under the expert guidance of KP-EZDMC.

Situated merely 15 kilometers away from the Chach/Hazro Interchange on the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway M1, GEZ offers a distinct competitive advantage by minimizing transportation costs and providing seamless access to both provinces and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route.

GEZ's strategic proximity to successful Economic Zones such as Gadoon and Hattar Economic and Special Economic Zone establishes it as a hub for collaborative growth.

Governor Sindh inaugurates Ethiopian tourism desk at Karachi Feast

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor of Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori and Ambassador of Ethiopia to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula

Tourism Desk on Friday.

cember 24, 2023, was attended by a diverse audience, including Honorary Consul of Ethiopia in Karachi Ibrahim Tawab, members of the diplomatic corps, government officials, business community, media, and representatives from civil society, said a news release of the Ethiopian Embassy issued

The pavilion, giving a captivating display of Ethiopia's multifaceted culture, rich heritage, and unparalleled tourism offerings, was a testament to the enduring bond between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

Governor Tessori, addressing the media, emphasized the longstanding relations between the two

nations, rooted in shared history, values, culture,

bassador Abdula for his tireless efforts in fortifying the bilateral relations, noting the impactful presence of the Ethiopian Embassy in Pakistan despite being established just a

Moreover, the Governor expressed gratitude to the Government of Ethiopia for launching Ethiopian Airlines in Karachi which played a critical role in connecting Pakistan with the whole African continent.

The Governor expressed commitment to elevating the relations between the two countries to new heights.

Ambassador Abdula, in his address, highlighted how the Ethiopian Embassy had effectively brought Africa closer to Pakistan through the commencement of Ethiopian Airlines operations in Karachi

TENDER NOTICE The ADMINISTRATION SECRETARIAT (C&W) invites bids from

eligible Bidders for supply of following items TSE-232412368121Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whethe Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory

and religion. He commended Am-

opened the Ethiopian

This grand occasion, set to culminate on De-

For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPPRA GOB. Tender Fee Rs.1000/-

Class of Object S.No **Bid Security** 1 ICT Equipment(Network, surveillance devices, storage devices, Office Equipment) (Total Item(s) Count: 4)

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: 3 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 4,000,000 in Previous 2 Years. Turn over of at least 3,500,000 PKR in 1 Subsequent Previous Years. Presence in Active Tax Payer List. Sales Tax Certificate. The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan. JV is not permissible. Submission of the required Bid Security In case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and nonresponsive. Submission of the required Bidding document Fee. Procedure Of Procurement: Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the undersigned 1,000 PKR Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 08 January, 2024during office hours on working days Last Date of bid submission: The Tenders must be submitted latest by 08 January, 2024till 10:00 AM. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the undersigned at 11:00 AM Address: Civil Sectriate Quetta Phone no: 0819202374Fax no:Email: azizzehri@gmail.com

ADMINISTRATION SECRETARIAT

(C&W) PRQ No.1217/22-12-2023

in Islamabad were also



QUETTA: People are filling their water cans from filter plant as they facing shortage of drinking water in their area, at Anscomb road

PPP will emerge winning **Election activities intensifies in** party of country in election DI Khan as candidates rush

HYDERABAD (INP): Hyderabad on Thursday, Former Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam the public is now more Memon has stated that aware and they will not get general elections are scheduled for February 8th and on this day, the party receiving a mandate must work diligently to solve people's issues. He asserted that Election Day will decide whether the people endorse hate politics or prioritize issue resolution.

Speaking to the media outside the RO office after submitting his nomination papers for the provincial as-

Memon said, he believes involved in politics of any conspiracy or linguistic fights. He expressed confidence that the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) would secure 95% of the seats in Sindh and emerge as a successful party, both provincially and at the Federal level. He further remarked that on February 8th, whichever party receives the people's mandate should wholeheartedly work towards resolving

BEIJING: Ambassador Khalil Hashmi unveiled the sculptures of Chairman

Mao and Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founding fathers of China

and Pakistan respectively during ceremony at Pakistan Embassy.

sembly constituency PS-61 their public issues. Aryan desirous to adopt Pakistani cricketer

Azam Khan's style

DUBAI (INP): Making an impactful international debut is not a dignity as it is boasted by too many cricketers but Aryan Lakra made his presence felt when he scored 84 on his ODI debut against USA in August,

The Desert Vipers have acquired the services of allrounder Aryan Lakra for season 2 of the DP World International League T20 after finishing as runnersup in the inaugural edition of the tournament.

The left-arm-spinnercum-left-hand-batsman who made a humble beginning playing school cricket went on to captain the UAE U16 and U19 squads including the one that participated in the 2020 ICC U19 World Cup, where he played a crucial role in their qualification.

Aryan believes the DP World ILT20 provides a massive platform for young players like him. "Season was a great success and going forward the tournament is only going to get a lot bigger with more superstars coming in. Getting a chance to play alongside them is an opportunity everyone

to begin in January

not be identified" by popetitioners' counsel Attaullah Kundi and Imaan Mazari appeared before the court. At the outset, Kundi contended that the police had told the counsels that a bus was waiting outside the police station looks for. which would take the pro-testers back home. "We

"I think if players like us do well in this tournament and show the world that we are as good as any of the players coming in, it could help us get a chance to be a part of any of the franchise-based leagues that take place around the world," he said.

Aryan also looks forward to interacting with all the big names that'll be a part of the 2024 edition of the tournament scheduled

Speakers hail Pakistan's achievements at COP28

Demand futuristic approach to meet pledges

COP28 roundtable dialogue on Friday hailed the progress made by the country at the international climate moot and demanded the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmen-Coordination alongwith other stakeholders to workout a futuristic approach to meet global pledges.

The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), organized a roundtable discussion on 'COP 28: An Analytical

The keynote speaker at the event was Secretary, Change and Environmental

Shah. Other panelists at the event included: Executive Director, CSCCC, Aisha Khan; Director, Governance & Policy WWF, Pakistan, Dr. Imran Saqib Khalid; Head, of Resilient Development Program, SDPI, Dr. Shafqat Munir; Professor, QAU, Dr. Ilhan Niaz; World Bank, Ahsan Tehsin; Climate & Energy Attache at Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, Nadeem Ahmad and Fatima Jinnah University, Rawalpindi,

In his keynote address, Secretary, Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Asif Shah underscored the substantial progress achieved during COP28, culminating in a host of positive outcomes and increased transparency in climate finance. Notably, Pathe board of the Loss and Damage Fund, demonstrating its commitment to addressing the impacts of climate change. Additionally, Pakistan's representation on the Santiago Network for Loss and Damage (SNLD further solidifies its global engagement.

Concluding his address, Shah acknowledged the competitive landscape for accessing the Green Climate Fund, highlighting the imperative for Pakistan to enhance its capacity to secure international fund-

rector of CSP, highlighted the significance of key decisions made during COP28. She underscored the necessity for a comprehensive analysis of the out comes and their impact on stakeholders, providing valuable insights for

PMDC clarifies

news on FIA

investigation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa-

kistan Medical and Dental

Council (PMDC) has taken

notice of the news appear-

ing in the media, creating

confusion amongst the

public regarding FIA's in-

vestigation into the council

According to

FIA has started an investi-

gation into corruption

tor General FIA has ordered

the inquiry on the com-

plaint of the Ministry of

National Health Services,

Regulations and Coordina-

has been started to investi-

gate the alleged extortion of

over 60 million rupees by

some PMDC officers

against outstanding pay-

ment of arrears of a federa

allowance to the counci

employees, alleged irregu-

larities in recognition of

some medical and dental

colleges and alleged illegal

registration of some unrec-

ognized qualifications, etc.

ECP asks MPs,

MPAs to submit

assets' details

by Dec 31st

He said that an inquiry

He said that the Direc

officials of the PMDC



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Ministry of Information, Broadcasting Shahera Shahid addresses the graduation ceremony of 38th MCMC Domain Specific Training and 40th Specialized Training Program at Information Service Academy Auditorium.

Ministry renovates 2,377 houses, flats in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa- PWD has started sending kistan Works Department notices to the allottees of (PWD), Ministry of Housing and Works has upgraded tion in Sector I-9/4 about and renovated as many as 2,385 houses and flats in various sectors of Islamabad during the last

five and half years. work is executed of different categories, an official in the ministry told APP.

The official said the ministry has owned as many as 5,253 houses and flats of categories-I to categories-V located in various sectors in the federal capital. He said the Capital Development Authority (CDA) was responsible for the maintenance and renovation of Pak Secretariat. Islamabad, therefore, no fund has been spent on ministry's renovation. The official said the

government accommodapayment of electric meter bills for water motors installed at residential blocks.

He said the Finance Division had allocated "The PWD has carried funds for payment of utiliout EM works of as many ties in the relevant heads of as 1,365 flats and houses while around 1,012 civil utility bills of the residenaccounts of the users while tial accommodation including hostels, rest houses and indicial residences should be paid by the users.

To a question, he said the Ministry of Housing and Works has allocated an amount of Rs 5.80 million in the current financial year 2023-2024 for electricity bills of Qasr-e-Naz Lodge. South Zone Karachi due to financial constraints. "Out of the total Rs 5.80 million, only an amount of Rs 0.87 million have been released at the rate of 15 percent in this regard so far," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Anjum Ageel Khan arriving for the submission of his nomination papers to contest for the upcoming general elections at DC Office in Federal Capital.

EPA launches crackdown against illegal units in H-13 burning plastic waste

ISLAMABAD (APP): request of EPA had imposed The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has launched a stringent crackdown against the illegal units, established without formal approval of the authorities concerned in sector H-13 of the federal capital, burning plastic waste that was causing dark smoke and risk

Director General Pak-EPA, Farzana Altaf Shah told APP via telephonic conversation that there were videos that went viral of H-13 Naseerabad area where people had illegally rented and established mega units burning scrap material particularly plastics for recycling purposes that were creating dark smoke screens into the atmosphere that were highly injurious to health and environment.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICT Admin) on the

section 144 in the capital to ban all sorts of burning of waste, stubble and any other material to curb smog risk, she added.

The EPA DG added that the Minister and Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination took serious notice of the matter. However, the EPA team, along with the ICT Admin and the area magistrate raided the illegal units burning plastic waste and

'As many as four individuals were arrested and five units were sealed in the area for burning plastic waste illegally. People are illegally setting up mega units in the sector, where burning of scrap material is being carried out in large cauldrons to melt plastic items for making pet plastic and substandard products of household use," she

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Malaysia to Pakistan Azhar Malan posing for a group photo graph along with others during cooking event at F-9 Park to mark the Asean BBQ Day, in Federal Capital.

ECP awareness drive likely to double women, youth turnout in upcoming polls: Zafar Iqbal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan Zafar Iqbal on Friday said that the Election Commission of Pakistan continued a media awareness drive among people with the overarching goal of motivating women and youth actively involved in the electoral process where young-sters of the country likely to double its voter turnout in upcoming elections.

Talking to PTV news channel he ensured that ECP will provide a level playing field for all political parties and advocate the General Election Commis-

inclusive in the electoral He said that elections

will be conducted with strict implementation of gender equality and all political parties also strive hard through their election campaigns to increase youth voter turnout. He also mentioned

that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued a comprehensive code of conduct for the upcoming general elections scheduled on February 8. Additional Director

active involvement of sion of Pakistan Syed

youth and women to ensure Nadeem Haider said that any violation of the code will be treated seriously, and allegations made by one candidate against another will require confirmation from both sides before prosecution can com-

To ensure the smooth functioning of the election process, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has complete powers to conduct general elections in a fair and freestyle while all the institutions, including military, judiciary and provincial governments are fully cooperating with us.

University

shooting

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister

Jalil Abbas Jilani on Friday

expressed his condolence

over the loss of life in a

tragic shooting that took

place at Charles University

of Prague on Thursday.
As per media reports,

a student opened fire in a

recovery of all the injured.

IHC reserves

verdict on

PMDC successfully FM saddened over life loss conducts NRE exams in tragic Prague ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa- ences, as per the schedule

kistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has successfully conducted the National Registration Examination (NRE) step 2. According to spokes-person PMDC, more than

50% of candidates passed the examination as 367 candidates appeared for the

were given the best possible facilities so that they were able to take the exam in a good environment, he

The exam was conducted by the National sence of which patients PMDC spokesperson, the University of Medical Sci-

announced by the council. The exam was held at Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on the 10th of

The whole purpose of the NRE was to test the competency, knowledge, and skills of a graduate to ensure they are a 'safe doctor' as they would be granted a license to treat patients independently.

Charles University of The NRE skills and clinical exam represent the Prague, killing at least 14 people and injuring more than 20. basic skills that are mandatory for patient handling Expressing heartfelt condolence to the families and management in the abof the victims, the foreign would be at severe risk. minister also prayed for the



ISLAMABAD: Director General (FDE) Tanveer Ahmad and Principal Prof. Fouzia Sheikh giving away 1st prize award to the winner of Quaid Day Declamation Contest organized by Federal Directorate of Education at Model College for Girls F-7/2.

Mushaal says: Global peace can be achieved by uniting people across all faiths

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime ISLAMABAD (INP): The Minister for Human Rights Election Commission of and Women Empower-Pakistan has drawn the at ment, Mushaal Hussein tention of the members of Mullick, has emphasized the parliament and Sindh that true global peace can and Balochistan provincial be achieved through the assemblies to submit assets unity of people from diverse faiths. details by December 31st.

The Commission in Speaking at a Christreminder issued here on Frimas cake-cutting ceremony day asked the parliamenarranged by the Nazriya tarians to submit the re-Pakistan Council, she unquired statements of assets derscored the importance of and liabilities including their fostering harmony and unspouse and dependent childerstanding among individuals of different religious dren as on the preceding 30th day of June on Formbackgrounds. Sabien Hussein Mullick (Focal B for the financial years Person to SAPM), Mian Javed (Chairman Nazriya

Pakistan

tendees

Council),

Manzoor Maseh (Execu-

tive Member Nazriya Pa-

kistan Council), Faisal

Zahid Malik, Salahuddin

(Former High Commis-

sioner of Pakistan to

United Kingdom), Ms.

Nargis and Mr. Khalid

Suleri were among the at-

the universal values of love,

sacrifice and peace embed-

ded in every religion. She

Mushaal highlighted

Education & Professional Training presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Submission of the assets details was a mandatory requirement under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017. The prescribed Form-B along with instructions guidelines prepared in this regard can be obtained free of cost from the Election Commission Secretariat Islamabad, offices of Provincial Election Commissioners of respective Province, Senate Secretariat, National Assembly Secretariat and Secretariats of concerned Provincial Assemblies.

said that during her meeting with Vatican pope she had emphasized fostering Multi-Faith Harmony as a key driver for enduring global peace. Mushaal asserted that

the resolution of global conflicts, including those in Kashmir and Palestine, lies in the propagation of the messages of love, peace, and harmony embedded in all religions. She stressed the need to stand in solidarity with people who were oppressed. Mushaal underscored the unanimous condemnation from all segments of Pakistani society regarding the Jaranwala incident. She commended the measures taken by the Government in response to the situation. She also praised the peace rallies organized by civil society, noting the substantial participation of ordinary citizens in these gatherings. Mushaal voiced deep concern over the persecution of minorities in India carried out on daily basis. She attributed it to the influence of Hindutvainspired policies within the Indian government

PAC's powers ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court

(IHC) on Friday reserved its verdict in cases pertaining to the powers of Public Accounts Committee to summon NAB officials in the Tayyaba Gul harassment case Chief Justice Aamer

Farooq reserved the verdict after hearing arguments from the two sides.

During the course of proceedings, Additional Attorney Munawar Dogal said that the committee had the authority to summon the officials as per the rules.

The chief justice inquired as to why Tayyaba Gul had approached the PAC instead of the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) or anti-corruption department.

2-day Regional **Heads conference** ends at AIOU

ISLAMABAD (APP) Vice Chancellor of AIOÚ Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood on Friday urged the Regional Heads of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) should create a Reference Document Chart" in order to increase enrollment, strengthen student support system, improve examinations system and overall development of the university.

Addressing the closing session of a two-day Regional Heads Conference, he emphasized the need for transparency in all matters, including exams, and requested a report on the regional heads' success in meeting admission targets.

VČ AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, said that any kind of irregularities or corruption would not be

ASEAN committee gathers Islamabad-based diplomats at family BBQ get-together

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee in Islamabad (ACI) organized an event themed 'Family Barbeque, Year-end get-to-gether' on Friday. Speaking on the occa-sion, Malaysian High Com-

missioner in Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan in his capacity as the Chair of ACI said the aim of the event was to bring together the diplomats and families Islamabad-based ASEAN embassies to provide them with an opportunity to touch base with one another in an informal setting. He expressed the confidence that such a gathering would bring about a sense of togetherness and belonging among the ASEAN community in Pa-

kistan. Considering the presence of more than 200 guests including the local officials and media personnel, High Commissioner Azhar expressed his happiness and hoped the event would be an annual feature.

He conveyed his well wishes to those celebrating stan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Christmas and a happy and The Association of South-prosperous new year 2024 to all present.

During the event, the guests enjoyed a number of cuisines, specially prepared by each ASEAN embassies, savoring the unique spices, techniques, and cultural influences of the Southeast Asian region. The cuisines included Satay with peanut sauce, Padthai, Nasi Goreng, Bakso and Sagudana, among others.
The ASEAN diplo-

mats and families exchanged warm greetings and cultural insights, while celebrating the diversity of ASEAN tradition in Pakistan, showcasing the rich tapestry of the region.

The event was not merely a social gathering but a celebration of the shared values and aspirations that unite the diverse nations of Southeast Asia.

It served as a testament to the enduring friendship and solidarity among the ASEAN nations and their commitment to fostering a prosperous and harmonious future together with the host nation. Paki-



ISLAMABAD: Former president Azad Kashmir Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob in a meeting with president Azad Jammmu Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhary.

Embracing Quaid's vision crucial for a strong Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): As championed by none other the nation would observe than Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the 147th birth anniversary of Pakistan's founder laid the foundation for an Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, on visionary ideals resonate. The call to uphold his principles of democracy, equality, and unity remains per-

Embracing his vision promises a path toward a genuine and democratic Pakistan, steering the nation through contemporary challenges with unwavering commitment

The journey towards Pakistan's independence was nothing short of a revolution, marked by the Mus-

lims' unwavering determination to carve out their sovereign state amidst a complex political landscape.

whose visionary outlook independent Pakistan.

Despite facing numer-December 25, echoes of his ous challenges, Pakistan emerged as a distinct nationstate, guided by Quaid's principles. However, the nation's journey post-independence has been fraught with challenges that con-

tinue to shape its course.

The inception of Pakistan was the culmination of decades of struggle. The Lahore Resolution of March 1940, which advocated for a separate homeland based on the Two-Nation Theory, marked a turning point. Jinnah's vision echoed the ideas of Allama Iqbal, emphasizing a separate state for Muslims to safeguard their identity and



ISLAMABAD: Leader of Pakistan People's Party Syed Fasih-ul-Hassan Shah Bukhari arriving for the submission of his nomination papers to contest for the upcoming general elections at DC Office in Federal Capital.

PNCA in collaboration with Saira Peter arranged special **Christmas celebrations**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pa- Peter performed songs kistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Saira Peter arranged special Christmas celebrations here at PNCA, Auditorium on Friday titled "Bethlehem's Christmas".

Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah was the chief guest on the occasion, with Adviser and Culture Expert Muhammad Kashif Irshad and Director General PNCA Muhammad Ayuob Jamali also in attendance and Zafar Francis moderated the overall programme.

The event began with a video message by a Palestinian pastor explaining how Palestinian churches are not celebrating Christmas this year due to the horrific bloodshed and tragedy befalling Palestine's children.

themed around Palestine's suffering children, calling for interfaith harmony and an end to violence. The programme also featured video messages of peace from around the world. In his remarks, Federal

Minister Jamal Shah highly praised Saira Peter for collaborating with PNCA to mark Christmas in a befitting manner. He said that the role of the Christian community is of key importance in the prosperity of the country. The Federal Minister

commended Saira Peter's demonstration that music is much more than entertainment, remarking on the power of the Arts to communicate society's issues He cited her moving depiction of the Palestinian genocide through a potent combination of songs, carols and images which could not

Accompanied by a ISLAMABAD: Senator Irfan-Ul-Haque Siddiqui, Chairman Senate Standing Committee On Federal backdrop of powerful images, Sufi opera singer Saira

Daily Soice of Masse Independent

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Flies on the wall

For the past few years, dubiously recorded private conversations of public figures have been released to the media, or uploaded on social media, in little access to food secuan effort to sully reputations. Victims of this detestable constitutional democracy practice have included people from the sporting world, judges and politicians including prime ministers, and even have failed to serve the natheir relatives. The millionrupee question is: who is responsible?

The Islamabad High Court to protect the Constitution attempted to answer this of Pakistan. The executive query while hearing petitions related to illegal wiretapping. During Wednesday's hearing of former first lady Bushra Bibi's case, the attorney general told the court that the ISI, FIA and IB are "not allowed to record any conversations" adding that if any government agency was involved in this practice, "it is doing so ille-

Further, the IHC was reportedly told that the ISI cannot trace the source of the audio leaks. Other intelligence agencies like the IB and FIA, too, have previously denied knowledge of the source of similar leaks. So if the nation's power-wielders out of their top agencies cannot trace the culprits, then who can?

It is common practice the world over for intelligence forms, over 10 million agencies to monitor suspected hostile actors and foreign agents who intend to harm the country. To do so is no doubt necessary — while following the PTI Chairman-for-life, Imran Khan using Artificial SOPs to avoid violating the Intelligence (AI) technology. rights of innocent people. But As one of my triends described it, "the Sunday strength and potency as a formidable political force to to extend these powers to se- night virtual jalsa unfolded cretly record personal conversations of public figures and leadership of the party. The private citizens cannot be jus-

What national security objectives are served by illegally recording personal calls or messages, and then releasing these, initiating a frenzy in the media and cyberspace? In fact, the policy of electronic eavesdropping by powerful quarters is a continuation of the practice of maintaining 'files' on public figures, and releasing these as and when 'required'. Literally, 'healing wounds'

As for those reacting gleefully to their opponents' dirty cised. It means a lot metalaundry being aired publicly phorically in the social conthrough such means, they communities deeply 'hurt' should remember that the each other because of one same weapon can be deployed ably, mental or psychologiagainst them at some point. cal wounds cause greater Both Imran Khan and Shehbaz and may sustain far longer Sharif can testify to this, as than physical wounds. the conversations of both saying goes, hurt deeper gentlemen were leaked from than the strike of a sword. I the time they were in the ons of mass destruction Prime Minister's Office.

The IHC has said it could hand, beautiful and inspirappoint local and foreign ex- ing words give fresh life to perts in case the state failed ties. Due to anger (regarded to provide information about as fire) erupting for any reathe leaks. The solution could cause harm — physical or lie in appointing an empow-lotherwise—to those who ered commission to investigate the source of the leaks.

Forensic experts, as well as heal and defuse the toxic those familiar with the tech- situation between individuals or in communities. nology in question, can be brought on board to trace the culprits, and help end this vile practice. Illegally recording tribal-based—is one of the and releasing personal conversations has no place in a democratic polity, and is more bers is a dire need to bridge suited to police states. If the gaps in relations and remove misunderstandings. That state does not want to be seen ours is a divided society is as complicit in these shady to state the obvious; what activities, it must endeavour wounds or recent injuries is to unveil the source of the not that obvious. leaks.

OPINION Daily Ind Facts, questions & solutions



Ashraf Jehangir Qazi

Pakistan's population is around 240 million, 90 per cent of whom are poor with rity, shelter, health and education. Pakistan is also a without essential democratic content.

Pakistan's history, its major national institutions tional interest which is the welfare, security, and protection of the basic human rights of its citizens. The superior judiciary has failed has failed to provide good governance for the people. The legislature has failed to represent the interests of the people. The military has failed to defend the territorial integrity of Pakistan

The relatively educated middle classes, especially the political intelligentsia, the bureaucracy, the commercial classes, and the media have by and large chosen opportunistic complicity rather than principled opposition whenever the national interest has been threatened by military intervention. Each of these failures

has contributed to corruption, inequality, inefficiency, cynicism, defeat, resignation, and loss of hope. This has inhibited the development of organised and sustained movements on behalf of a national Over the course of transformation to overcome a whole range of challenges to the existence of the country. It has enabled the power structure to defeat the legal structure and precluded the political coherence of the country.

Sadly, all this is known. Most of it is accepted. But none of it seems to make a difference. This cannot be true. If it were, Pakistan would not deserve to survive. Yet there are far too many among the elites and their 'coattails' sweeping the floor behind them who Mao Zedong or Quaid-i-

cheerfully accept such a

What is to be done? Chairman Mao said, "So much to do; so little time' and "Women hold up half the sky". At the time China was worse off than Pakistan is today. And China is where it is today. China. moreover, is a tested friend that has a strategic interest in our recovery, stability, success and friendship that no other country can match. We are so fortunate. And yet so unfortunate!

There are ten thousand things to be done. The equivalent of pyramids have to be built. Great walls have to be constructed. Real Long Marches have to be undertaken. The eternal truths of Islam have to enlighten, energise and unify the people against all ob-A thousand move-

ments have to emerge and coalesce. A nation has to develop. A thousand-mile journey takes time to traverse. But the first step in the right direction – must be taken immediately so that 'a thousand-mile journey is a thousand miles no longer

Does Pakistan have a

Azam? Yes, every Pakistani is potentially one. So, what must be the first step of a thousand-mile journey? A free, fair and internationally monitored election the results of which are accepted by the people. But the last time such an election was held the country broke in two. That was because the military aborted the results of the election. The military

rejected what the people

accepted. We must learn

from our tragedies in order

not to repeat them.

Our currently passive and perverse political intelligentsia needs to have more integrity. Moreover, we need to assume a latent decency among our movers and shakers even if our experience cannot vouch for it. We have to assume no one is inherently evil in order to take the first step. Otherwise, all is lost

Spontaneous popular eruptions die down quickly. National transformation requires meticulous preparation and time. It also requires a sympathetic or at least non-hostile government. Once movements develop momentum those who are truly incorrigible can be dealt with. Those

are either cynics or dreamers pretending to be realists.

Almost certainly, Imran Khan would win a fair election. Probably with a working majority. Possibly by a landslide. If so, he should avoid the 'electable' trap. Similarly, he must reject 'hybrid' models and Uturns which undermined his credibility. The Egyptian model, in particular, would sink Pakistan. But he should form a coalition government even if he does not need to in order to be as inclusive as possible. There is no need, however, for a 'national government' as it would lead to political dead-

lock and paralysis. He will need to prepare the ground for radical reforms across the political, economic, financial, social, educational, human rights and human development spectrum. A longer-term policy perspective must lend consistency and momentum to his policy measures which otherwise would sooner or later peter

He must also prepare the ground for the continuation and development of his policies beyond his political career. This does not who deride such optimism mean managing his succes-

sion. It implies the development of a whole infrastructure of discussion, debate, consensus-building, communication, reviews and revisions, etc that will progressively alter the political culture of the country. Imran Khan Mark II, accordingly, will need to be very different. If he fails again he will

have had his innings and the country will move on. Failure may not be an option. But it is always possible. What matters is how one fails if one is destined to. In making a gallant and valiant attempt at serving the people and nation? Or in walking away from all one promises? The only certainty is that no one but the people have the right to decide on whom to put their trust and on making a judgement on whether their trust has been fulfilled or betraved. As a citizen, it is my fervent hope, prayer and demand that those shaping the destiny of Pakistan today rise to their God-given moral potential and fulfil their constitutional obligations to the much abused people of our country. Words can say no more. Only actions or inactions

Breaking barriers, discovering new



Raoof Hasan

Much that it may be denied in every conceivable way, the Sunday night virtual jalsa of the PTI has jolted the contrived slumber. Despite the government's efforts to slow down the internet and disrupt X, Facebook, and other social media platpeople connected with the event which lasted into the early morning hours on Monday. The highlight of show was the groundbreaking address of Imran Khan, using Artificial

without the physical presence of Khan and other top assembly was strategically devised to ready PTI voters, supporters, and leader- brutal state apparatus.

lenges that lie ahead, leading up to the planned elections on February 8 He was also impressed

by the immense gathering of the party supporters from across the globe as a "demonstration of passion, political acumen, and depth of PTI leadership along with its rank and file. In essence, the PTI has evolved into an intergenerational phenomenon of the people with a vast grassroots support base. It is imperative to realise and adapt to this re-

This and other similar accolades have found expression by way of the need to recognize by far the most impressive showing of the expanse and depth of strength by any political party in the history of Pakistan. The phenomenon refuses to stop growing in strength and connectivity. People from across all social. cultural and age divides find the PTI aura irresistible formidable political force to

The project to eliminate Imran Khan and the PTI started a long while ago by employing both stealth and

be reckoned with.

tration of the perpetrators, not only were they not able to achieve their immediate goals; but they ended up helping the PTI gain further depth and strength across all societal echelons. As a matter of fact, its popularity continued to increase in direct proportion to the use of a vast repertoire of brutal tactics to decimate it.

When the democratically elected government of Imran Khan was removed by hatching a conspiracy with local and foreign collaborators, it was thought that, once out of power, the PTI would be a dead horse. What happened was the opposite of the perceived plans: the party grew in popularity at a phenomenal pace, and it is now reckoned as the most imposing political force ever in the country with deep roots across societal parameters. To the naysayers, it may have come as a surprise, but not to those who have been students of political history and who have followed the emergence of parties in the country and in the larger region Pakistan is located in

The PTI's credibility has been based on a passionate espousal of its social welfare programme and

ship" for the daunting chal- Much to the angst and frus- translating its promises into reality in alleviating the sufferings of people, most notably those belonging to the aggrieved sections of society. From achieving a 6.1 GDP growth rate to ensuring relief to the impoverished communities of the country even through the challenging times of Covid-19, Khan lived up to his pre-election promises in letter and spirit. Be it the country-wide health card facility, Ehsas programme, Roshan Digital Account, billion tree tsunami, shelter homes, fight against corruption, bumper

crops, and record production

in multiple sectors – his

principal achievements

were primarily focused on

improving the lives of the

poorest segments of the so-

That is how he set about changing the face of the country and providing breathing space to such communities who had been historically brutalized by the notorious ruling elite, fully aided, and abetted by a system rooted in the sickening colonial mindset. This change threatened the traditional minuscule beneficiary class of the country as they started hatching a plot to bring him down to save their

ascendency on a system

which had grown increasingly brutal and corrupt through consciously contrived and malevolent intent of those who were benefiting from its accumulating

The critical steps that Khan took in expanding the strategic paradigm of the country by initiating a policy of outreach to regional stakeholders, including Russia, became a key factor in launching the final assault to dismantle his government as it disturbed the traditional ingredients that had shaped Pakistan's foreign policy. But the barbaric post-dismissal actions have bred hate for the system across the vast expanse of the societal network. This is what has given rise to the unstoppable expansion of

the PTI phenomenon. Heading towards the elections scheduled for February 8, there are two broad ways one can look at paying the way into the future: accept the reality and initiate a process of dialogue to come to terms with it or try to crush it against the intensity of predominant public sentiment and the currents of time. By opting for the former, an environment of peace and harmony would be cultivated in the country.

but resorting to the latter option would breed further division in society, even forcing it into a violent outbreak of emotion. I have written earlier

shall answer questions. --

about the phoenix syndrome and whether we have seen the last of it. Having taken stock of the past almost two years, I dare say that the phoenix has begun to rise from its ashes with formidable power and force. With a support base across the country and through all segments of the societal divide. the PTI's rise is no accident It is embedded in its espousal of the national cause in a manner that only Khan had the courage and grit to do. It now appears to be an irreversible phenomenon. Pakistan and its people seem wedded to the cognisable change which is taking shape. I share my friend's concluding thoughts "the PTI's limitless capacity to keep proving its critics wrong underscores that it is not a fleeting phenomenon". Breaking the traditional barriers and discovering new vistas has provided the space that is otherwise being so unjustly and brutally denied. The way into the future is by conceding to the dominant will of the people, not fighting it. -- Courtesy

Healing wounds



Jan-e-Alam Khaki

is a laudable act, no matter in which context it is exertext, where individuals or excuse or another. Prob-

Words, as the famous

call hurtful words 'weapwhen used in a communal context, while on the other individuals and communison, people get upset and inflict it. Once this happens, someone, or some people, need to resort to 'therapeutic' treatment to

The healing of wounds through building bridges among communities — whether faith-based or prime tasks of civil society and society in general. Meetings between leaders or general community memwe can do to heal old

In this context, let me restricted for internal conmention a case study in sumption, while consen-

which a certain faith leader sus should be developed attempted to build bridges and heal the hurt mentioned here. A prominent religious scholar, a committed educator and innovative ful, he pointed out. thinker visited the scenic but communally tense worth highlighting from his speech was discouraging Gilgit-Baltistan in the backdrop of the recent tension those who create discord caused by a religiously senby arousing the emotions of the members of other sitive issue. The issue was thankfully defused by efcommunities, and particuforts of the government and larly those whose business saner members of society. it is to provoke the masses Meeting communities to do through emotional and powhat we are talking about lemical speeches. He arhere — 'the healing of gued not to leave the space wounds' — following the vacant for them to exploit

lowering of tensions was a

their representatives, ulema

and dignitaries. From what-

given a feeling of healing.

while at the same time ac-

cepting differences of in-

terpretations, right from

the early history of Islam.

Differences should not lead

to confrontations, he

emphasised. Communal

interpretations need to be

He suggested that the dire need to strengthen peace. This, to me, was an elders in communities, like unusual act of generosity in in the family, should enthe true spirit of Islam sure that such elements are discouraged and not given which advises: "The Believers are but a single centre stage to cause Brotherhood: So make trouble. Even if a person peace and reconciliation tends to create mischief, between your two (conthe other community tending) brothers... members should not support them and take sides The leader in question with the wrong person. made a point of meeting all The Quranic guidance (5:2), which says, "Help major communities and

ever I could gather from the help ye not one another in speeches he made to the sin and rancour" provides select gatherings he held guidance regarding what (now on YouTube) with e need to do. different communities, I A commentator made summarise a few key a succinct remark about the points from his talks. talks referred to above and First, meeting these observed, "Each word is a communities as an outreach golden word; my request step to foster brotherly feelis for visiting each district

ye one another in righ-

teousness and piety, but

and encourage discord.

ings and remove misunderof Pakistan taking this standings was itself a great message. Scholars and leaders 'healing' step. He listened to them first before he of this stature, with this spoke to them — indeed, kind of highly articulated an important step to better view in a modern idiom understand and heal. This rooted in essential Islamic generous gesture must have teachings, are in short supply today. Mawlana The second point was Jalaluddin Rumi rightly says, "Tu barai wasl that he emphasised on the commonalities of faith, kardan aamadi; ne barai

> We need more such inspiring leaders with the capacity to heal wounds through their efforts and inspiring talks. -- Cour-

fasal kardan aamadi" mean-

ing, "O humans, you have

been asked to unite, not di-

Baloch question regarding the major pillars of Islam on which there is overall agreement — and these examples are plenti-The third point

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

There is no single issue that clarifies one's political position in Pakistan than the Baloch question This was made brutally clear this past Wednesday night when a caravan of peaceful, unarmed protesters who had made their way to Islamabad from Turbat were violently refused entry into the federal capital.

In the preceding few weeks, the Baloch long march had literally made waves, mobilising thousands of Baloch women, men and children, along with progressive political workers, ethnic-nationalists hailing from other communities, as well as ordinary people. Led by young women.

the caravan snaked through Balochistan and then the Seraiki. Pakhtun and Punjabi heartlands. It was the most meaningful expression of democratic aspirations and what a voluntary federation could look like in recent times. And then they reached the outskirts of Islamabad.

The demands of the marchers are simple enough, but it is precisely their simplicity that is unpalatable to those who rule us: to bring an end to the dastardly practice of enforced disappearances, as well as 'encounter killings', which is what triggered the initial protest in Turbat and accountability for those who are known to be complicit in all such practices Simple demands with earth-shattering implica-

Why is it that raising such demands is so taboo? And why is it especially taboo for Baloch youth to

eryone in Pakistan already knows: that there are some functionaries of the state who do what they want and cannot be held to account. It is telling that while

the long march was making its way through the country, mainstream parties were busy wooing Balochistan's proverbial electables. Sarfraz Bugti, the caretaker interior minister who resigned as soon as the Election Commission confirmed the Feb 8 poll date, was in particular demand. He eventually joined the PPP.

The caretaker prime minister also hails from Balochistan. In the aftermath of the violent crackdown on the long marchers, it was reported that he took urgent notice. As did the Islamabad High Court after a petition was filed on behalf of the hundreds who were detained. Which begs the question: why is it that the Baloch are repeatedly brutalised and nominal remedial action taken only after more salt is rubbed in their already gaping wounds?

Zubeida Mustafa wrote last week on these pages about the systemic and systematic oppression that steadily increased disaffection amongst the Bengalis and led to the eventual creation of Bangladesh. One presumably

writes such words in the hope that the lessons of history are learned, but the Baloch question makes clear not only that nothing has been learned but that the state is even more militarised

Indeed, the scenes on the outskirts of Islamabad this past week make it more difficult to convince the sceptics that a democratic federation in which ethnic nations like the Baloch enjoy genuine citizenship is still a possibility. To be sure, there is no other way to describe the attitudes and actions of those who rule us as old-fashioned colonial statecraft.

The marchers asked to

state what pretty much ev- be let into the federal capital and be allowed to say their piece. Their language was not incendiary was, in fact, a plea to be heard. They certainly did not come with the loftiest of expectations, given the historical track record.

This is precisely why the young women and mothers who came on foot to what is supposed to be the symbol of the federation, simply asking to be allowed to make their way to a peaceful protest camp, should not have been batoncharged, hosed with water cannons and bundled into police vans.

Mainstream Pak-is--tan has been exposed to some of these tactics in recent months, especially those who continue to pledge their allegiance to the jailed former prime minister. Many of those who have now experienced the big stick ask rhetorically how and why they are being treated so bru-

The truth is that they are only now being subjected to the treatment that many Baloch and those who have stood in solidarity with them suffered for a long time. To recognise this is to truly open up the possibility of a deeper democratic struggle in which the most oppressed is given central-

Indeed, the solidarities that were expressed along the route of the long march should not be forgotten in the clamour of what happened when it actually entered Islamabad.

The establishment will not be held to account by bourgeois politicians who want to cosy up to it. The only hope is for all progressives — and the ordinary people who came out onto the streets to make clear their abhorrence for disappearances and 'encounter' killings — to recognise that that can maybe, just maybe, still lead to a just and democratic

future. -- Courtesy Dawn

CM orders 24/7 CT-Scan, MRI reports facility

Independent Report LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has directed the health secretary that all hospitals must adhere to a 24/7 facility for providing CT scans and MRI reports to patients.

He made a surprise visit to Children's Hospital on Friday where parents raised concerns regarding delayed issuance of CT scans and MRI reports. The CM was informed that CT scans and MRI reports

were issued three days after the tests. The CM warned that hospitals found to be causing delay in delivering CT scans and MRI reports would face administrative

CM inspected various wards, interacted with parents of children and inspected the medical facilities. The CM also inspected up-gradation work, engaged with the labourers and assessed progress.



LARKANA: President PPP Sindh, Senator Nisar Ahmad Khuhro submits his nomination form from PS 11 to returning officer for upcoming General

IPMG meeting urges Fortifying gender data collection to promote gender equality

LAHORE (APP): The chairperson NCSW, said: participants in the Inter-Provincial Ministerial Group (IPMG) discussed effectively in efforts to promote gender equality in

IPMG meeting, held under the auspices of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), and with support from UN Women and the United States, concluded here on Friday during which speakers shared vision of a more inclusive society, where every woman can thrive and contribute to the nation's progress. The IPMG was established in

"This assembly serves as fostering collaboration and the use of data more initiating positive change on the path to gender equality and empowerment of women in Pakistan. Together, let's unite to construct a society where every woman's voice echoes, and her rights and

contributions are valued."

Sharmeela Rassool, country representative of UN Women, said, "The IPMG functions as an inventive platform for devising tailored solutions that cater to unique needs of Pakistan. An exemplary illustration of this is the National Gender Data Portal. Acknowledging the to enhance crucial role of data, we coordination on gender recognise its importance in equality and women's identifying policy gaps and Nilofar Bakhtiar, make informed decisions.

Firdous says: **Every political step of IPP** will lead to the country's construction, development

SIALKOT (APP): Central Information Secretary Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and former Federal Minister Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that every political step of Istehkame-Pakistan Party (IPP) will lead to the country's construction

development and to divert the resources of a strong and powerful Pakistan towards the development and prosperity of the people of NA-70, there must be sincere and honest leadership from the constituency.

In a statement issued here to the media on Friday, Information Central Secretary Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and

former Federal Minister said that the President of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Abdul Aleem Khan issued instructions to his candidates participating in the elections to receive nomination papers and submit them in time.

Dr. Firdous Ashiq

Awan said that the the People's friendly manifesto of İstehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and the implementation of ongoing struggle in the interest of the country was possible with the support of the people and the power of

She said that in order to take Pakistan on the path of development and prosperity



LAHORE: Group photo of Sikh Yatris during the International Punjabi Conference.

During his visit, the



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with during function organized in connection with the Quaid Day at the Governor House.

Education minister for reforming examination, assessment system

Caretaker Federal Minister Education and Pakistan" Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, Friday, stressed the need for a paradigm shift in educational examinations and assessment systems to align them with the requirements of the era of modern technology.

Examinations and assessment were pillars of the educational system and we have to adopt those measures which encourage critical thinking, creative abilities and practical implementation knowledge, he said while addressing the inaugural session of the 2-day IBCC 1st Annual Conference

ECP Sindh fixes date for scrutiny

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Election Commission of Sindh has set December 25 as the new date for scrutiny here on Friday.

According to a spokesman for ECP Sindh, the candidates, who were earlier, invited for scrutiny on December 24 were then advised to visit ECP Sindle on December 25

The decision was given announcement by the Election Commission of Pakistan to extend the date for nomination papers till 24 December.

IGP holds meeting with Karachi CCA

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, held a meeting on Friday with a six-member delegation from the Karachi Goods Carrier the Karachi Goods Carrier Association, led by Noor Khan Niazi, at the Central

Police Office (CPO).

During the meeting, the delegation conveyed their satisfaction with the law and order situation in the province, according to a spokesman for Sindh Police. They commended the proactive measures taken by the police, expressing gratitude for the successful recovery of a cargo vehicle stolen in Malir in recent days.

In response, IGP Sindh conveyed that the police's commitment extends beyond maintaining peace; it includes safeguarding life, property, honour, and dignity. He emphasized the importance of effective, coordinated operations to ensure the protection of citizens. IGP Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, issued directives to establish a coordination committee with AIGP Operations Sheeraz Nazeer as the focal person, aiming to strengthen and enhance the cooperation between transporters and the police, ensuring future interactions are robust and efficient. the offices of their submission of nomin respective returning papers by two days. efficient.

KARACHI (APP): The titled "Examination and to bring necessary changes three core factors- better Assessment Practices in assessment

conference, organized by the Inter Board Coordination Commission (IBCC) here at a private university, was attended by vicechancellors of universities, chairmen of different boards of education from across the country, academicians, teaching faculty and students.

Madad Ali Sindh, addressing the occasion, said that with extensive research and advent of modern technologies educational scenarios around the globe were transforming rapidly and it was essential for Pakistan

SPEECH BY CHIEF GUEST

LAHORE (APP): US

women become a source of

positive change in societies

through the life transforming skills and confidence gained from

Speaking at a four-day US funded sports workshop for women at

University of Education

(UoE) Township here on

Friday, she said sports

contribute to character-

building and help women become positive agents of change and reminded the

workshop participants of

their unique role as

educators, coaches, and

DERA ISMAIL KHAN

(APP): The process of

filing nomination papers

for the Feb 8, 2024, general

elections continued for the

National Assembly in Dera

Ismail Khan. The process

to submit nomination

papers, which began Wednesday gained

momentum on Friday after

many candidates rushed to

leadership skills.

KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Education

Minister, Madad Ali Sindhi is being presented with

memento during the 1st Annual Conference 2023

"Examination and Assessment Practices in

Kristin Hawkins sees

women become agents

of change through sports

Consul General in Lahore of empowering young Kristin Hawkins has said women, the workshop was

With the sole purpose

conducted by coaches,

trainers, and educators from Baylor University

and University of North Carolina, Wilmington, in

partnership with the UoE, Township. Female sports

educators, trainers, and coaches from 10 schools

and four universities across Punjab attended the

participates in sports, will

confidence, teamwork, and

skills that we learn from

sports can help us become

officers appointed by the

Election Commission of

Pakistan. Several

candidates, including

seasoned politicians, on

Assembly constituencies

(NA-44 and NA-45) of

district Dera Ismail Khan.

The process will continue

till Dec 24, as the Election

Commission of Pakistan

extended the deadline for

submission of nomination

on professionally, but the

life," Hawkins said.

'Not everyone, who

workshop.

mentors in helping young a force for positive change, women develop their no matter what we do in

Nomination papers of

several political bigwigs

submitted for NA-44,45

third day for two Friday filed nomination constituencies of the papers for two National

in its examination and systems accordingly Underscoring the

significance of utilizing advanced technologies in assessment the minister stated that the use of digital technology in the examination could help improve the educational system. He also urged the need to take pivotal steps for maintaining standards of fairness, honesty and transparency in the

Madad Ali Sindhi reiterated that there was no other option for the development and progress of Pakistan except quality education and focusing on

curriculum, teaching faculty and a conducive and encouraging environment.

He expressed dismay that in the past the most important sector of education could not get proper attention policies of previous governments and electoral manifestos of political parties.
"Now when the nation is heading towards

general elections, all the political parties must prioritize education, economy, clean drinking water and health in their manifestos as resolving the issues of masses was their

Mushaal says: **Christian community** playing key role in Pak development, prosperity

RAWALPINDI (APP): atrocities were being Special Assistant to the committed on minorities in Prime Minister for Human India and the international Rights and Women community should to take Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Station Commander congratulating the Christian community on congratulating

Christmas, has said that the Christian community was playing a key role in the development and prosperity of the country.

She said that the Christian community

members were performing significant services while all the minorities including the Christian community had equal rights in Addressing ceremony organized by

Archbishop Rawalpindi-Islamabad Dr Joseph Arshad in connection with Christmas celebrations, Mushaal said

Station Commander Rawalpindi Brig. Ahmad Nawaz, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leaders Chaudhry Tanveer, Barrister Daniyal. Chaudhry Osama, Malik Abrar, Ziaullah Shah and Rashid Khan, Pakistan Peoples Party's Sibt-ul-Bukhari, Hasan businessman Hafeez, Muhammad Shoaib Sadal, Member of the peace committee, Babu Sajid Amin Khokhar, Frayad Francis, Napoleon Gomez, Sanobar Gill, ambassadors of various countries, Hindu, Sikh and Christian leaders, Ulema Izhar Bukhari Hafiz Iobal

Rizvi andPir Azmatullah.



LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi and others offering Dua after inaugurating Captain Colonel Sher Khan Shaheed Flyover. Corps Commander Lahore Lt. General Syed Amir Raza, Provincial Ministers and Chief Secretary Punjab are also present.

KP Cabinet reiterated commitments to provide level playing field in Election

PESHAWAR (APP): The government during daylight been mobilized for the Caretaker Provincial to ensure efficient security purpose and every effort and safety of the Cabinet of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday reiterated its commitment to provide a level playing field to all political parties and has asked them to follow the Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) during their election campaigns.

Besides the directives Election

CM grieved

at labourers

killing

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi has condoled the

death of five labourers,

who were shot dead at an

under-construction police

in

sympathies to the bereaved

families. He also prayed for

speedy recovery of the injured labourers.

extended

station

Waziristan.

He

designated areas notified the provincial

under the Chairmanship of the Caretaker cabinet, Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Arshan Hussain Shah finalized preparations for the upcoming general

The cabinet met

participants.

Commissions, these SOPs that every effort will be missing facilities, and include holding large made to ensure free and fair placement of IT staff and The Chief Minister assured that provision of

purpose and every effort is being made to ensure transparency and efficient utilization of taxpayer's money. The Cabinet was briefed in detail about preparations for the upcoming general elections.It would ensure elections in light of the the availability and directives of the Election placement of human Commission reiterating resources, mapping of



MULTAN: Senior Vice Chairman PPP, Sved Yousaf Raza Gillani submitting his nomination papers with his supporters at the Commissioner's office.

Kundi submits

nomination papers,

RPO orders foolproof security on Christmas

FAISALABAD (APP) Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr. Muhammad Abid Khan has issued instructions for ensuring foolproof security arrangements Christmas.

He directed the capital police officer (CPO) Faisalabad, district police officers (DPOs) of three districts including Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chiniot to make foolproof security arrangements in churches. Christian settlements, special markets and celebration points on Christmas.

A police spokesperson said here on Friday all district police heads had strictly been directed to personally visit the special Christmas

(APP): Faisal karim kundi, a former Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary on Friday submitted his nomination papers for the general elections set to take

place on February 8, 2024. Kundi, appearing in person at the returning officer's office along with his supporters, filed his nomination papers for NA 44 (DIKhan -I).

Speaking to media persons after filing his papers, Kundi said this time PPP step into the election race with the backing of the area's two esteemed political families including Miankhel and

optimistic to victorious DERA ISMAIL KHAN Makhdoom at Dera Ismail Khan to secure stunning

victory against opponents. Kundi said he was going to contest the election from NA-44 while Fateh Ullah Miankhel submitted his nomination papers as a candidate for NÂ-45 on PPP tickets. He revealed that Makhdoom Aftab Haider representing the Makdhoom family contesting for PK-111 (Paharpur) constituency on a PPP ticket, while Former MPA Ahmed Karim Kundi contesting from PK-112 (City-II) and Qaizar Khan Miankhel from PK-114 (Parowa) for provincial assembly seats. The candidates constituencies PK 113 (City-I) and PK-115 (Kulachi).



KARACHI: Youngsters from Balochistan Province are shouting slogans during protest in the favor of their demands outside Press Club.

Household pollution posing serious threats to public health, environment

PESHAWAR (APP): The fossil fuel, wood and waste increasing level of household pollution both in the shape of biomass and solid waste generation is posing serious threats to public health and the environment of the city.

The air quality index in Peshawar in the current winter season has belled the alarm by recording a dangerous stage of more than 236 pollution levels; raising the status of the city to the most polluted in the

pollution is vehicular shape of the burning of lives in rural area.

for cooking at home.

A recent study by Peshawar Clean Air Alliance (PCAA), a volunteer association of civil society individuals, found that transport is contributing 58.46 percent in air pollution and is followed by household pollution making a contribution of 11.66 percent while waste burning 4.1 percent and dust 17.67 burning.

It showed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has environmental experts, the one of the highest major source of air proportions of wood fuel usage, particularly in rural emission followed by households and about half household pollution in of Peshawar population

According to 2017 census, about 138000 households in Peshawar used wood as fuel for heating.

The study titled Status of Air Pollution in Peshawar' finds that the annual Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5) in Peshawar has ranged between 61.40 ug/m3 and 80.09 ug/mg3, exceeding the current national and provincial standards by 4 to 5 times and WHO air quality guidelines by 12-16 times. High level of PM 2.5 have a considerable impacts on the population of Peshawar as the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) estimates that citizen of Peshawar can add up to 2.3

expectancy if air quality level meets the WHO's

"Peshawar has been declared as the third most polluted city in Pakistan and the 9th most polluted in the world in the 2021 World Air Quality report," says Dr. Adil Zareef, a public health expert and convener of PCAA.

Talking to APP, Dr. Adil said while evaluating the current year data of Peshawar air quality, the city has jumped from third most polluted city in Pakistan to number one. In November and December 2023, sometimes the air quality index of Peshawar crossed the pollution level years to their life of Lahore, the most

polluted city of Pakistan. He said according to Health Department Report, around 93,000 cases of pneumonia have been reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the current year, an indication of an increase in chest and respiratory problems

mainly due to toxic air.

'It's time for chalking out a multi-sectorial policy to air pollution and safe public from different health-related ailments connected with poor air quality," Dr. Adil stressed Introduction of

Environmental Green Police" can be given a regulatory authority under **Environment Protection** Agency (EPA) KP.

OMMERCE EWS

Minister says:

Good to use natural elements to support agricultural activities

Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik has said using natural elements for supporting agricultural activities is most desirable

He said this while addressing the 5th PlantwisePlus National Forum meeting at a local hotel on Friday.

He said, "Climate change and realisation to move away from fossil fuel technology are highly

He said anything related to bio was extremely important whether it was biocontrol, biopesticide, biofertilizer, biostimulant, etc.

He said that climate agriculture in a number of

existing challenges to crop production. Smallholder farmers in developing countries were the most vulnerable

disproportionately affected because they lack the capacity to cope with uncertainties created by a rapidly changing world, he added.

He said smallholders needed to adapt to farming practices to climate hazards to maintain the quality and quantity of crops, or in some cases diversify into new forms of farming and livelihoods. He said that it was very important to look at soil health to obtain desired

Dr Kausar said, "We are consuming most important resources of gas change was impacting and energy in developing fertilizers." Fertilizers

way they were being used was illogical, he added. The and export depend on sanitary and phytosanitary measures as it was extremely important. He suggested the Centre for Agriculture and Bioscience International (CABI) to impart training to all our potential exporters and importers as they were not aware of SPS. He said that biopesticide was also extremely important and there was need to encourage research and development developing biopesticides adding that pesticides put negative impact on environment. The minister

also appreciated the role of CABÎ. CABI Senior Regional Director Asia Dr Babar E Bajwa, Country Coordinator



PESHAWAR: Chairperson, Intellectual Property of Pakistan (IPO-Pakistan), Ambassador Farukh Amil addressing an awareness session on Intellectual Property Rights.

IPO Pak emphasis need for creating awareness on **Intellectual Property Rights**

Ambassador Farukh Amil, ensure their effective Chair-Intellectual Property enforcement by law Organization of Pakistan enforcement agencies to (IPO-Pakistan) here on avoid counterfeiting and Friday said Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) were very important for said the process of the promotion of genuine trade and underscored the started by IPO Pakistan need for the creation of awareness among manufacturers, people and industrialists on its registration, protection and enforcement for genuine

business development. He expressed these views during an awareness session on 'Protection and enforcement of IPRs: Business development opportunities industrialists' jointly organized by (IPO- was blessed with all kinds Pakistan) and the of resources including Industrialists Association mines and minerals, Peshawar (IAP) here.

Speaking as chief guest, Farukh Amil said that the workshop aimed to raise awareness among people, manufacturers and industrialists in Peshawar about IPRs related services including trademarks, said

(INP): by his organization and piracy of their products. For this purpose, he

with the assistance of the Punjab IT Board for speedy service delivery. Besides English and Urdu, he said people need to be educated about IPRs in regional and mother languages including Pashto, Hindko, Punjabi, Sindhi and Balochi for which the role of academia and media

was equally important. Ambassador Farukh Amil said that Pakistan was blessed with all kinds forests, coal, winds, gemstones and hydel power and its optimum utilization through innovative approaches and modern research-based practices could bring laurels to the country. He economic copyrights and patent empowerment of youth designs that were protected carried significant.

Tessori says: Agriculture backbone of country's

economy KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Minister for Irrigation Eshwar Lal called on Governor Mohammed Kamran Khan Tessori at the Governor the occasion, they

backbone of the country's necessary to save water

from wastage.

about future opportunities in building the IT talent private partnerships in supplementing university House here on Friday. On

of the canal system in the province, the availability of water for various crops problems of tail-end farmers and other related issues. The Governor said that agriculture was the economy. He said that crop production could be increased with better distribution of canal water. He further said that effective measures were

School of Engineering, Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK); and Amr Hashem, Policy Director, GSMA MENA. The discussion was moderated by Ammar Tobba, VP, of Public Affairs and Communications, Huawei Middle East and Central curricula with practical Asia Region.

shared their thoughts on driving digital The University of transformation, building a sustainable knowledgebased digital economy in the region, and raising national competitiveness in line with the government's

national plans and visions. Gender equality in technology was also highlighted as a pressing

need during the discussion. The forum was Jassim Haji, President of attended by university students and tutors.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Kauser Abdullah Malik addresses at CABI 5th Plant Wise Plus National Forum Lahore.

Senate body discusses financial challenges faced by PSM

Independent Report ISLAMABAD:

Senate Standing Committee Stanung Industry and Friday Production discussed multiple options to address the financial challenges of Pakistan Steel Mill. The meeting, chaired by Senator Khalida Ateeb, was held at the Parliament House to deliberate on critical issues concerning the industrial sector of the

During the meeting, the committee received a comprehensive update on the progress regarding the previous recommendations concerning Pakistan Steel Mill, National Fertilizer Mill, National returned Corporation, and Pakistan rupees.

ISLAMABAD (APP):

Speakers at an event hosted

by the University of

Bahrain on the sidelines of

Huawei

Competition 2023-2024

regional final awards

ceremony in Manama, delved into discussions

ecosystem and the

significance of public-

socio-economic growth in

Bahrain is a partner for the

Huawei ICT (Information

Communications

Technology) Competition

2023-2024 regional final

and hosted the official

closing and awards

ceremonies for the

discussion featured Dr

the International Group of

The forum panel

programme this year.

the region.

They called upon

nurturing innovations.

Assistance Center.
The Chief Financial Officer of Pakistan Steel Mill highlighted a 25% increase in the temporary

relief allowance for employees, effective since September 2023, initially emphasizing its one-year duration Of profound concern for the committee was the alarming surge in theft

incidents within Pakistan Steel Mill, resulting in substantial financial losses. Officials revealed that since 2021, thefts have escalated, causing a loss of approximately 18 million

rupees, with recoveries amounting to 4.9 million theft

Artificial Intelligence; Dr

Hessa Jassim Al-Junaid. Dean of the College of

Information Technology, University of Bahrain; Dr

Tilda Karkour Akiki, Associate Dean of the

Speakers discuss future

IT talent ecosystem

significantly impacted the operations and stability of Pakistan Steel Mill. Dilating on the issue,

machinery and assets has

the committee discussed the correlation between decreased workforce and the rise in theft incidents. The CFO of Pakistan

Steel Mill attributed the increase in thefts to the decreased workforce, highlighting a drastic reduction in employees from over 9,000 to a deserted environment, thereby escalating security vulnerabilities.

committee The expressed apprehension regarding the prolonged vacant CEO position for the past four months.

Zong announces special offer opportunities in building on Christmas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecom operator announced a special data roaming bundle for the United Kingdom to ensure seamless and uninterrupted connectivity at affordable rates this Christmas.

As an organization that believes in inclusivity, this bundle has been tailormade for those celebrating the festivities of the occasion said a news

This customized bundle is designed to ensure that you get access to the best data roaming services at affordable

Zong 4G aims to create ease of access for its users and is evolving every day to cater to the needs of modern travelers.

Recognizing considerable challenge associated with switching networks for every international trip, Zong 4G has curated bundles designed to cater to the connectivity needs of travelers in over 150 countries worldwide.

reach \$6.88bln in 5 months ISLAMABAD (APP): witnessed negative growth include cotton cloth, the exports of which declined

Pakistan's textile exports

Pakistan exported textile \$6,883.615 million during the initial five months of the current financial year (2023-24), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS)

The exports of the however witnessed a decline of 6.50 percent during July-November (2023-24) when compared to the exports of 7,361,914 million during July-November (2022-23).

commodities witnessed positive growth in trade included raw cotton, the exports of which grew by 253.10 percent, from \$11.253 million last year to \$39.733 million this year. Likewise, the exports

of cotton yarn increased by 50.30 percent, from \$328.197 million last year to \$493.277 million this year, cotton carded or combed by 22.86 percent, from \$0.477 million to \$0.586 million and towels by 0.74 percent, from

by 13.35 percent, from \$903.685 million to \$783.087 million, yarn other than cotton yarn by 11.47 percent, from \$19.455 million to \$17.223 million, and knitwear by 13.11 percent, from \$2,112.818 million to \$1,835.782 million.

Likewise, the exports of bed wear declined by 5.62 percent from \$1,219.307 million to \$1,150.777 million, tents, canvas and tarpaulin by 5.72 percent, from \$51.514 million to million, \$48.568 , ready-made garments by 9.45 percent, from \$1,513.719 million to \$1,370.736 million.

The exports of art, silk and synthetic textile also decreased by 18.55 percent by declining from \$179.327 million to \$146.068 million, madeup articles by 4.72 percent, from \$307.390 million to \$292.889 million whereas the exports of all other \$409.510 million to textile materials also went \$412.544. The textile down by 4.23 percent.



Iwo new Carrefour supermarkets open their doors in DHA Lahore, graced by the presence of Umer Lodhi, the Country Manager of Carrefour Pakistan, who joyfully cut the ribbon at the inauguration ceremony.

Weekly inflation falls by 0.51%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), 0.51 percent for the points. combined consumption groups during the week ended on December 21, the Pakistan Bureau of 22,889-29,517; Rs 29,518-

The SPI for the week under review in the abovementioned group was recorded at 310.00 points as compared to 311.58 points during the past week, according to the PBS

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 42.60 percent.

The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure basmati broken (0.11%)

lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.39 percent and went down to 304.83 points witnessed a decrease of from last week's 306.02

The Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. 44,175 and above Rs 44,175 it decreased by 0.40 percent, 0.39 percent, 0.44 and respectively.

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 18 (35.29%) items increased, 09 (17.65%) items decreased and 24 (47.06%) items remained stable.

The items, which recorded a decrease in their average prices on a weekon-week (WoW) included potatoes (13.17%), petrol super (4.97%), diesel (4.68%),tomatoes (3.45%), sugar (1.16%), =100 covers 17 urban wheat flour bag (0.33%), chicken (0.13%), rice

ps. and cooking oil 5 litre The SPI for the (0.07%).

UK recession might be under way after economy shrinks in Q3

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Britain's

economy might be in a recession, according to data that showed it shrank between July and September, shortly after finance minister Jeremy Hunt took the rare step of suggesting the Bank of England might cut interest rates to boost growth. Gross domestic

product (GDP) contracted by 0.1% in the third quarter, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.It had previously estimated that the economy was unchanged from the previous three months and economists poll had mostly expected another unchanged reading.

Similarly, second-quarter GDP was now estimated to have been flat, a cut from a previous estimate of 0.2% growth. However, there were

about the economy in separate data also published on Friday which showed retail sales in November jumped by much more than expected, increasing by 1.3% from October, boosted by discount sales. The boost to retail

some more upbeat signs

sales volumes reflected heavy discounting during the Black Friday sales promotions. Sales fell over the three months to November and were still below their pre-pandemic levels, the statistics office said.Sterling rose against the dollar and the euro immediately after the data releases.Finance minister Hunt - whose Conservative Party is lagging far behind the opposition Labour Party in opinion polls with an election expected next

year - took the unusual

step of commenting.



PESHAWAR: A carpenter busy in making part of a traditional bed (charpai) at his workplace in Dabgari area.

ISLAMABAD: Senator Khalida Ateeb, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Industries and Production presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament Lodges Islamabad.

ISLAMABAD (APP): seen bargaining with The sale of winter clothes, particularly second-hand, has gained momentum as many stalls selling woollies can be seen in different areas of the federal capital - the latest rising trend of second-hand stuff is going to overtake fast fashion in the next few years.

Heaps of secondhand quilts, blankets and rugs are up for sale at weekly Sunday bazaars. The main advantage of buying second-hand clothing is that it is much cheaper than buying new. All kinds of wear and

accessories including gloves, woolen hats, pullovers, mufflers, sweaters, shirts and jackets are also seen hanging in front of shops bazaars. Crowds of people, retailers in markets and Sunday bazaars.

World Economic Forum, the market value of secondhand clothing has reached \$24 billion by 2018 and is expected to double in the middle of the next decade.

Muhammad Khan, a buyer at H-9 Weekly Bazaar said that secondaffordable for the people but now the exorbitant rates of clothes in these bazaars have created a sense of frustration among

Ahmed Ali, another, second-hand clothes stall holder in the bazaar said that the variety of imported clothes is and stalls of weekly available at economical prices which is a great

second-hand winter stuff increase in the bazaars. He clothes, claimed that "we are already taking a minimum profit on selling these products despite pricehike-situation in the country.

shops for second-hand items are not poverty-stricken people, many middle-class and wealthy individuals shop in the shops and also swap designer clothing on a regular basis. "Some people purchase secondhand stuff due to the

The bazaars secondhand clothes are found everywhere in the city and poor customers are looking

handbags, stalls. The reason is that

clothes markets

the population under 30 years of age. Internet penetration stood at 36.7 percent at the start of 2023, giving easy access to online stores.

"Young people are looking at global trends on social media. They follow celebrities and know which shoes are famous, but they don't have access to those brands," said Fayaz Khan a digital expert. He said, "We are

bridging the gap by bringing the best of sneaker culture to Pakistan and listing them on our website for a fraction of the cost of

what their brand-new counterparts would cost. The country has long had a booming secondhand market, with clothing being sold at its "second-hand

KARACHI SpilKartini, Vanauish.

Sale of second-hand winter clothes gains momentum dignity of white collar strata of the society. warm clothes for the winter season. a huge young population with around 64 percent of

He said that prices of According to the

The hand clothes were once always for poor or

economic problems.' both poor and rich, can be source to protect the for moderately priced

The second-hand clothes owners maintained have registered a significant that people prefer buying furniture, and kids' items from the second-hand several branded new items. especially clothes, are made with lesser quality materials and sold at higher

The secondhand clothes are mainly imported from China, The United States of America and Canada which became the 69th most imported product in Pakistan. The country has long had a booming secondhand market, with clothing being sold at its "second-hand

Digitalizing this market makes sense for Pakistan: the country has clothes markets", he added.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,800 ISLAMABAD (APP):

The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,800 and was sold at Rs 219,800 on Friday against its sale at Rs 218,000 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams

of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs 1543 to Rs 188,443 from Rs 186,900 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 172,740 from Rs 171,325, the All Sindh Jewellers Sarafa Association reported. The price of per tola

and ten gram silver witnessed no change and was sold at Rs.2,650 and Rs.2,271.94 respectively.

Shipping activity at **Port Qasim**

Shipping activity reported at the Port where five ships namely, Seaspan Ganges, Kamome Victoria and Sheng Ping Hai carrying Container, Edible Gasoline and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Oil Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on 21st December. Meanwhile three more ships, Sheng De Hai, Estia and Silver Eleaner also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Oasim during last 24 hours.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali addressing a orient session regarding online Platform for **Business Governemnt Communication.**

Independent

More than 20 countries now part of US-led Red Sea coalition, Pentagon says

Monitoring Desk WASHINGTON: A total of more than 20 countries have agreed to participate in the new US-led coalition safeguarding commercial traffic in the Red Sea from attacks by Yemen's Houthi movement as more nations join the effort, the Pentagon said

on Thursday. Still, the new Pentagon total would suggest that at least eight of the countries who have signed up have also declined to be publicly named, in a sign of political sensitivities of the operation as regional tensions soar over the Israel-Hamas

Patrick Ryder said, noting he told a news briefing. declarations by Greece and Australia.

countries, defer to them to talk about their participa-

The United States launched Operation Prosperity Guardian two days ago, saying more than a dozen countries had agreed to participate in an effort that will involve joint patrols in Red Sea waters near

Each country will contribute what they can, Ryder said, dubbing it a "coalition of the willing."

"In some cases that "We've had over 20 will include vessels. In other nations now sign on to par- cases, it could include staff or other types of support,"

The crisis in the Red Sea has grown out of the war between Israel and Gaza's ruling Palestinian Islamist group Hamas.

The war began on Oct. 7 when Hamas fighters stormed across the Gaza border into southern Israel, where Israeli authorities say the militants killed about 1,200 mostly civilian Israelis and foreigners.

Israel's retaliatory bombardment and invasion of Gaza, which Israeli officials state is aimed at wiping out Hamas, has killed nearly 20,000 Palestinians, according to health officials in the densely populated, coastal enclave.

Diplomatic ties

with US could

break down

over asset

seizures

Monitoring Desk

MOSCOW: Russia may

cut diplomatic ties with the

United States if Washing-

ton confiscates Russian as-

sets frozen over the Ukrai-

nian war, the Interfax news

agency quoted Deputy

Foreign Minister Sergei

Ryabkov as saying on Fri-

'must not act under an illu-

sion... that Russia is cling-

ing with both hands to dip-

country," Ryabkov said.

States as "below zero" be-

cause of U.S. military and

financial aid for Ukraine in

the war now approaching

the end of its second year.

Ryabkov said Russia, which

sent forces into Ukraine in

February 2022 in what it

called a "special military operation", would not be the

one to initiate a break in dip-

lomatic ties, but such a rup-

ture could be prompted by

China threatens

Philippines serious

consequences on

maritime violations

BEIJING (Online): China has warned the Philippines

not to "misjudge" the situ-

ation in the South Seas and

not to do something that

would only make it suffer

According to the World News Agency, this

threat from China was given

by Foreign Minister Wang

Yi to his Philippine coun-

the consequences.

a variety of factors.

The United States

Russia has described relations with the United



Lai Ching-te, Taiwan's vice president and the ruling Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) presidential candidate gestures during an election campaign event in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

UN Security Council Gaza vote delayed again, US signals backing Monitoring Desk in the Hamas-ru

NEW YORK: The UN Se- have said, a new reflection curity Council once again of the staggering cost of pushed back a vote for a much-delayed resolution on the war between Hamas and Israel. The postponement to Friday came even as the United States, which has opposed a number of proposals during the resolution's drafting, said it was ready to support it in its current form.

in the Hamas-run territory Israel's military offensive as pressure grows to scale it

The figure amounts to nearly 1% of the territory's population before the start of the war, which has displaced nearly 85% of Gaza's people and levelled wide swaths of the tiny coastal enclave. Gaza's The war in Gaza has Health Ministry said it has killed more than 20,000 documented 20,057 deaths

Second North Korean nuclear reactor appears to be operational, IAEA says Monitoring Desk too, the International

North Korea's Yongbyon nuclear complex appears to be operating for the first time, the U.N. nuclear watchdog and independent experts said on Thursday, which would mean an additional potential source of plutonium for nuclear

North Korea has for years used spent fuel from a 5-megawaft nuclear reactor at Yongbyon to produce plutonium for its nuclear arsenal but a telltale discharge of warm water from a larger light-water reactor suggests it is coming online,

too, the International Atomic Energy Agency

'The discharge of warm water is indicative the reactor has reached criticality," IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said in a statement meaning the nuclear chain reaction in the reactor is self-sustaining.
The IAEA has not had

access to North Korea since Pyongyang expelled its inspectors in 2009. The agency now observes the country mainly using satellite imagery. Without access, the IAEA cannot confirm the reactor's operational status, Grossi said.

UK backtracks on immigration rule on family sponsor

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Just weeks after the Conservative government announced new immigration rules, including a new salary threshold of £38,700 for UK residents to sponsor a foreign spouse, the government has backtracked on its measure.

Late on Thursday evening, media reports suggested the government had watered down by cutting the newly proposed fee by almost £10,000. The Home Office confirmed details of

showed that while the Miniby the £38,700 salary.





A vendor sells food to polling agents at the Mavuno polling station after they worked long hours during the parliamentary and presidential elections, in Goma, North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Czech Interior Minister Vit Rakusan and Police Chief Martin Vondrasek give a press conference in the Ministry of the Interior in Prague, Czech Republic.

Czech police seek motive in Prague mass shooting that killed 15

Monitoring Desk

PRAGUE: Czech authorities sought a motive on Friday in a student's gun attack that killed 15 people at a Prague university, where tearful mourners have left a sea of candles to grieve for the victims.

The gunfire on Thursday at the Charles and their identity. It's 15 University's Faculty of Arts sparked frantic scenes of students running from the attack that was the Czech Republic's worst shooting in decades.

A makeshift memorial of hundreds of candles flickered outside the univereigners.

sity on Friday as police pursued the investigation at the campus in Prague's historic centre.

The gunman, a 24year-old student, killed himself after the attack, shooting dead 15 people and wounding 25 others. "We know all 14 dead

victims of the mad gunman and the gunman himself," Interior Minister Vit Rakusan told public broadcaster Czech TV, revising down a previous toll of 14 victims. He added that three of the wounded were for-

Japan prepares for missile shipments after easing arms export restrictions

Monitoring Desk TOKYO: Japan said on Friday it would prepare to ship Patriot air defence missiles to the United States after revising its arms export guidelines earlier that day, in the pacifist nation's first major overhaul of such export curbs in nine years. The announcement comes as Japan, which had long adopted a stance of not allowing ex-

ment in the Indo-Pacific. This holds significant meaning in terms of further strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance. It will contribute not

ports of deadly weapons,

seeks to boost its defence

industry amid an increas-

ingly tense security environ-

only to Japan's security but also the peace and stability of the wider Indo-Pacific region," Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said following the announcement. Although Japan's new export controls still prevent it from shipping weapons to countries that are at war, it may indirectly benefit Ukraine in its war with Russia as it gives the United States extra capacity to provide military aid to Kyiv. A Japanese government

official, who declined to be named because of the sensitivity of the matter, said the missiles would be used to restock the U.S. military's arsenal for the safety

Turkey on Swedish NATO bid: **Hungary's Orban Monitoring Desk**

BUDAPEST: There is no Hungarian-Turkish deal about the ratification of Sweden's bid for NATO membership as it will be up to the Hungarian parliament to decide when to vote on this, Prime Minister Viktor Orban told a news briefing on Thursday.

Turkiye detains 304 over **Islamic State ties**

ANKARA: Turkish authorities have detained 304 people suspected of having ties to the militant group Islamic State in operations across 32 provinces, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya

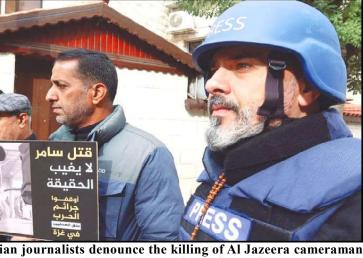
suspects were detained in Turkiye's three biggest cities of Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir, Yerlikaya said on social messaging platform X. He said the operation, "Operation Heroes-34", was carried out simultaneously across the country. "We will not allow any terrorists to open their eyes, for the peace

No deal with

Orban said there was no great willingness among ruling party lawmakers in Budapest to approve Sweden's bid. Sweden's application has been held up by Turkey and Hungary's refusal to support it. Orban said in September that Hungary was in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO accession.

Monitoring Desk said on Friday.

The majority of the and unity of our people.



Jordanian journalists denounce the killing of Al Jazeera cameraman Samer Abu Daqqa during a demonstration in front of the broadcaster's office in Amman, Jordan.

part of an effort to relieve

one of the biggest humani-

tarian challenges in Gaza.

ing... we used to bring water

from the sea before. This

water tastes like sugar, it is

drinkable," Abu Sleyman

is badly wanted, Gaza's ru-

ined infrastructure means it

is hard to distribute beyond

tanks that allow people to

use it in the enclave's remain-

"We were really suffer-

Water from Egypt tastes 'like sugar' to parched Gazans

Monitoring Desk CAIRO: For Gaza resident Zaki Abu Sleyma the water now flowing into the devastated enclave from a desalination project in Egypt tastes "like sugar" after weeks of Israel's bombard-

terpart on the telephone. Chinese Foreign Minment and siege left him and ister Wang Yi told his Philmany others drinking unippine counterpart that beclean, brackish water. ing neighbors, we should The water comes discuss any conflict that from three plants built by may arise and I think that the United Arab Emirates handling the current marion the Egyptian side of the time situation is the most

important task at this time. He also warned his Philippine counterpart that if you misjudge the maritime situation or unintentionally collude with external forces, China will respond strongly in self-de-

border and being pumped into Rafah since Tuesday, use it in the en ing buildings. China vows to keep up military pressure on the Philippines as territorial dispute grows tenser

Monitoring Desk

BEIJING: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi says the country will maintain military pressure on the Philippines amid a dispute over overeignty in the South China Sea that could involve U.S. forces defending their treaty partner.

In a phone conversaion Wednesday with his Philippine counterpart, Enrique A. Manalo, Wang 'warned that if the Philippine side misjudges the situation, goes its own way, or even colludes with ill-intentioned external forces to continue to stir up troubles, China will defend its rights in accordance with law and respond resolutely," the official Xinhua News

Agency reported.
Wang's comments follow China's mobilization of its coast guard and maritime militia to block Philippine supply missions to support its soldiers and fishermen. China claims sovereignty over virtually the entire South China Sea, one of the world's most crucial waterways for shipping, putting it at odds with the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, who all maintain claims over islands, reefs and undersea resources in the region. In particularly sharp comments, Wang was quoted as accusing the Philippines of having "changed its policy stance so far, reneged on the promises it has made, provoked troubles at sea.

Putin vows aid, urges halt to Gaza fighting in call with Palestinian president

Monitoring Desk MOSCOW: Russian Presi-

dent Vladimir Putin promised to continue to supply the Gaza Strip with humanitarian aid and urged a peaceful resolution to fighting besaid. But while clean water tween Israel and Hamas. 'Russia will continue to supply the Gaza Strip with essential goods, including medithe border town of Rafah, let cines and medical equipment," Putin told Palestinalone pump up to rooftop ian President Mahmoud Abbas during a telephone call, the Kremlin said, adding that Putin urged the "importance of a quick cessation of the bloodshed and the resumption of the political process?"

Woman killed by falling Christmas tree on Belgian market square Monitoring Desk

BRUSSELS: A woman was killed and two people were injured by a large Christmas tree that fell over in the Belgian city of Oudenaarde on Thursday evening, authorities said on Friday.

Security camera footage on Belgian news media showed a brightly lit 20metre (65.62 ft) high Christmas tree slowly leaning over, then collapsing next to a Christmas market as a merry-go-round spinned on the historic town square.

warns of 'nuclear attack'if 'provoked' nuclear attack

North Korea's Kim

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned Pyongyang will not hesitate to launch a nuclear attack if "provoked with nukes", state media said on Thursday, while Seoul and its allies called for "dialogue without preconditions".

Kim's warning follows a meeting between South Korea and the United States last week in Washington, where they discussed nuclear deterrence in the event of conflict with the North.

meeting's agenda nuclear and strategic our call for engaging in planning", and the allies substantive dialogue reiterated that any without preconditions".

Pyongyang on the United States or South Korea would result in the end of the North Korean

But Kim told his military's missile bureau "not to hesitate (launching) even a nuclear attack when the enemy provokes it with nukes, Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said.

Washington, Seoul and Tokyo released a statement shortly afterwards, urging the nuclear-armed country to "stop conducting further included provocations and accept

No functional hospitals left in northern Gaza: WHO

Monitoring Desk GENEVA: There are no longer any functional hospitals in the north of the Gaza Strip, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said Thursday, describing "unbea-rable" scenes of largely abandoned patients begging for food and water.

The UN health agency said it had led missions to two badly damaged hospitals, Al Shifa and Al Ahli, in the north of the Palestinian territory on Wednesday. Our staff are running

out of words to describe the beyond catastrophic situation facing remaining pati-ents and health worksaid Richard Peeper-korn, the WHO representative for the occupied Palestinian territory.

His comment came amid increasingly frantic diploma-tic efforts to secure a pause in the war that Hamas says has already claimed 20,000 lives in Gaza, 70 per cent of them women and children.

WHO has already described Al Shifa, the largest in the south.

hospital in Gaza which last month was the focus of an extended Israeli army operation and has been devastated by Israeli bombard-

ments, as "a blood bath" The smaller Al Ahli hospital had since become the only place where surgeries were possible in the north, but its director said it had stopped operating on Tuesday after being stormed by the Israeli army.

The WHO-led mission revealed that Al Ahli, which just two days ago was "overwhelmed with patients needing emergency care", was now "a shell of a hospital", Mr Peeperkorn told reporters in Geneva via video link from Jerusalem.

"There are no operating theatres anymore due to the lack of fuel, power, medical supplies and health workers, including surgeons and other specialists," he

"It has completely stopped functioning." Of Gaza's original 36 hospitals, only nine are now partially functional, all of them

US, China top military officials speak for first time in over a year

WASHINGTON: The top U.S. military officer held a virtual meeting with his Chinese counterpart on Thursday, the Pentagon said, in the first such conversation in over a year amid hopes by U.S. officials that it could lead to a broader restoration of ties between the two militaries.

The video teleconference followed an agreement between U.S. President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping last month to resume military-to-military ties severed by Beijing after then-House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited self-ruled Taiwan in August 2022.

U.S. Air Force General Charles Q. Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and General Liu Zhenli of China's People's Liberation Army touched on "a number of global and regional security issues," Brown's

Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the military body responsible for China's combat operations and planning. Pentagon officials say

communication between the two militaries is crucial to preventing a miscalculation from spiraling into con-"Gen. Brown dis-

cussed the importance of working together to responsibly manage competition, avoid miscalculations, and maintain open and direct lines of communication," Brown's office "Gen. Brown reiter-

ated the importance of the People's Liberation Army engaging in substantive dialogue to reduce the likelihood of misunderstand-

Brown said last month he had sent an introductory letter to Liu saying he was

Italian ruling coalition votes against ESM reform

Monitoring Desk ROME: Italy's lower house of parliament voted on

Thursday against a longawaited reform of the eurozone bailout fund, throwing into doubt ratification of a European Union treaty that is designed to provide help for failing

The vote confirmed the deep hostility within Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's ruling coalition to the overhaul of the socalled European Stability Mechanism (ESM), which has been approved by all other eurozone countries bar Italy.

"For six months here, there will be no talk about ESM," Ylenia Lucaselli, from Meloni's nationalist Brothers of Italy party, told

reporters. A source in Meloni's office, who asked not to be named, said the rejection could provide an opportunity for the EU to consider changes to the ESM more in line with the euro zone's

Meloni and Economy Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti were not in the chamber on Thursday for the debate and subsequent vote, which saw approval for the ESM defeated by 184 votes against 72 in favour, with 44 absten-

Brothers of Italy party and Giorgetti's League both voted against it, whilst the other main coalition group, Forza Italia, abstained. The opposition 5-Star Movement, headed by former Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, also opposed the Deputy Economy

Minister Maurizio Leo told reporters parliament was sovereign and the government had to recognise its decision. The ESM can offer a lifeline to eurozone governments cut off from markets, or recapitalise banks and provide precautionary credit. However, many Italian parties fear the pact could trigger a restruc-turing of Italy's huge pub-

Pak Living Indus Initiative recognized as World Restoration Flagship by UN

Pakistan's Living Indus Initiative has been selected as the World Restoration Flagship of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Res-

Executive Director of the United Nations Envi-Programme (UNEP), Inger Andersen announced the groundbreaking achievement in a letter addressed to Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, a news release said. The Living Indus Initiative stood out among more than 150 applications and garnered support from over 70 governments world-

The Initiative's dedication to restoring millions of hectares in the Indus River basin, a critical ecosystem supporting 90% of Pakistan's population and driving a significant portion of its economy, earned it the prestigious recognition.

Developed jointly by the Ministry of Climate Change and Énvironmental Coordination, provincial authorities, and the UN system, the Living Indus Initiative represents a collaborative effort to uplift the environmental and health conditions of the Indus Ba-

ISLAMABAD (APP): addresses the ecological challenges faced by the fragile basin due to climate change, with a set of 25 measures emphasizing nature-based solutions and ecosystem-based adaptation strategies.

Expressing her delight, Ms Inger Andersen commended the Living Indus Initiative for being one of the world's most promising, ambitious, and inspiring examples of large-scale

The recognition reflects the tireless efforts of everyone involved in and supportive of the initiative, highlighting its significant impact on both people and The World Restora-

tion Flagships, including the Living Indus Initiative, will be publicly announced in February 2024 during the sixth United Nations Environment Assembly in (UNEA6). The announcement will be celebrated through a global media campaign and wide online outreach, with an anticipated reach of millions of

This marks a significant milestone for Pakistan, showcasing its commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable develop-



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on health related issues and role of Mosques

8th CPEC Media Forum calls for objective narrative of CPEC amid fruitful outcomes

BEIJING (APP): The 8th stated,"Under the strategic cioeconomic landscape, ad-China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Media Forum was held in Beijing, Islamabad and Gwadar, both online and offline.

The Forum saw the unfolding of several key events, including the CPEC Golden Anchor Awarding Ceremony, the launch of the CPEC Media Forum Balochistan Initiative, and the Perceptions on CPEC in Pakistan research paper, and the unveiling of its Joint Statement

The Forum com-menced with Cui Jun, Presirecognition dent of China Economic Net, reading out a congratulatory letter from Sun

guidance of the leaders of the two countries and the care and support of people from all sectors, China-Pakistan relations have grown in depth in recent years and bilateral cooperation in various fields has yielded fruitful results.

To further strengthen friendship and collaboration, it added, media professionals of both countries were expected to undertake significant responsibilities The positive role of

CPEC in Pakistan was echoed by Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, who stated that the economic corridor "has transformed Pakistan's so-

QUETTA (APP): The sea-

soned journalist of Quetta,

Raza-ur-Rehman on Friday

filed the nomination papers

for the provincial assembly's PB-42 Quetta

as an independent candidate

ture, has generated 236,000 jobs since 2013, and is set to create 1.2 million direct jobs, contributing to local workforce development and reducing regional dis-In response to the use of selective facts, emotions, and sometimes misleading stories by the West-

ern media against CPEC,

Solangi urged the media

personnel of both coun-

tries to engage in the ob-

jective reporting of CPEC

and disseminate accurate

and unbiased narratives re-

dressing a dire energy crisis

and crumbling infrastruc-

sponsibly.

"I will try my best to

It may be recalled that

live up to the expectations

of the people and resolve

the issue faced by an ordi-

nary man, once elected," he

and for the last over a de-

cade, he has been associated

with the same news group.

highlighted the constructive role of Chinese and Pakistani media in creating an enabling public atmosphere for CPEC.

He suggested that both sides should jointly navigate through challenges for more development opportunities, enhance exchanges for people-to-people bonds and connectivity, and conduct impartial, evidence-based news report-

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman of the Senate's Defence Committee and Pakistan-China Institute, noted that CPEC, featuring openness, inclusivity, and connectivity, had advanced notably and "the best of CPEC is yet to come'

Khattak says: Azam Khan running PTI founder govt

PESHAWAR (Online): Pervez Khattak, chairman PTI Parliamentarians has said Azam Khan was running the government of PTI

pointed chief secretaries and IG's in Punjab, KP and Gilgit-Balstistan. PTI had to suffer heavily due to Azam Khan. He went on to say Usman Buzdar was not in PTI and he had won the election as independent candidate. The logic behind appointing Usman Buzdar as chief minister Puniab by PTI founder was beyond

founder.

"the bureaucrat whom powers were given has become approver today, he said this in a statement issued here Friday.

He stated Azam ap-

comprehension he reminister and PML-N Presi- Nisar Ali Khan.

Mosques can play role in preventing diseases: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): and senior officials. President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said that the mosques and pulpits could play an important role in preventing diseases.

Chairing a meeting regarding the importance of the mosques in creating awareness about health issues, the president said that during the corona virus, the religious scholars and Imams (prayer leaders) played an important role in preventing spread of the

The meeting was attended by Caretaker Federal Health Minister Dr Nadeem Jan, Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed, provincial representatives

President pointed out that the community participation could also reduce the burden of disease on the health sys-

It was agreed in the meeting that a policy draft on the role of mosques towards public health would be prepared in two weeks. The health minister

appreciated the president and the first lady for playing a role in creating awareness about certain

The provincial representatives informed the meeting about the measures taken for the health of the people in their respective



DIR: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Sirajul Haq talking with mediamen after submit nomination paper for

Zaradri, Sharif families to field next generation in elections 2024

generation of the two poitical families, Zaradri and Sharif, are gearing up to contest February 8, 2024 elections. Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, will contest elections for Punjab Assembly from five constituencies. It may be recalled that People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari who used to contest elections from Larkana, has decided to run from Lahore this time and filed nomination papers for National Assembly con-

stituency NA-128. Meanwhile, the old guard of the PPP, Asif Zardari, received nomination papers from Nawab Shah constituency NA-207 for National Assembly on prime

LAHORE (INP): The next dent Shehbaz Sharif will contest elections from National Assembly constituency NA-123 and Punjab's PP-158 and PP-164.

Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani will contest elections from NA-260 of the National Assembly and constituency PB-32 of Balochistan. The JUI-F chief, Fazlur Rehman got nomination papers from National Assembly constituency NA-44 Dera Ismail Khan. Former speaker Asad Qaiser has filed nomination papers from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituency PK-50 and National Assembly's NA-

The most notable contestant in the field for elections 2024 is former PML-N stalwart and ex-in-

Sponsorship Scheme Hajj applications submission deadline extended till Dec 31

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has extended the deadline for submitting Hajj applications under the Sponsorship Scheme till December 31.

The step had been taken on the insistence of overseas Pakistanis while there would be no extension in the deadline for Regular Scheme as the number of applications submitted had already crossed its quota, a ministry spokesperson said on Friday. The spokesperson made it clear that there would be no further extension in the deadline for submission of applications to ensure smooth and timely arrangements for Hajj.

He said the balloting for the regular Government Scheme would be held on December 28. Over 66,000 applications had received under the scheme, he added.

The spokesperson advised the Hajj applicants to acquire signed copies of their computerized Hajj forms from the respective banks and rectify any errors in their details on the spot. This proactive measure was recommended to prevent any inconvenience in the future he added

Meanwhile, the Saudi Aviation authorites have instructed airlines to submit their Hajj flight schedules by January 2, 2024, to ensure the seamless operation of flights.



QUETTA: Raza-ur-Rehman submitting his nomination papers to Returning Officer for participate in General Election during meeting held at Election Commission Office in Quetta.

Khaliq resigns from BAP; would take part in elections in ind. capacity

Independent Report QUETTA: The Provincial Vice President of Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and former Provincial Minister Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq

ignation from the party.

Achakzai said he has decided to resign from the party and position he held in the party.

paign from now. Abdul

Achakzai said that the people of Chaman should know their real representatives and not pay attention to the hollow slogans. He said that he has

never committed any negligence in serving the masses. He also said that he considered public service as his duty and his past char-

acter is not hidden from Haji Attaullah Khan Achakzai and others also

addressed the public gath-

provinces



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Finance Minister Amjad Rasheed cutting Christmas cake alongwith Christian community

PTA cautions public about deceptive links

Urges vigilance & use of official platforms for services

ISLAMABAD (APP): mising their personal infor-The Pakistan Telecommu- mation. The public has been nication Authority (PTA) has cautioned the public against phishing, and fraudulent links circulating on Whatsapp, social media, and through text messages, falsely claiming to be associated with PTA's Device Identification Registration & Blocking System (DIRBS). The message making the rounds purports to be an official communication, stating that the user's SIM is found to be

involved in "suspicious activities" and that the user should check the number of SIMs at the given link. Alternatively, another message warned that the user's phone registration will be suspended unless they visit the provided link, according to a news release.

These deceptive tactics are designed to trick individuals into clicking on urged to refrain from clicking on links from unknown numbers/senders and report such phone numbers/links for blocking through PTA's complaint management system (toll-free number: 0800-55055, web link:

ttps: complaint.pta.gov.pk/ RegisterComplaint.aspx and PTA CMS mobile

To check the status of their device, users should only visit https://dirbs.pta.gov.pk, SMS IMEIs to 8484 from their device, or through the offi-





SUKKUR: Peoples Party (PPP) Central Leader and Candidates, Syed Khursheed Shah and Nasir Hussain Shah talks with media persons after submit nomination papers to Returning Officer for participate in General Election during meeting held at Election Commission Office in Sukkur.

367 more power connections disconnected; 66 tempered & shunt meters removed

Recoveries from defaulters & pilferers cross Rs. 2.5 billion **Independent Report** power pilferers is contin-

ued all over the province.

The QESCO has QUETTA: In all 367 more electricity connections of managed to collect over Rs. the defaulters of utility bills and arrears were discon-320 million on account of the detection and fine from the power pilferers in the nected and 67 tempered and shunt meters were removed during last 24 hours in all Similarly, over Rs. operation circles of Quetta Electricity Supply Com-

pany (QESCO).

2.26 billion have been recovered from some According to the spokesman of QESCO, the 1,30,000 defaulters during the campaign, the QESCO drive against defaulters and spokesman maintained.

Two-way Link Badeni Road completed

(APP): Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki on Friday lauded Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat for taking practical measures to complete the work of two-way

Link Badeni Road. Appreciating his performance and efforts, especially the comprehensive completion of the two-way project of Link Badini Sariab Road, the CM also awarded him with a certificate of admiration.

Two drug pushers held with 5.300 kg chars in Loralai

QUETTA (APP) - Police arrested two persons and recovered from their possession 5.300 kg hashish in two separate area of Loralai town on Friday.

According to police sources, on special directive of Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Loralai Range Nazir Ahmed Kurd & SSP Loralai Muhammad Zafar under the supervision of SDPO Kaleemullah, SHO Abdul Rehman Loni Loralai police conducted raid at two different places and 3. 300 kg of hashish was recovered from the possession of Zainullah a resident of Peshawar.

In the second raid, Anwar Ali Shah resident of Peshawar was arrested with 2 kg chars by police.

Further investigation was underway.

Only transparent **elections** acceptable to

nation: SirajLOWER DIR (INP): The general elections scheduled for Feb 8 next year will only be acceptable to the nation if they are transparent, Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq asserted on Fri-

Interacting with a group of reporters after filing his nomination papers for the National Assembly constituency of NA-7 Lower Dir on Friday, Siraj emphasised that the general elections [on Feb 8] were a

constitutional prerequisite. The JI leader said that suspicions and doubts were dispelled with the issuance of the election schedule by the Election Commission

to run for the general elec-Raza-ur-Rehman is a senior tions 2024. journalist working in the It is the first time in media industry in Quetta. the history of Balochistan Mr Raza started his jourthat a working journalist nalistic career with the print will contest the general elecmedia and later with the intions. Accompanied by the flux of electronic media, he prominent journalists, he joined Express news group

Quetta's senior journalist

files nomination papers

for PB-42

the office of Assistant Commissioner Quetta. Talking to newsmen, Raza-ur-Rehman said that he wanted to serve people and parliament, as a main pillar of the state is the best forum from which public

filed nomination papers at

He, as an active media person, remained in key positions in media bodies

including the Federal Union of Journalists, the Balochistan Union of Jourissues could be addressed nalists and Quetta Press

ZHOB: Provincial Secretary Science & Information Technology Muhammad Ayaz Khan Mandokhail addressing students who complet training course at

DC chairs meeting to review measures of anti-polio drive starting from Jan 8

KALAT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Kalat Hafiz Muhammad Qasim Kakar Tehsils of Kalat district, a total of 209 health departon Friday presided over a meeting to review measures for the upcoming polio campaign of the district starting from January 8, 2024. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Siraj Karim Baloch SP Kalat Babar Mushtaq, Assistant Commissioner Manguchar Barkat Baloch District Health Officer Dr Naseem Longo, WHO Dr Naseer Kurd, SHO Kalat, Levies

Risaldar Jan Mohammad Longo and other heads of depart-

ments attended the meeting. The measures of the upcoming polio campaign were discussed in the meet-

WHO representative Dr. Naseer Kurd gave a detailed briefing on the polio campaign and said that 39196 children would be

ment teams would partici-pate in this campaign, which could administer anti-polio drops to children between up to five years of age across the district. Addressing the meeting, the deputy commissioner said that polio was a contagious disease and it

was important to administer anti-polio drops to protect children from this disease. Children need to be healthy to build a healthy society to create a polio-free society, we all have to fight together against a disease like polio, he said. He said that for which we have to raise awareness among the people, it was the responsibility of the orators, scholars, journalist community. poets and writers of the area to play a role in raising awareness among the



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters from Balochistan Province are shouting slogans during protest in the favor of their demands outside National Press Club in Federal Capital.

DC chairs meeting to take action against illegal medical stores

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner Quetta Lt ® Saad Bin Asad on Friday chaired a meeting of Quetta Drug Inspection Team to take action against illegal medical stores in the city.

The meeting was attended by all drug inspectors of Quetta.

In the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Quetta formed teams of drug inspectors for different areas which in the first phase would warn all unregistered medical store owners to get their registration done immediately, otherwise their illegal medical stores would be closed.

He said that in the second phase, these teams would take action against all medical stores that did not have license and they would be sealed.

Mainly cold, cloudy weather forecast for **Balochistan**

Quetta (APP)-The Met Office has forecast mainly cold weather with partly cloudy condition in most parts of the province during next 24 hours.

According to the Met Office, the minimum temperature in Kalat was recorded at -2.5 degree centigrade and – 2 degree centigrade in Quetta on Fri-

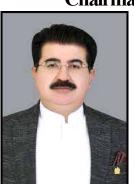
to launch his election cam-

Achakzai has tendered res-Addressing a workers convention in Chaman on Friday, Abdul Khaliq

He also announced to contest the elections in his independent capacity. Therefore, he is also going



Mr. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani **Chairman Senate**



The Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) have consistently championed the economic growth and advancement of our beloved nation through its determination and hard work. Its commitment to nurturing businesses, promoting commerce, and upholding the highest standards of industry excellence is unparalleled. The year 2022 stands as a testament to the resilience and prowess of our business community. Through challenges and changing landscapes, our industrious professionals have not only adapted but thrived, marking significant milestones in the socio-economic development of Pakistan. Their efforts are not ternational markets, making us all immensely proud. It is with great respect and admiration that we ac-knowledge the high achievers of this year. The FPCCI Achievement Awards are not mere accolades but a recognition of the remarkable journeys, relentless determination, and innovative ventures that have set these individuals and organisations apart. Earning this prestigious award underscores their exemplary contributions and places them among the elite in both Pakistan and abroad. Such recognitions are pivotal. They not only celebrate success but also motivate the broader business community to aspire, innovate, and contribute more profoundly to the socio-economic fabric of Pakistan. It is through these accomplishments and the continuous encouragement from platforms like FPCCI that we pave the way for a more prosperous and progressive future for our nation. May the laurels of today inspire many more success stories tomorrow, and may the FPCCI continue its commendable work

but have resounded in in-

Dr. Umar Saif Federal Minister for IT & Telecom, Science & Technology



just of national significance,

I am delighted that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry is organizing its 11th Achievement Awards ceremony this year in recognition of the services of talented people and reputed organizations and, as usual, is bringing out an informative Achievement Award Souvenir on the occasion.

I am very happy to note that the aims of this award is to give recognition to individuals and organizations whose achievement has contributed significantly in the growth and development of Pakistan. The Awards promote healthy competition among people and encourage them to strive harder to push the boundaries of excellence. The Award recipient would have demonstrated past accomplishments and forward thinking to advance the notions of sustainability in every possible way.

We all know that Pakistan has unique location and talented people, but the platforms to recognize the services of these people are organizing of achievement award is really praiseworthy. Such important Award ceremonies play a major role in motivating the corporate sector of any country to reach out to new heights of excellence. In an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, Apex trade bodies play a vital role in both national and international affairs and make significant contributions that benefit society at large, from spurring economic growth to promot-

in spearheading Pakistan's

economic journey

ing good governance. On this joyous occasion, allow me to congratulate FPCCI on its devotion and sincere efforts to promote talent of the country I also felicitate all Award Winners on their performance and hope that the business community will continue its efforts for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. I hope that the award winner will not only maintain the record of their best performance but also become role models for other people to compete for this coveted accomplishment.

Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh **President FPCCI**



The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry being the apex representative body of the business community of Pakistan taking pride of initiative to acknowledge the outstanding performances of business entities and individuals in their respective fields through Achievement

Awards. After successful organization of the previous events, FPCCI is holding the 11th Edition of "Achievement Awards", as a flagship event which is regularly organized to honor the achievements of enterprises in their respective fields, acclaiming as symbol of prestige and recognition at national and international level. The FPCCI Achievement Awards helps Award Winners, in the elevation of their profile and reputation among all circles.

The performances of award winners and their achievements despite the challenges faced by the business community in Pakistan are highly commendable. This speaks of their dedication, devotion and commitment to their business interests and valuable contribution towards Pakistan's

I thank my team, Convener and Members of the Awards Committee, the Senior Vice President, Vice Presidents, Coordinators, the Secretary General of FPCCI and his team for their dedication and hard work put in organizing this event. I am confident the Achievement Award will motivate and encourage others to put in more efforts into their respective areas of interest and come out with outstanding achievements which will not only reward them but will also serve trade and economic interests of the Pakistan. I congratulate all the Award Winners and wish them a continued success in their endeavors, with

Justice (retd) Maqbool Baqar Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh

reaching international mar-

kets and I commend them

on this achievement. On

this occasion, I also applaud the role of FPCCI in

promoting technology, ex-

port, economic growth, and

prosperity and assisting

traders and industrialist in

addressing the new chal-

lenges being faced in the

sphere of international

will play a role to boost the

confidence of people in

marketing their activities.

Every successful nation al-

ways wants the quick con-

vergence of the country,

which is possible only in

that condition when coun-

tries adopt export led

growth and investment-led

growth policies for com-

petitiveness, diversification

and value addition. 1 am

confident that this event

will open up a new vista of

fresh opportunities and

greatly help in promoting

true image of Pakistan,

which need bareness at sig-

iant winners for their dedi-

cated efforts which are highly admirable and it is

my conviction that our

people will perform better

in future too to accelerate

the progress of Pakistan's

economy which is the need

ity products.
FPCCI is making vig-

orous efforts to promote

our businesses, and the

Awards represent but one

facet of the complex role played by FPCCI in fur-

thering the trade and indus-

try interests of the coun-

try. In the wake of the nu-

merous crises confronting

our country, strong exports are the need of the hour.

Despite the problems of

law and order and power

crisis, Pakistan's business

community has remained

steadfast to increase the

exports potential of Paki-

stan and exploiting the new

market for diversification of

the Government's resolve

to facilitate the business

community in their efforts

to boost Pakistan's trade

and playing greater role in

ors of Mr. Irfan Igbal

Sheikh, President FPCCI

and his entire team on hold

ing the Awards ceremony

for recognizing the efforts

of entrepreneurs and also

country's economy.

development

I commend the endeav-

I also wish to reiterate

exports

the

I congratulate to all val-

nificant level

I believe that this event

Saturday December 23, 2023



The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to recognize the outstanding performance of individuals and firms for enhancing the insignia of Pakistan. As we know that, in knowledge drive global culture and human development, progressive nations atheistically search for new ideas, people, talents creative plans innovative methods to renovate the old and obsolete systems and infrastructure with new passion and ambitions for a better future. In the era of globalization and economic integration the issues of socioeconomic development is one of the category of FPCCI's achievements awards.

Despite all challenges like infrastructure, lack of knowledge creating activities and educational and health backwardness, our

of the time. I congratulate all the awardees, and convey my best wishes to the people are still competitive organizers for the success in marketing their talent in of the ceremony. Mr. Ahmed Irfan Aslam

Federal Minister for Climate Change



I am pleased to know that following its past tradition, the FPCCI is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to confer awards to the leading entrepreneurs of Pakistan in recognition of their exceptional performance this year.

The organization of Achievement Awards is a commendable step because they recognize the achievements of exporters and service sector who dare to venture in new areas and succeed. By learning from the example of successful achievers, new entrepreneurs will also encourage to take bold initiatives and win a seal of approval from the apex body. On this occasion, I would also like to appreciate the contribution of the private entrepreneurs for promoting the image of

congratulate the award winners and wish them greater success in the futhe country through qual- ture. Mr. Rizwan Ahmed Bhatti CEO, Pakistan Industrial

Development Corporation



I am glad to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing its 11th Achievement Awards in order to honor the business houses who have made an outstanding contribution towards Pakistan's business performance.

Pakistan's strategic location offers our manufacturers a great opportunity to serve the markets in the region, provided they have exportable surplus of manufactures. We should, therefore, adopt innovative methods and the public private partnership model for

increasing both quality and quantity of our manufac-

On this occasion, FPCCI pays due tribute to all those entrepreneurs who have achieved highest level of performance FPCCI is undoubtedly playing a crucial role in promoting export-oriented industry in Pakistan, and the Achievement Awards motivate businesspersons to achieve ambitious business

In these circumstances due recognition of exportoriented industry through events such as the Achieve ment Awards provides industrialists with the encouragement to continue their efforts to put Pakistan on the road to growth and

prosperity. Î congratulate President FPCCI and all FPCCI Achievement Award Winners on their excellent performance, and look forward to their continued success in the future

Haji Ghulam Ali Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



It is heartening to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards, to strengthen the confidence of Pakistani individuals and organizations who performed exceptionally in their respective fields and

I am pleased to learn that FPCCl's Achievement Award has generated fair competition amongst individuals and organizations and boosts their dynamism, which will lead Pakistan to the road of self-reliance. Economic development, open trade and social emancipation always take place in those countries where creativity, freedom of

welcomed and due recognition is given to the individuals who participate actively in attaining the objectives.

The industrial sector

plays vital role in the economy by creating jobs, providing goods services, and stimulating economic growth. It is also an important source of tax revenue for governments. Indeed the individuals and organizations of industrial sector not only collaborate with governments to gain access to resources and develop new products but also enable government to invest in infrastructure and other important projects. Congratulate all award winners for their dedicated efforts. It is my firm belief that our individuals and organizations will perform even better future to accelerate the pace of Pakistan's economy.

I would like to convey my best wishes to the President of FPCCI, Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and his entire team for organizing the Award successfully with this hope that FPCCI will continue its efforts by way of providing marketing opportunities to individuals and organizations both thoughts and actions are at home and abroad.

Mr. Aneeg Ahmed **Minister for Religious Affairs** & Interfaith Harmony



I am glad to learn that the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) is organizing the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards to pay tribute to the proficient and bright people and organization who have performed well in the field of trade, industry, economic, science, academia, research and development, commercial and socio-economic development. The institution of Achievement Awards is one of the praiseworthy contributions of FPCCI towards the promotion of merit and expertise and serves to provide recognition to the unfaltering mem-

Pakistani Community. In this era of competition, there is a dire need that we recognize the motivate the services of individuals and organization whose are

of interest to boost the economy by devising strategies that give us an edge over our competitors. These bright people are not only in other nations to the prosperity and development of the nation.

I anticipate that the FPCCI's Awards will generate new fair competition amongst organization and individual and boost their dynamism which will lead Pakistan to the road of selfreliance. I hope that the Achievement Awards will further encourage the country's people to perform outstanding to improve the status of country in industries, commercial and socioeconomic activities and to enhance the progress of Pakistan in national and international market.

I extend my warm felicitations to the president FPCCI and his team for organizing such a prestigious event and also on bringing out an impressive souvening bers and organization of the on this occasion. I also extend my felicitations to the Achievement Awards Winners on their excellent performance and hope that they will continue their efforts for the

performing well in their area prosperity of our country. Mr. Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry **CEO**, National Productivity **Organization**



It gives me immense pleasure to know that FPCCI is organizing the 11th Achievement Awards in the honor of the leading entrepreneurs of Pakistan whose performance is outstanding in bringing the much-needed foreign exchange to build the reserve of the country.

Through hard work and dedication these individuals have built efficient & commercial organizations that contribute to the economic growth and development of the communities in which they serve. The instituting of FPCCI Achievement Awards is a great initiative of FPCCI to further motivate the star performers under the prevailing conditions when global economy is slow down and affecting our

economic progress. Pakistan economy, particularly industry, agricul-

ture and services are increasingly exposed to serious challenges of competitiveness. In order to improve the competitiveness, there is immediate need to work on relevant indicators as with current performance, Pakistan cannot ideally compete and fetch a good share in the international market. Competitiveness is key for Pakistan's Industry. In today era, it is impossible to compete in global market without being productive and efficient. I hope that the export awards would serve to encourage a healthy competition in all sectors of economy improving produc-

I congratulate FPCCI on its devotion and sincere efforts to promote entrepreneurship in the country. I also extend my heartiest felicitations to all Awards Winners on their outstanding performance and contribution in economic development of country. Their achievements and contributions to our business landscape have indeed set a high bar for the entrepreneurs of

tivity, harnessing new mar-

kets and meeting the inter-

national challenges.

Syed Mehdi Shah Governor Gilgit-Baltistan



I am pleased to know that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is organizing a prestigious event of the 11th FPCCI Achievement Awards, to leading individuals and organizations in lieu of their outstanding performance. These awards have great significance in the present competitiveness environment and they provide an opportunity to the individuals and organization to identify challenges, analyze emerging trends and devise new strategies for recognizing the talent of the coun-

The FPCC Achievement Awards encourage those who have done well during the previous year, and also act as a catalyst in generating fresh efforts to meet upcoming challenges to improve the image of country. I hope that the FPCCI Achievement Awards will recognize the individuals and organizations that have contributed extraordinary in the fields of trade, industry, social sector, science, research and others and reveal the highest values of their pro-

I believe that FPCCI Achievement Awards will motivate the individuals and organizations to vigorously play their crucial role in the growth and economic development of the country. I extend my warm felicitations to Irfan Iqbal Sheikh President of FPCCI, and his entire team on organizing this splendid Award ceremony in Pakistan. I also wish all award winners to continue good fortune and success for the future.

Mr. Mohamed Karmoune Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco, Acting Dean of the Diplomatic Corps



I am pleased be part of FPCCl's 11th Achievement Awards which has a widespread recognition at national and international level and considered as an occasion of pride and gratification for the distinguished winners.

As we all are well aware that the private sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economic growth and helps ensuring the policies are broad-based and are being followed by business sector I truly admire FPCCI's contributions to promote activities in the field of trade industry and business sector of Pakistan while organizing such events and honouring companies and individuals who are making life easier by providing quality products and services

FPCCI Achievement Awards certainly encour-

ages the entrepreneurs not only to play more vibrant role in the socio-economic development but also provides an opportunity for organisations and individuals to gain fresh ideas to improve their performance by learning the best practices of finalists and winners.

quite optimistic that FPCCI will continue to support commendable activities of recognizing and admiring high achievers, which surely motivates and encourages individuals and organizations to further explore creativity and skills that propel them to achieve

even higher goals. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of FPCCI, its President Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Office Bearers and the Executive Committee Members, for holding this extraordinary event. Your support allows the winners to gain the recognition they de-

I congratulate all the award winners on their achievements and wish them continued success in future. It is a pleasure to be in the company of so many high-achieving organisations

Dr. Saifuddin Junejo **Chairman Export Processing Zones Authority (EPZA)**



It is a well known fact that export is one of the important pillars of economic development and plays incredibly important role to strengthen the national economy as it offers people and firms many more markets for their goods. In modern times one of the core functions of diplomacy and foreign policy between governments is to foster economic trade, encourage exports and imports for the

benefit of all trading parties. Innovation, technological advancement and policy framework have historically proven to be the primary reason behind the enhancement of export. Unfortunately, Pakistan is behind the other countries in innovation, technological advancement and consistent Policies during the recent decades. Despite above handicaps, Export Processing Zones Autnormy (EPZA) has taken measures to boost exports and facilitate Foreign Direct Investment (FDIs) in its established Zones in the country, hence achieved export growth in the FY 2019-20 US\$ 638.022 million, FY 2020-21 US\$ 974.600 million and FY 2021-22 US\$ 934.997 through manufacturing Sector. EPZA is trying its best to enhance its share in the national exports. EPZA efforts have resulted in the cumulative exports of US\$ 11,875.00 million till the end of FY 2022-23.

There is a dire need to pursue an integrated approached wherein public and private sector work as partners to facilitate and promote an innovative and modern culture for promoting exports. FPCCI being an apex body of trade and industry is undoubtedly playing a crucial role in promoting trade and industry in Pakistan. The Achievement Awards are one of the major activities which encourage the business community and the exporters of Pakistan who are working tirelessly to promote Pakistani products in the International market and earn precious foreign exchange for

Last but not least, I congratulate all the award winners for their commendable performance and wish them success in future.

the country.

ance of trade has become ir-

relevant under the new

phase of global trade but

equilibrium in trade has sig-

nificance when economy is

facing contraction. How-

ever, during expansion of the

economy industrial demand

for input material need to be

satisfied. One of the major

impediments has been the

concerns of the domestic in-

dustry in Pakistan that feels

threatened from the compe-

tition of Chinese products.

fearful as elimination of cus-

tom duties would lead to

substantial revenue losses as

Pakistan heavily relies on

taxation on international

trade for revenue generation.

According to the latest fig-

ures, 40% of the Pakistan's

total revenue is from taxes

Pak – Iran PTA became

operational in September

2006. When this PTA began

during 2006 the total trade

between Pakistan and Iran

was US \$ 638 million and

on import of goods.

Pak- Iran PTA:

The public sector is also

ering traditional as well as

non-traditional sectors such

11th FPCCI Achievement Awards

Saturday December 23, 2023

Creating employment through entrepreneurship



Mr. Irfan Iqbal Sheikh. President FPCCI

Unemployment is one of the major driving forces behind social unrest, rising crime rate, mental health issues and even terrorist activities in Pakistan. Being an entrepreneur, I strongly believe that entrepreneurship spurs economic growth in several ways. The most obvious one is generating employment opportunities for skilled/unskilled and educated youth of the country Entrepreneurs, at even the most basic scale, employ people, providing them with incomes that they can spend, initiating earn money programs, which fuel the movement of the national economy and also encourage people to do their own business and cre-

ate more jobs. The entrepreneurs are responsible for creating jobs with varying qualification requirements. For example, smaller entrepreneurs are more willing to hire employees with limited or no education, thus providing opportunities to people from all sections of society. Entrepreneurs also tend to hire locally, which reinforces the social fabric of their surrounding communities and is instrumental in promoting social change. Establishing and running a business encourages the people, while the resultant

households, thus reducing of generational improvecrime rates related to unemployment. It has proven more and more people gain with time that employees employment, the country's get a from hands both them use to tions world as readily available finance.

	chiployincht, the country s
trepreneurial ventures	middle class will grow, set-
ccess to mentorship	ting it on the path of
the entrepreneur and	transitioning from a devel-
s-on work experience,	oping country to a devel-
of which empower	oped one.
with skills they can	The retail sector is the
o further their ambi-	third largest contributor to
in life. Countries in the	Pakistan's economy, con-
d with better entrepre-	tributing about 18-20% of
al infrastructure such	the GDP and the employer
dily available finance,	of millions of people en-

		PAKISTAN		
Year	Number of female business directors	Number of male business directors	Share of female business directors	Share of male business directors
2014	2,259	9,968	18.5%	81.5%
2015	2,167	11,757	15.6%	84.4%
2016	2,705	13,839	16.4%	83.6%
2017	3,440	18,613	15.6%	84.4%
2018	3,950	23,572	14.4%	85.6%
2019	4,554	28,293	13.9%	86.1%
2020	5,612	34,619	13.9%	86.1%

policies, and healthy industrial infrastructure boast a better quality of life and prosperity.

Êntrepreneurship is not only a solution to unemployment; it can be a road map to a better life. Generating employment on a micro-level is a key to national economics on a macro level. It is a universal truth that employed people will spend more, thus, giving a boost to the country's gross domestic product. They will also contribute to national exchequer by paying taxes, and by doing so, contribute to a country's national income, are more likely to save and invest to make larger asset purchases in the future. The people on a more stable financial footing are children to educational insti- etc. and expected to show resilient economy.

tail, one of the principal sectors of entrepreneurship, is going through a transition phase in Pakistan and the world over. Most of the structured retailing in Pakistan has started recently and

is engaged mainly in urban The retail sector likely touches you as a citizen every day, possibly multiple times a day. From prominent fashion brands to footwear and groceries and food and fuel, retail transactions are what an average individual goes through every day. Pakistan has around 2 million retailers, of which 0.8 million represent the FMCG modern trade and general trade channels, including kiryanas, general stores, medical stores, sualso more likely to send their permarkets, hypermarkets, creating a more balanced and

port themselves and their households, thus reducing of generational improve- (CAGR 2023-2028) of 16.58%, resulting in a proments in quality of life. As jected market volume of US\$300.80m by 2028. In Pakistan developing the retail sector as entrepreneurship can be a key driver of job creation and employment growth, and for good reason. Starting a business is not an easy task, but it can lead to significant benefits, both for the individual entrepreneur and the economy as a whole. By providing new products, services, and innovations to the market, entrepreneurs can stimulate economic growth and create new job opportunities. Entrepreneurship can create more and more jobs both directly and indirectly and can affect employment growth overall depending on the facilities provided by the government declaring the retail sector as an industry. In developing entrepreneur ship in the country, it is necessary to promote technical education rather than conventional education. To extend entrepreneurship to all fields of study in vocational education it should be linked with practical training in specific fields of

> Trade bodies and business associations should take steps to promote partnerships between Technical Vocational Institutions and enterprises and motivate more business people to get involved in entrepreneurship education to promote economic diversification in Pakistan. By encouraging the establishment of businesses in different sectors entrepreneurs reduce reli

many restrictive policies

are still in place. After the

passing of three decades, the SAFTA has not been

fully implemented in Paki-

stan due to complex rela-

tions with neighbouring

countries but other SAFTA

member countries have in-

tegrated their economies

and benefitted greatly from

this collaboration. Same as

the Economic Cooperation

Organization Trade Agree-

ment (ECOTA) was signed

in 2003, but after passing

of many years, it has yet to

become fruitful for Paki-

stan. While other countries

in the region have allowed

the movement of goods by

acceding to the TIR Con-

vention (which works un-

der an international guaran-

tee system and facilitates

the movement of trucks and

containers), Pakistan has

vet to follow suit. Similar

setback to Pakistan's inte-

gration with regional trade

blocs has been its failure to

put into effect the various

regional transit agreements

to which it is a signatory.

agreement is the Afghani

stan Pakistan Transit and

Trade Agreement, but since

its implementation in 2011

most of Afghanistan's tran-

sit trade (which was previ-

ously routed through Paki-

stan) has been diverted to

Iranian ports because of the

complex provisions and

procedures outlined in the

agreement. This is unfortu-

nate, given that Pakistan's

ports could provide Central

Asia the shortest overland

route to sea, and there is

tremendous export poten-

tial among the Central Asian

markets. The regional trade

The only operational

study with the objective of

entrepreneurship, and pro-

vide support for students

interested in starting up a

Regional Trade: a tool for economic development



By Mian Anjum Nisar Vice President SAARC CCI

In the civilized world, different forms of trade have existed for thousands of vears. Whether or not analyzing the trade routes of antiquity or modern times. trade and commerce have played a vital role in business expansion, developing national economies and nation building. In the modern times have witnessed the birth of a global economy and Regional trading blocs provide countries with the ability to exchange goods with member countries with minimal or no tariffs or cumbersome trade regulations countries today engage in some form of global trade.

We witness that over the last three decades, the intensification of regional trade has played a powerful role in economic and political integration. For example, the EU's original free trade area evolved into a customs union, which later became an economic and monetary union. Almost two thirds of the EU's trade is conducted between members. Similarly, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). which was created 30 years ago to expand trade between the US, Canada, and Mexico, has been a great success. Trade between NAFTA members has grown by over 500 percent. Similarly, since the formation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area in 1992, many ASEAN economies have registered miraculous growth rates and their intra-regional trade is now over 25 percent.

Regional trade has been an important factor in the economic success of many countries. Within most trading blocs, intra-regional trade comprises 40 percent or more of each member country's individual trade However, for the regional arrangements of which Pakistan is a member, intraregional trade accounts for less than 5 per cent.

PAKISTAN								
Adult Population	Year	Number of new Limited Liability Companies	New business density rate					
92,399,584	2006	4,117	0.04					
95,241,842	2007	3,356	0.04					
98,165,302	2008	3,458	0.04					
101,152,817	2009	2,414	0.02					
104,187,043	2010	2,868	0.03					
107,101,806	2011	3,367	0.03					
110,060,746	2012	3,928	0.04					
113,060,252	2013	3,937	0.03					
116,096,389	2014	4,680	0.04					
119,164,298	2015	5,385	0.05					
122,150,863	2016	6,716	0.05					
125,175,221	2017	9,624	0.08					
128,222,837	2018	12,991	0.10					
131,288,856	2019	15,958	0.12					
134,372,752	2020	19,791	0.15					

Pakistan's strategic location is its greatest asset, but it has not leveraged this to its advantage. Although Pakistan was a relatively forward-looking country until the mid-1960s its policies have not been favorable to promoting trade and economic development since then. While other successful developing countries have espoused liberal trade regimes since the 1980s resorting to protectionism only on a selective basis— Pakistan continues to rely on import substitution policies. Clearly, the country needs to revisit its regional and global trade poli-

The studies and data reflect that until the 1960s, Pakistan was a relatively forward-looking country and its economic activity more integrated with the rest of the world. Its volume of manufactured exports exceeded those of the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia combined and many other counties of the world. Today, however, Pakistan's total exports are only a fraction of the exports of any of these individual countries.

Despite its strategic geographical location, Pakistan has yet to leverage this

World Bank Entrepreneurship Database country straddles a key trade route between the energy-rich countries of western and central Asia and those in South Asia with a high demand for energy. Pakistan's three seaports i e Karachi Port Oasim and Gwadar provide the shortest routes linking Afghanistan. China. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan to the rest of the world. At present, however, hardly any transit trade passes through

> to two very important re-Agreement (SAFTA) and Organization Trade Agreeboth are of little service to Pakistan as any normal have vet to be established. items under its positive list. In March 2012, the country liberalized its trade poli-

these Pakistani ports despite the fact that all these countries would benefit greatly from lower trade and transportation costs. Pakistan is a signatory gional trade agreements the South Asia Free Trade the Economic Cooperation ment (ECOTA). However, trading arrangements with the members of these blocs The SAFTA was signed in 2006 but unfortunately, Pakistan allowed only a limited number of trade

PAKISTAN								
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2019	4,554	28,293	13.9%	86.1%				
2020	5,612	34,619	13.9%	86.1%				

By Suleman Chawla Senior Vice President,

FPCCI Pakistan has signed 12 trade agreements, some of them are PTAs, FTAs, Transit Trade and Trade in Goods Agreements. Pakistan singed Transit Trade Agreement with Afghanistan and Tajikistan, Pak-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement, Pak-China Free Trade Agreement, Pak-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement, Pak-Mauritius Free Trade Agreement, Pakistan Pak –Iran Preferential Trade Agreement. Pakistan-Uzbekistan Preferential Trade Agreement Pakistan-Türkiye

was showing expansionary trend as Pak- Iran bilateral PARISTANISTRADEAWITH DV/BERTSTAN (MILLION US\$) TOTAL TOTAL % SHARE BALANCE **IMPORTS** IN TOTAL EXPORT OF TRADE OF TRADE PAKISTAN EXP. PAKISTAN 93.0 23,778.6 0.3 60,391.1 34.3 23,818.8 116.4 (71.1)0.1 50,511.0 121.4 (73.3)22,245.7 0.1 45,841.7

28,880.0

31,175.9

0.2

0.4

Trade in Goods Agreement, Trade & Investment Framework Agreement between Pakistan and USA and Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area. Recently, Pakistan is also negotiating FTA with GCC.

YEAR EXPORTS IMPORTS

63.6

22.7

24.0

50.7

110.8

2019

2020

2021

2022

29.3

93.8

97.4

126.6

123.7

177.4

234.5

All these agreements are differ in scope and nature and unfortunately inadequately utilized to produce desired results instead contributed in imbalance in Pakistan trade. Pakistan's export is significantly low then imports. Surprisingly, in some cases Pakistan's imports have increased manifold from its FTAs/PTAs

The low utilization and trade deficit indicates failures of receiving potential benefits from partners under agreements

these agreements is discussed below to emphasize reviewing and cautious approach while setting such agreements.

Pak - China FTA: Volume of bilateral trade between Pakistan and China is increasing under the Pak -China FTA which was become operational in 2007. At the time of FTA (2006-07), volume of bilateral trade was US \$ 4110 million and balance of trade of US \$ 2958 million was in favour of China. On completion of the Phase-I, which was from 2007 to 2011, the volume of bilateral trade was stood at US \$ 10558.1 million in which share of Pakistan exports was US \$2118.4 million while share of Chinese exports was US \$ 8439.7 million. In the first phase both sides were agreed on the elimination of tariff on 30% of the products. The second phase envisages liberalisation of tariff up to 90% of the goods from both sides. The tariff concessions committed by Pakistan in

trade was US \$ 366 million during 2002-03. However, current volume of bilateral trade has significantly increased to US \$ 2144 million in which Pakistan exports to Iran is US \$781 million while Iran exports to Pakistan is US \$ 1363 mil-

(75.9)

(12.9)

Under the Agreement, Pakistan offered concessions to Iran on 338 tariff lines, whereas Iran gave concessions on 309 tariff lines. Preferences granted by both countries to each other cover approximately 18% of MFN tariff of both coun-

Pakistan and Iran has also signed a barter trade agreement Government ministries from both sides and Quetta and Zahedan

tween Pakistan and Uzbekistan covering a total of thirty-four goods. The main objectives of the PTA is to lower duties which was ranges from 20 percent to 100 percent while NTBs (Non-tariff barriers) are to be reduced by mutual recognition of standards and easing procedural requirements for goods covered

73,106.6

71,104.7

under the PTA. In order to compliance international treaty and rights of the landlocked countries, Pakistan has also given transit trade facility via its ports to Uzbekistan under Transit Trade Agreement which was signed in

Though Pakistan and Uzbekistan are PTA and

Evaluating the viability of trade agreements that, although theory of bal- a total of 311 tariff lines on ket for 261 tariff lines covpreferential rates. It included edible palm oil products, sugar confectionary, cocoa products, consumer goods, chemicals, tableware, kitchenware, rubber products, wood products, glassware products and electronic products. Pakistan has offered the same preferential treatment on edible palm oil products from Indonesia as provided to Malaysia under Pakistan Malaysia Free Trade Agreement.

Prior to the PTA volume of bilateral trade was US \$ 1.65 billion in 2012 Pakistan exports to Indonesia were UŜ \$ 273 million while Indonesia exports to Pakistan were US \$ 1.38 billion. However, volume of two ways trade has grown significantly US \$ 4.5 billion but share of Pakistan's exports remained low in comparison just 188 million dollar against US \$ 4331 million (4.3 billion).

Pakistan Uzbekistan Pakistan

Uzbekistan signed a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) in March 2022 be-

% SHARE

IN TOTAL

0.0

0.2

0.2

0.2

0.2

as leather, rice, dates, mangoes, cutlery, sports goods, seafood, processed agricultural products, rubber tubes and tires, plastics, and engineering goods. While Turkey has been granted concessions on 130 tariff lines, including products such as black tea, processed food products and flavorings, industrial raw materials and parts of machinery, and parts of electronic equipment. akistan exports to Türkiye was expanding rapidly till the imposition of duties by Türkiye Authorities. However, after strong advocacy by business community the two countries agreed to sign FTA instead PTA, both countries now trading under agreement on trade in goods. Volume of trade between Pakistan and Türkiye has seen significant growth after implementation of the agreement. Current volume of bilateral two way trade is US\$1.3 billion in which share of Pakistan's exports is US \$ 432 million while Türkiye exports to Pakistan

is US \$ 870 million. Pakistan Afghanistan and Tajikistan Transit Trade

Agreement Pakistan being the signatory of the various international protocols/agreements has granted transit trade facilities. Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement was signed in 1965 and has been modified accordingly. Similarly, The Agreement between Tajikistan and Pakistan had been negotiated and finalized, covering trade and transit of goods by road and rail along with customs procedures, largely on the template of Transit Trade Agreement between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, which was a comprehensive agreement, implemented since March 2022.

Besides above PTAs/ FTAs and trading agreements, Pakistan is also negotiating bilateral trading arrangements, with Singapore (FTA), Thailand and Gulf Cooperation Countries

While Pakistan's exports mainly depending on USA's market (19% shares), Transit trading partner, but followed by China (8%

	PAKISTAN'S TRADE WITH TÜRKIYE (MILLION US\$)							
YEAR	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	TOTAL TRADE	BALANCE OF TRADE	TOTAL EXPORT OF PAKISTAN	% SHARE IN TOTAL EXP.	TOTAL IMPORTS OF PAKISTAN	% SHARE IN TOTAL IMPORTS
2018	330.7	462.2	793.0	(131.5)	23,778.6	1.4	60,391.1	0.8
2019	306.3	550.2	856.5	(243.9)	23,818.8	1.3	50,511.0	1.1
2020	268.8	620.2	888.9	(351.4)	22,245.7	1.2	45,841.7	1.4
2021	314.8	773.1	1,087.9	(458.3)	28,880.0	1.1	73,106.6	1.1
2022	432.4	870.3	1,302.7	(437.9)	31,175.9	1.4	71,104.6	1.2
	_		_			chara	a) IIV 70/	Garman

chambers of commerce were allowed to begin barter trade. Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan issued notification to begin implementing the "Business-to-Business (B2B) Barter Trade Mechanism, 2023, allowing public and private entities to engage in trade with Iran, Afghanistan and Russia under the B2B Mechanism. Trade of goods under a B2B BT arrangement allowed on the principle of import followed by export. The export would be made to the extent of the value of imported goods.

unfortunately, bilateral trade is very low just US \$ 235

and trade agreements between Pakistan and Uzbekistan are helpful for improving and capturing Central Asia Market to trade Pakistani products. Pakistan is also achieving other targets than trade by signing such agreements with Uzbekistan which is one of the major nations of CARs, ECO and SCO which an emerging and influential bloc. Pakistan – Türkiye

Trade in Goods Agreement The Framework Agreement Establishing a Free

6%, Spain and UAE shares 5% of Pakistan exports. Only 21.5 percent of Pakistan's exports share by its trading partners.

Pakistani exporters are overabundance of various fixed and variable costs, such as documentation, transportation, border delays, tariffs, and non-tariffs, inadequate IT and shipping connectivity.

Reduced cost influence the nature, direction and composition of trade flows, however, Pakistan's trade does not enjoy improved trade facilitation. Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) predicts that a reduction in trade costs in Pakistan to the level of those of Singapore could increase Pakistan's GDP by \$10 billion, create 2.2 million jobs and reduce poverty by 5%. Pakistan ranks 122nd out of 167 countries on the Logistic Performance Index (LPI). Neighbouring India stands at 44th and Bangladesh at 100th. China ranks 19th, Indonesia 61, Sri Lanka 73, Uzbekistan 88, Tajikistan 97 and Iran ranks at 123rd on Logistic Performance Index. LPI provides country-wide assessments of six aspects of logistics performance: trade- and transport related infrastructure, customs and border management, logistics services quality, timeliness of shipments, ability to track and trace, and the availability of com-

petitively priced interna-

tional shipments. Pakistan

could only be achieved po-

tential benefits from over-

seas trade specifically

from trading partners by

reducing trade cost, cost

of producing exportable

surplus improving ship-

ping connectivity and en-

hancing logistics perfor-

mance. Improvement in

domestic commerce to

serve as buffer stock re-

moval of infrastructure

bottlenecks and business

friendly policy to establish

comm	itted by I	Pakistan in	PTA;	PTA; Pakistan Indonesia men			nt Establishing a Fre			
	PAKISTAN'S TRADE WITH AFGHANISTAN (Million US\$)									
YEAR	EXPORTS	IMPORTS	TOTAL TRADE	BALANCE OF TRADE	TOTAL EXPORT OF PAKISTAN	% SHARE IN TOTAL EXP.	TOTAL IMPORTS OF PAKISTAN	% SHARE IN TOTAL IMPORTS		
2018	1,356.4	510.3	1,866.6	846.1	23,778.6	5.7	60,391.1	0.8		
2019	1,183.6	580.5	1,764.1	603.1	23,818.8	5.0	50,511.0	1.1		
2020	871.2	518.5	1,389.7	352.7	22,245.7	3.9	45,841.7	1.1		
2021	835.9	640.5	1,476.4	195.4	28,880.0	2.9	73,106.6	0.9		
2022	988.9	958.0	1,946.9	30.9	31,175.9	3.2	71,104.7	1.3		

Pakistan - Indonesia

agreements (RTAs) are exthe first phase of the FTA periencing unprecedented predominantly contained rapid development in terms raw materials and intermeof economic growth of the diary goods. In return, China countries. With the increase eliminated tariff on finished in the depth of RTA provigoods. Protocol on the Phase-II of the CPFTA has sions, as an important form been signed by Pakistan and of economic and trade rela-China during the visit of the Prime Minister to Beijing on 28th April, 2019. In pursuance of Article 79(2), the Amending Protocol will form an integral part of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement. Under the Phase-II, Pakistan has secured enhanced and deeper concessions on products of its export interests, revision of safeguards mechanism for protection of the domestic industry, inclusion of the balance of payment clause as a safety valve against balance of payments difficulties, and effective enforcement of the electronic data exchange.

It is worth mentioning

preferential trade agreement was signed on February 3, 2012 after conclusion of prolonged negotiations, which were initiated in August 2002. The Preferential Trade Agreement became operational in September 2013 after many rounds of negotiations. Under the agreement, Indonesia agreed to offer market access to Pakistan for 220 tariff lines on preferential rates. The list included fresh fruits, cotton yarn, fabrics, readymade garments, fans, sports goods, leather goods and other industrial products. After PTA's implementation, Indonesia will be able to increase exports of crude palm oil to Pakistan, whereas Pakistan can export fruits, value-added textiles, carpets, fabrics, leather goods, chemicals, surgical equipment and other items. Pakistan offered Indonesia

Trade Area between the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Türkiye signed in Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the 22nd day of March, 201 6. Pakistan and Turkey's Trade in Goods Agreement, which was signed in August 2022, has finally come into effect on May 1, 2023, as per mutual agreement. The Trade in Goods Agreement signifies a notable milestone in the historic brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkey and envisages further integration of the markets and business communities of both countries. This agreement is expected to increase bilateral trade across various sectors and bring reciprocal tariff concessions extended to select exports of both countries. Under the agreement, Pakistan has gained preferential

access to the Turkish mar-