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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on matters related to Balochistan.

Progress, prosperity of people of Balochistan among priorities of government, says PM

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar for according significance to climate resilience, finance aspects in Balochistan hydro projects; Directs for expediting the matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Tuesday stressed upon focusing the climate resilience and climate finance aspects in all the water projects of Balochistan and reiterated that progress and prosperity of the people of province were among the top priorities of the government.

The caretaker prime minister chaired a review meeting on the important matters pertaining to the Balochistan province. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Balochistan Chief Minister Ali Mardan Domki, Education Minister Dr Qadir Baloch and Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir, Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Sami Saeed,

Caretaker Federal Minister for Law and Water Resources Irfan Aslam, and relevant senior officials, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The chief secretary gave a briefing over different projects of the province. The prime minister further directed for expediting the matters related to the construction of a two-lane highway from Khuzdar to Karachi and observed that with its construction, the different parts of the country would get an alternate leeway, besides strengthening of the linkages. He also asked for an immediate resolution of the financial issues faced by the universities in the province.

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Balochistan people stand beside Pak Army to thwart enemies' nefarious designs: Achakzai

QUETTA (APP)- Balochistan Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai on Tuesday said that the people of Balochistan stood beside the Pakistan Army which was thwarting the nefarious design of enemies for maintaining peace in the country.



Addressing a press conference at Quetta press Club, the Minister said that Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir was backing the government in efforts to improve the national economy.

Mardan Khan Domki was trying to solve the problems of the people of Chaman.

Jan Achakzai said that Balochistan government under the leadership of Balochistan Caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali

He said that at least 20 thousand rupees per month would be given to the unemployed youth of Chaman by accepting the long-standing demand of the unemployed youth

of Chaman while payment would be made after registering of youth.

Mr. Jan Achakzai said that Sarfaraz Bengulzai and others were included in the national mainstream which was positive sign of the province saying that Bolan Express was grateful to the government for its restoration.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar had directed Pakistan Railways, thanks to which the problem has been resolved, he said.

Jan Achakzai said that the ticket for Bolan Mail train from Quetta to Karachi is 2200 rupees, which is reasonable.

PHC suspends ECP verdict revoking bat as PTI election symbol

PESHAWAR (APP): The Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday suspended the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision of declaring the PTI's intra-party polls as unconstitutional and the revocation of its election symbol 'bat' till the final verdict on its petition.

The single-member bench comprising Justice Kamran Hayat Miankhel announced the verdict which it had reserved on the petition of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf against the ECP's decision earlier in the day.

During the course of proceedings, Justice Miankhel observed that the

general elections were about to take place on February 8, 2024, and that the last date for allotting the election symbols was January 13.

He said that the arguments of all the parties involved in the case were heard.

PTI lawyers, including Barrister Ali Zafar pleaded that the intra-party polls were carried out on the orders of the ECP and the latter's December 22 decision might be declared illegal.

They argued that according to the Constitution, any citizen could form a party or be a member of any party.

Murtaza Solangi says Govt to explore legal options to redress journalist layoffs issue

Workers' forced dismissal from media houses unacceptable

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said the government would explore maximum options to redress the problems of journalist fraternity, and seek legal action, in accordance with the Constitution, to restrict forced job layoffs of media persons.

Talking to the media after the walkout of journalist during the 334th session of the Senate in the press gallery, he expressed full solidarity with the journalist community regarding

the forced dismissal by some media houses.

Solangi said the legal provisions would be explored to take punitive action and extend support to safeguard the rights of media workers.

"I stand with journalists and media workers; the issue of forced dismissals of journalists is not acceptable," he said.

He said he had an earlier discussion with the Chairman of Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) regarding the forced dismissal

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Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf interacting with Heads of various Navies during 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) in Bangkok, Thailand

CNS emphasizes collaboration among regional navies for maritime security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Naval staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf visited Thailand to attend eighth Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Conclave of Chiefs at Bangkok.

The event involved panel discussions on issues related to cooperation in maritime security of Indian Ocean and Blue Economy ways forward for sustainable development of IONS members, a Pakistan Navy news release said on Tuesday.

During the IONS Conclave of Chiefs, bilateral meetings between Chief of the Naval Staff and naval leadership of IONS member states were also held.

The CNS called on Commander of Qatar Emiri Naval Forces, C-in-C of Royal Thai Navy, Deputy C-in-C of Russian Navy, Commander of Royal Navy of Oman, CNS of French Navy, Commander of Iranian Navy, Fleet Commander of Royal

Navy, UK and Vice Chief of Japan Maritime Self Defence Force and discussed matters of mutual interest. Admiral Naveed Ashraf focused on PN contributions to regional maritime security and emphasized on collaboration between the regional navies to enhance maritime security of the region.

He also stressed upon greater collaboration between Indian Ocean countries to exploit potentials of blue economy.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (ret) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali in a meeting with Inspector General of Police Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh

Amanullah Kanrani says Bureaucracy third big pillar of state & civil servants are agents of real charge

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Law & Parliamentary Affairs and Prosecution, Amanullah Kanrani has stated that the bureaucracy is the third big pillar of state and the civil servants are the agent of real change because they enforce the policies at the lower level.

The caretaker Provincial Minister was speaking to the Certificates awarding ceremony among the 2nd Mid-Career Management Course (MCMC) graduates of Balochistan Civil Services Academy held at Governor House Quetta on Tuesday.

The ceremony was attended by Senior Bureaucrats, Senior Academicians, Members of Corporate Sector and Media Representatives.

Balochistan Civil Services Academy held its 2nd graduation ceremony of 26 Mid-Career Trainee Officers.

ers in Governor House Quetta in which the graduating officers were from Balochistan Civil Services Group, Balochistan Secretariat Services Group, Agriculture and Forest Department and Local Government Department were awarded the certificates on completion of the course.

Mr. Amanullah Kanrani, Minister, Law & Parliamentary Affairs and Prosecution attended as the chief guest of the event.

While addressing he aid, "Bureaucracy is the third pillar of the state and civil servants are the real change-agents since they implement the policy at grass root level".

Earlier, Hafeez Ahmed Jamali, Director General, BCSA said that BCSA is an indigenous academy which is providing the landscape of service delivery through the training of mid-career officers.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Amanullah Kanrani distributing certificates among participants of 2nd Mid-Career Management Course

Balochistan: Seven former Chief Ministers in election field

QUETTA (INP): Seven former chief ministers of Balochistan contesting in upcoming general elections scheduled on February 08. Former chief minister Sardar Akhtar Mengal contesting election on National as well as Balochistan Assembly seats.

Another ex-chief minister Nawab Aslam Khan Raisani running for a Balochistan Assembly seat on the JUI ticket. Former chief ministers Dr. Malik Baloch and

Nawab Sanauallah Zehri of People's Party have also been in the election field.

Former BAP chief minister of Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan now contesting election on the PML-N ticket. Incumbent Speaker of Balochistan Assembly and former chief minister Jan Mohammad Jamali also contesting election. Former caretaker chief minister of the province Sardar Saleh Mohammad Bhotani contesting election from his traditional constituency.

Defence Ministry submits reply in audio leak case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Defence on Tuesday submitted its reply with the Islamabad High Court (IHC) regarding the audio leak case involving Bushra Bibi and the son of former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar.

IHC's Justice Babar Sattar heard the case.

The ministry, in its one-page reply, stated that several inexpensive accessories and tools were readily available in the market, simplifying the process of intercepting audio during phone calls. It further pointed out that some platforms also offered such services for a fee, and the content of the audios could also be altered with the use of artificial intelligence. The ministry said that only social media platforms could provide the source of the recordings posted on them.

It mentioned that the Cyber Crime Wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) was the competent authority to obtain information from the social media platforms under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Murtaza Solangi talking with media men.

National conference calls to promote interfaith harmony in country

KARACHI (APP): The Department of International Relations of the University of Karachi in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony organized a national conference on "bridging beliefs: interfaith harmony in Pakistan", at the KU Chinese Teachers Memorial Auditorium on Tuesday.

The conference called to promote the interfaith harmony culture in the country and emphasizes the importance of interfaith harmony, tolerance, love, dialogue, acceptance, and respect for all religions and faiths.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, in his address as the chief guest said that every person in the country condemned the incident of Jarawal Town in Faisalabad district which was reported in August 2023. He recalled that our

scholars opened the doors of mosques for the Christian community and that gave a positive message to the world.

The minister asked the audience to play their role in promoting interfaith harmony culture in their social circle so that conspiracies against our motherland can be foiled on every platform. This is the first program arranged by the Ministry at any educational institution, he added.

The federal minister stressed the importance of refraining from using the term 'minority' for other religions, asserting that citizens of all faiths are equal in Pakistan. Recalling Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah's words, he reiterated the principle of freedom for churches, mosques, and temples in Pakistan.

The speakers of the conference urged that it

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ASI among 5 injured in hand grenade attack on police mobile

Independent Report
QUETTA: A hand grenade exploded on a police mobile on patrol in Nawan Killi area of Quetta.

Due to the explosion, ASI Khuda-e-Dad among 5 persons were injured who were shifted to the hospital.

Meanwhile Caretaker Home Minister Balochistan Mir Zubair Jamali condemned the attack on the police in Nawan Killi area of Quetta.

In a statement he said that the incident is very sad. He sought a report of the incident from the police.

The home minister prayed for the speedy and complete recovery of the injured policeman.

ECP warns govt. employees against political involvement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Tuesday has issued a pre-general election advisory, instructing government officers and employees to refrain from participating in political activities.

The advisory specifies that government officials and employees were prohibited from taking part in election activities.

According to the issued circular, the government officials and employees are restricted from engaging in election activities.

Government officials seeking leave must obtain approval from Returning Officers (ROs), while district officers are obligated to seek permission from the District Returning Officers (DRO) for their leaves.

According to the ECP advisory, federal government employees up to grade 19 can have their leave sanctioned by DROs.



LAHORE: PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif presiding over 16th meeting of Parliamentary Board.

Scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates continues in Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The process of scrutiny of the nomination papers of the candidates is continued for the provincial and national assemblies on second consecutive day, Tuesday.

According to the sources of Provincial Election Commissioner office, the scrutiny of papers of some 240 candidates has been completed during last two days.

On second day, the nomination papers of leader of Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party, Nawab Ayaz Khan Jogeza and leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Governor Balochistan, Syed Zahoor Agha were found corrected. They had filed nomination papers for NA-262, Quetta-I.

Similarly, the nomination papers of PKMAP chairman, Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani were also found corrected for NA-263, Quetta-II.

Syed Farooq Shah expresses grief Deputy Director DGPR Hazrat Ali passes away

Independent Report
QUETTA: Deputy Director, Directorate General of Public Relations Balochistan Hazrat Ali passed away here on Tuesday. He was laid to rest at Mehmoodabad graveyard.

He was brother of Daulat Khan, photographer DGPR and father of Master Saadullah, Dr. Naseebullah, Niamatullah and Qudratullah.

His Fateha khawani is continue at Haji Sardar Gul Jama Khushhal Road Street No. 1, Achakzai Colony Pashtoonabad Quetta.

Meanwhile the Chief Editor Independent Group of Newspapers Syed Muhammad Farooq Shah



has extended his condolence on the demise of Hazrat Ali.

In a statement, he expressed profound grief over the death of Hazrat Ali. He prayed that May Almighty Allah rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give the bereaved family the courage and patience to bear the loss.

Attique lauds insightful Kashmir, Palestine projection by COAS during visit to US

ISLAMABAD (APP): Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu Kashmir and President of All Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has lauded the insightful projection of the Kashmir dispute and Palestine cause by the Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir during his recent important visit to the United States. The people of Jammu and Kashmir express gratitude to the Army Chief for his bold reiteration of Kashmir and Palestine causes at this critical phase of complex international history, he said in his congratulatory message to the Army Chief released to the media here late Monday.

At this phase, the reiteration of principled stance on the Kashmir dispute and highlighting Palestine cause by the Army Chief of a nuclear Pakistan is much weightier than several diplomatic overtures on the issues.

"Kashmiris have gained fresh courage and confidence by this multi-institutional projection of seriousness of Kashmir and Palestine struggles", Sardar Attique said in his message.

Trial of civilians in military courts: SC returns with objection against defence secretary

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has returned with objections against defence secretary. Civil society had filed contempt of court petition against defence secretary for not sending cases of those accused in May 9 and 10 incidents to criminal courts following the SC decision regarding nullification of civilian trial in military courts.

SC returned the petition remarking the decision of nullification of civilian trial in military courts has been suspended on December 13. Therefore, the petition is not maintainable.



Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a Senate House Business Advisory Committee meeting at Parliament House, Islamabad.

Literary icon 'Parveen Shakir' remembered on her 29th death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 29th death anniversary of eminent and trailblazing poetess, Parveen Shakir, affectionately known as the "Poetess of Fragrance" was observed (Tuesday) where fans from all walks of life through media platforms paid rich tributes to her unforgettable services.

Born in Karachi on November 24, 1952, Parveen Shakir became a prominent figure in the literary landscape after successfully clearing the competitive examination for the Civil Service, PTV news channels reported.

In 1977, she made her literary debut with the publication of her first poetry collection, 'Khushbu' (Fragrance), which garnered exceptional acclaim within literary circles. Her subsequent collections, including 'Sad Barg' (One Hundred Leaves), 'Khooh-Qalami' (Self-Talk), and 'Inkaar' (Denial) further solidified her status as a distinguished Urdu poet.

The complete works of Parveen Shakir were published under the title 'Mah-e-Tamam' (The Full Moon), while her final poetry collection, 'Kaf-e-Aina' (The Mirror's Edge), was posthumously released after her demise.

Parveen Shakir contributed a unique and fresh style to Urdu poetry, earning her accolades and recognition. The Government of Pakistan honored her with the prestigious President's Award for Pride of Performance in acknowledgement of her outstanding contributions.

On the fateful morning of December 26, 1994, Parveen Shakir tragically lost her life in a traffic accident in Islamabad. She rests peacefully in the central cemetery of Islamabad.

Poet Munir Niazi remembered on death anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 17th death anniversary of the distinguished poet Munir Niazi, renowned for his contributions to both Urdu and Punjabi literature, was observed nationwide on Tuesday.

Born on April 9, 1923, in the city of Hoshiarpur in Eastern Punjab, India, Munir Niazi left an indelible mark on the literary landscape with his profound and evocative poetry.

Munir Niazi's Urdu poetic collections include masterpieces such as "Is Bay Wafa Ka Sheher," "Tez Hawa Aur Tanha Phool," "Jangal Mein Dhanak," "Dushmano Ke Darmiyan Shaam," "Safaid Din Ki Hawa," "Aghaz-e-Zamana Mein Dohara," "Siyaah Shab Ka Samundar," "Maah-e-Muneer," "Che Rangin Darwazay," "Saat Sayyar," "Pehli Baat He Aakhri Thi," "Ek Dua Jo Main Bhoole Gaya Tha," and "Mohabbat Ab Nahi Hogi," along with the series "Ek Tasalsul Ke Naam."

His Punjabi poetry collections, including "Char Chup Cheezan," "Rasta Dasan Wale Taare," and "Safar Di Raat Ke Naam," have also been widely acclaimed.

Munir Niazi extended his literary talents to the world of cinema by composing melodies for numerous films.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Capt (R) Anwar-ul-Haq cut the along with others during an event regarding the Christmas celebrations at Open Air Theater in Shakarparian area.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on matters related to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

BISP receives 5,372 applications for Savings Scheme so far

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has received 5,372 applications so far under its newly launched 'Savings Scheme'.

The BISP has recently launched its 'Savings Scheme' with the primary goal of instilling financial independence and promoting a savings culture among consumers enrolled in the scheme.

Following the application submission, a 'Registration' process will be initiated, and upon successful completion of this stage applicants will become eligible for the 'Savings Scheme.'

This initiative aims to provide a financial buffer for unexpected expenses and emergencies, said a press release.

Eligibility for the scheme is extended to needy families of BISP whose poverty score is up to 40 PMT not having regular employment.

A substantial number of applications have been received from various regions, including 3,416 from Punjab province, 1,135 from Sindh province, 397 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 176 from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 117 from Balochistan, 79 from Gilgit Baltistan, and 52 from Islamabad. These applications have been submitted through the web portal provided by BISP.

In the initial phase, the scheme will accommodate one hundred and fifty thousand customers on a first-come-first-served basis.

The Savings Scheme is open to both men and women, with one person per family eligible to apply. Upon joining the scheme, customers commit to a two-year tenure, during which they must save between Rs 500 to Rs 1000 in their dedicated 'Savings Accounts.' BISP will provide an additional forty percent of the gross savings to customers on a quarterly basis. Notably, while the additional amount provided by BISP can be withdrawn, the principal amount deposited for savings is non-withdrawable.

Participants retain the flexibility to terminate the scheme at any stage of their choosing.

The scheme is free of any application fees, and applicants are cautioned to be vigilant against potential fraudulent activities.

In case of complaints, individuals are encouraged to reach out to their nearest BISP offices or contact the toll-free number 080026477.

Mehbooba reveals how Kashmiris paying heavy price of "facade of normalcy"

ISLAMABAD (APP): Peoples Democratic Party President Mehbooba Mufti referring to the normalcy mantra being propagated by Narendra Modi regime in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019 has said that "the facade of normalcy exacts a heavy price from the people of Jammu and Kashmir".

According to Kashmir Media Service, Mehbooba Mufti in an article said, Kashmiri youngsters are packed off to jails in and outside Jammu and Kashmir on trivial grounds while the rest pay with their lives and liberty to maintain a sullen silence.

"Even religious heads like maulvis and imams are told what to include in their weekly sermons. The masses cannot protest peacefully even about day-to-day issues like grueling power cuts that affect their lives," she deplored.

"The scale of violence and atrocities that I have witnessed during my political career has ensured nothing shocks or rattles me anymore. But I was left stunned by a gruesome, abominable video that is doing the rounds over social media. The video, a little less than a minute long, shows Army jawans clad in uniforms using abusive language while mercilessly thrashing civilians who appear to be half dead.

Not satisfied with lashing them with sticks, they then go on to strip them naked and pour heaps of red chili powder on their gashed and wounded bottoms. A few hours after the video was verified, another disturbing fact came to light. One of those innocent civilians was already dead while this act of violence was carried out," Mehbooba revealed.

She went on to add: "A deeply distressing question came to mind. Who would dare to shoot such a video under those circumstances?"



A group of students of the Government High School Shafi Muhammad Umrani, Naseerabad, Balochistan visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House, Islamabad.

CDA devises system to check misuse of vehicles, fuel theft

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) administration has decided to address complaints of misuse of government vehicles and theft of petrol and diesel with modern technology.

According to CDA official, under the direction of CDA Chairman Captain (retd) Anwarul Haque, the Member IT and Technology has devised a foolproof mechanism. In the first phase, the system will be applied to commercial vehicles.

In the second phase, the vehicles used by officers will also be connected to the system.

Under the new system, the supply of petrol and diesel to all vehicles will be stopped from CDA's own petrol pumps. PSO cards will be issued to each vehicle and it will get a fixed amount of petrol or diesel.

All vehicles will be fitted with fuel sensors and vehicle trackers. Fuel monitoring will be done by fuel sensors while vehicle tracking will be done by vehicle trackers and an alarm will be set off as soon as a vehicle goes out of its route. Every vehicle will have a check on where it is going. The vehicle can also be locked for misuse.

Forced lay offs of media workers Journalists stage walk out from press gallery in Senate

ISLAMABAD (Online): Media staged walk out from press gallery during Senate session against forced retrenchment of journalists and media workers from media houses.

The walk out was staged by journalists affiliated with Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) Tuesday.

Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani while taking notice of walk out of journalists directed the delegation including caretaker information minister to hold talks with the journalists.

The delegation including caretaker information minister Murtaza Solangi held talks with the journalists and the caretaker information minister assured the journalists to raise their problems at every forum.

He said they are with workers and not with owners. I will talk to chairman PEMRA today. The owners of BOL and Dunya will be called in the meeting of standing committee on Friday.

Senate session adjourned due to lack of quorum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate session on Friday was adjourned due to a lack of quorum and ruckus that forced the chair to wind up the meeting of the House without taking any substantial agenda item.

Amid the rising ruckus, the Minister responded to the dissenting Senators saying, "The issuance of any ordinance is the prerogative of the government under Article 89 of the Constitution, and it is important for us to lay these ordinances in the form of bills and it's the House's job to make any decision on it."

After Senator Saadia Abbasi succeeded in presenting her motion to establish the first Parliamentary Caucus on Water Resources, the Senator requested the chair to talk about it which was turned down by the chair.

Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani directed the Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi to table his bill for amendment titled "The Motion Pictures Ordinance, 1979 [The Motion Pictures (Amendment) Bill, 2023]."

As the Minister for Information initiated to present his bill, and started reading the text of the Bill, the Senators from different political parties started commotion, hence hampering his speech. However,



ISLAMABAD: Younger Girls from christen Community are buying traditional "Gajray" from woman vendor at Lake View Park during the celebrations of Christmas in Federal Capital.

India grilled for violating basic rights of Kashmiris in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): APHC leader and Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Social Peace Forum Advocate Divender Singh Behal in a statement in Jammu said the systematic human rights violations by Indian occupation forces in the territory have broken all past records. He said that one million trigger-happy troops have caged the entire population in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, turning the Kashmir valley into an open-air prison. All the government institutions especially the so-called security forces have been suffocated by the Hindutva Indian government.

"The Indian corporate media on one hand distorts the true picture of Kashmir, dubs every Kashmiri, killed extrajudicially, a terrorist and on the other hand sells the invisible peace and development mantra to the outside world. The local media is barred from reporting the factual ground situation barring outsiders from knowing what really is happening on the ground," he added.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said India's propaganda of so-called peace in the territory is meant to hide its crimes against humanity in the territory. The statement deplored the silence of the international community over the revocation of the disputed Kashmir's special status in flagrant violation of international laws.

The spokesman said that Hindutva BJP regime while issuing domicile to non-Kashmiris including Indian troops has snatched all rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, guaranteed under UN Charter.

29 outlaws including arrested; stolen goods, bikes, drugs and weapons recovered

ISLAMABAD (Online): Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Islamabad has accepted bail plea of Manzoor Pashteen chairman of Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM).

The court has accepted bail pleas of Manzoor Pashteen in two cases.

The court has granted bail against the surety bonds in the sum of Rs 30000 each in two cases.

It is pertinent to mention here Manzoor Pashteen was arrested from Chamman this month.



ISLAMABAD (INP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has completely banned admissions and affiliation in the Lakki Marwat University (LMU) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to the notification issued by the HEC officials, the ban has been imposed due to serious irregularities and non-implementation of Higher Education Commission guidelines. There will be a complete ban on new admissions at Lakki Marwat University, HEC said. Moreover, the education commission also warned all the students not to be admitted.

namely James Jozaf and recovered three stolen motorbikes and weapon used in crime from his possession.

The Secretariat police team arrested an accused namely Sawal Tariq and recovered one 30 bore pistol from his possession. The Kohsar police team arrested an accused namely Shoab Aziz and recovered 711 gram heroin from his possession. The Humak police team arrested two accused namely Naseer Ahmed and Salfar Hussain and recovered two 30 bore pistols from their possession.

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Nominations done

From a state of uncertainty only a couple of weeks ago centring on the question of whether or not the general elections would take place, the poll process is now firmly moving forward.

Nominations for both the federal and provincial legislatures wrapped up on Sunday evening, with big guns representing the mainstream political parties throwing their hats into the ring.

Meanwhile, the migratory tribe of 'electables' is also present in the contest, offering their services to those believed to have the blessings of the powers that be. Nawaz Sharif, Asif Zardari, Imran Khan, Fazlur Rehman, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari — all mainstays of the political landscape — have filed their nomination papers, though PTI hopefuls have repeatedly said obstacles are being placed in their way.

From here onwards, parties are expected to switch to election mode, and this requires them to communicate their programme for Pakistan's uplift to voters. It should be remembered that elections are not a popularity contest, as people expect solutions to their myriad problems from the parties vying for their votes.

In this regard, it is a matter of concern that most mainstream parties, with the exception of Jamaat-i-Islami, have not yet released their election manifestos.

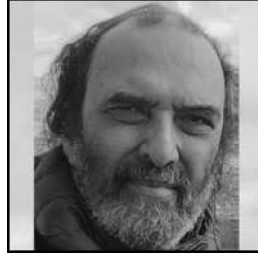
Perhaps the parties themselves were not expecting the polls to take place on Feb 8, hence their lethargy in finalising their policy proposals in the form of manifestos. But, as the Supreme Court has said, no more delays will be tolerated and the polls are to take place on schedule. Therefore, the parties need to release their manifestos soon.

It is true that unlike in many mature democracies, the politics of clan and ethnicity still dominate Pakistan's political culture, meaning that a fair percentage of voters will care little about party programmes.

Yet it must also be said that younger and more tech-savvy voters will demand answers from the parties to their problems, and will be swayed less by cults of personality, or how their respective clans/ tribes vote.

Parties have a moral obligation to inform the people of Pakistan — in both dusty villages and the sprawling cities — how they intend to fix the economy, improve healthcare and education, bring down crime, etc. Hollow promises should not be enough; firm policy is required.

Meanwhile, as has been mentioned in these columns, it is essential that the electoral exercise has legitimacy. And this cannot be achieved when one party is being excluded from the democratic process. The state's attempts to cancel the PTI must cease, and all parties need to have a level playing field during elections. Let the people of Pakistan decide who is to steer the ship of state for the next five years. Political manoeuvring has never worked, and will only exacerbate our multiple crises.



Jawed Naqvi

It wasn't surprising in the end that the presiding officers of the two Houses of India's parliament, both handpicked by Prime Minister Modi, suspended 146 opposition MPs en masse. This was unprecedented and worrisome for the troubled democracy. The MPs had hoped to ask layered and probing questions about a security breach at the Lok Sabha. Answering questions, however, is not Mr Modi's forte or that of his home minister. Mr Modi openly relishes his reputation as India's only prime minister who hasn't held a press conference in 10 years.

The current crop of questions from the opposition pertains to the two men who jumped into the Lok Sabha from the visitors' gallery. It was an unsavoury

incident for the spanking new parliament house, which Mr Modi had inaugurated with gaudy fanfare and mediaeval ritual. The intruders had shouted slogans about unemployment and galloping authoritarianism. In 2001, on the same day, Dec 13, in the old British-built parliament house, under another BJP government, an equally curious breach of security had occurred. It had led to a terrifying military stand-off with Pakistan. Major embassies in Delhi moved out their staff over fears of a nuclear exchange. It was as bad as that.

There was a third breach, earlier, again under a government with BJP's muscular nationalist leaders as key ministers. But it was not deemed threatening since Madhu Dandavate, former minister of socialist beliefs, had smuggled an unloaded pistol into parliament. He was highlighting lax security under the Janata Party's watch. Subsequent security lapses — in 2001 and now in 2023 — suggest that Dandavate's alert had gone characteristically unheeded. On the two serious close calls, the government, habitually, stonewalled key

questions. In 2001, a car with a home ministry sticker drove into the precincts, which were busy with MPs arriving and leaving. In the current case, instead of car stickers, the two men were issued passes at the behest of a BJP MP. In both events, parliament's security should have been taken more seriously, the responsibility pinned on the powerful home minister of the day: Lal Krishna Advani then, and Amit Shah now.

Luckily but strangely, in the first episode, the car carrying supposedly highly trained battle-hardened gunmen tumbled into a parked vehicle. That set off an alert, leaving five intruders and seven security men dead in the ensuing shootout. Intriguingly, none of the intruders was captured alive. Some MPs said they saw a sixth man on the closed-circuit TV, but the claim was spurned by the government like most other questions, presumably in national interest. The two men also ended their high-profile intrusion, tamely, making a spectacle of themselves by releasing yellow gas from canisters they had apparently smuggled in. They raised slogans but

were roughed up by MPs and handed to the marshals. A redeeming feature of the latest security lapse was that Pakistan wasn't blamed.

The answers that opposition MPs expected from the government about the Lok Sabha incident would perhaps have been too embarrassing for the government to come clean on. The questions won't go away. For example, how were the two men known to the BJP MP from Mysuru who sponsored their security passes? How did the government plan to respond to prevent a repeat? How were the men able to smuggle the gas canisters under the nose of a security detail that by its nature involves the protection of the prime minister and all senior and junior leaders of India?

Two other colleagues of the intruders were arrested from outside parliament as they protested against unemployment and authoritarianism. This was the tricky part. Any discussion on the security lapse would have led to discussion on rampant unemployment, that too on the eve of crucial general elections. It would also have brought

another troublesome discussion to the fore — on authoritarianism. The government obviously wouldn't want any of that.

The 2001 intrusion into the old parliament spawned similar questions. Several have remained unanswered to this day.

Arundhati Roy and A.G. Noorani raised these issues vociferously. For example, months before the attack on parliament, both the government and police had been saying that parliament could be attacked. On Dec 12, 2001, at an informal meeting then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee warned of an imminent attack on parliament. On Dec 13, parliament was attacked. Given that there was an "improved security drill", how did a car bomb packed with explosives enter the parliament complex?

The entire attack was recorded live on close circuit TV. Then Congress party MP Kapil Sibal reportedly demanded in parliament that the CCTV recording be shown to the members. The chief whip of the Congress, the late Priyaranjan Dasmunshi, said: "I counted six men getting out of the car. But only five were killed. The close circuit TV camera recording clearly showed the six men." If Dasmunshi was right, as Roy wondered, why did police say that there were only five people in the car? Who was the sixth person? Where is he now? Why was the CCTV recording not produced by the prosecution as evidence in the trial? Why was it not released for public viewing? Why was parliament adjourned after some of these questions were raised?

Importantly, the courts acknowledged that Afzal Guru, who was subsequently hanged as a conspirator, was a surrendered militant who was in regular contact with Indian forces, particularly the dreaded Special Task Force of former Jammu and Kashmir's police. How could a person under their surveillance become a key conduit to conspire in a major militant operation? Anyone who has seen the grilling of the British prime minister by the opposition every Wednesday, or has watched how US presidents are not spared scrutiny if the law warrants it, must wonder what the hullabaloo is about regarding the supposedly fabled Indian democracy. — Courtesy Dawn

A democracy without question

Peace with India in 2024?



Mosharraf Zaidi

Just another day in Indian-Occupied Kashmir's Poonch district on December 22. Mohammad Showkat, age 22, Safer Hussain age 45, and Shabir Ahmad age 32 were picked up in the morning and dropped off later that day. Dead. Three more dead Kashmiris to add to the over 100,000 that India's occupying forces have killed over the last three and a half decades.

In less than six weeks, Pakistan is going to elect a new government. It is likely that this government will not want to be reminded of Kashmir. It will instead want 'dialogue' with India. It will most likely privilege this dialogue with India over all other issues, including the economy. As a long-standing champion for normalization between South Asia's two largest countries,

I should be excited by this prospect. Why then does the prospect inspire trepidation instead?

Exactly eight years ago on December 25, 2015, I was among the few Pakistanis that was thrilled at Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lahore. That visit, at that time, represented the prospect for the two countries to engage as relative equals in terms of sovereign autonomy. India was just coming to terms with what a right-wing Hindu supremacist leader was going to do as the country's chief executive. Pakistan was winning a devastating war against terror and the economy looked like it would really start to grow.

It is not hard to imagine a positive trajectory for the two countries that were engaged with each other in some manner of diplomatic and economic negotiation. We don't know what that trajectory may have looked like, but as an optimist, I am willing to concede that it may have been very different from how things ensued.

Just how different? For starters, Pakistan may have spared its grey-listing at the FATF. Addi-

tionally, it may have faced a different kind of posture from the United States and its allies in Afghanistan — one that did not start and end with those countries saddling Pakistan with the blame for their failed (at that time) decade and a half of war in Afghanistan.

It certainly would also have been a very different set of circumstances that then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif would have faced. The openly hostile attitude of the military, peaking with the so-called Dawn Leaks fiasco of October 2016, may have gone differently. So much else may have been different thereafter, including the Supreme Court decision that unseated the then PM in late July of 2017. This is largely where there is objectively good reason for peace in Pakistan to be sour — until about mid to late 2017. The problem is that history does not start or end where we would like it to. It is a continuum. How we choose to read history is our prerogative, but the facts don't change to suit our preferences.

As strongly pro-normalization as I am, it is hard for me to ignore the explicit and unapologetic posture

of India's leaders since 2016. Pakistan has held India responsible for financing and supporting terrorists attacking Pakistan throughout this period, but there are other indicators that are much more obvious.

In 2016, there were 326 ceasefire violations by India across the Line of Control (LOC). In 2017 this number almost tripled to 1,140 ceasefire violations. It then doubled in 2018 to 2,350 and then spiked again to 3,351 in 2019. This escalation isn't isolated, and it can't be blamed entirely on whatever India claims Pakistan may have been doing to provoke it.

It isn't just across the LOC that India has consistently sought to raise temperatures.

The year 2016 represented a major shift. First, India claimed that it had conducted 'surgical strikes' in Pakistani territory. Pro-normalization peaceniks like me were assured then — by senior officials in Pakistan and by pro-normalization voices within India — to ignore India's posturing, that it was only for the newspapers, and to persist with the vision for a strong and peaceful South Asia. Pakistan officially took the

same position that pro-normalization folks here were encouraged to take: to let the surgical strikes claim be and not react to them. They were fictions that some Indians needed for their internal consumption.

Later in 2016, pro-normalization Pakistanis like me were left completely speechless by PM Modi's Independence Day speech, where he said, "I want to especially honour and thank some people from the ramparts of the Red Fort. For the past few days, the people of Balochistan, people of Gilgit, people of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the way their citizens have heartily thanked me...". Rhetorical provocations like this used to be the domain of India's large Hindu supremacist troll army, but they were never taken seriously. (Perhaps it is worrying that they still aren't). Deliberately or accidentally, India's populist Hindu supremacist rhetoric on Pakistan has morphed into its formal policy architecture. India's leaders, its institutions and even the weapons it buys from countries ranging from France and the United States to Russia are all pointed, principally at Pakistan.

In the interim, India's formal structures have adopted and endorsed the unilateral change to the status quo in Kashmir. Kashmiris have been left to fend for themselves for decades, but since 2019 even the rhetorical engagement of Pakistani elites has nosedived. Like always, there may be a debate about what Kashmiris are, but there is none about what they are not. They are not Indian. Put together, the case for Pakistan to seek further ways to assuage and concede to India seems weak. Sadly, those that wish to plough into further concessions to India see all this evidence of India's true intent but counter with the fact that India has added more than one trillion dollars to its GDP since 2016. In the same period, Pakistan has added just a smidge over \$60 billion to its economy. Is an economic gap a compelling reason to bend over backwards in search of peace with a war-mongering adversary? And, more importantly, can anyone identify the upper limit of what it would take to soothe the existential thousand-year rage of India's Hindu supremacists? — Courtesy TheNews

Unjustified stigma



Ali Burhan Mustafa

Pakistan is grappling with the stigma surrounding mental health. A social fabric steeped in tradition often finds itself at odds with the critical need for progressive mental healthcare solutions.

This clash is exacerbated by misguided reliance on shamans and archaic spiritual rituals, propelled by misinterpreted religious doctrines, rather than scientific psychiatric intervention. This dependence on traditional healers, especially in impoverished areas, perpetuates the stigma.

Child sexual abuse in Pakistan, with its dismal conviction rates, casts a long shadow over our human rights record. Chilling statistics from organisations like Sahil, reveal thousands of cases with a conviction rate of less than two per cent. Despite initiatives like the Zainab Alert Bill and national sex offender registries, the acute scarcity of child psychiatrists and underdevelopment of specialised branches, such as forensic and community psychiatry, are a glaring oversight in addressing mental health after abuse.

Pakistan faces a dire human rights challenge, as detailed by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. A woman is raped every two hours — a statistic that is potentially more frequent, with claims of such incidents occurring every 20 minutes by groups such as Pakistan Men Against Rape.

The distressingly low rate of cases being reported and even fewer convictions exposes deep flaws within

the justice system. A number of high-profile rape cases, including the Zainab Ansari incident and a mother abused sexually in front of her children, necessitates a demand for forensic psychiatric assessments in court proceedings.

Pakistani women are encumbered with a disproportionate share of mental health conditions compared to men. While attention has been drawn to many of the sociocultural practices responsible, including karo kari ('honour' killings often seen in Balochistan and Sindh), watta satta and child marriages, the struggles of women in less visible rural and urban slum areas remain largely unacknowledged.

Despite Pakistan's pledge to the WHO Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030), women are brutally punished for perceived immorality. Such barbaric practices inflict fear and profound physical and psychological trauma, often leading to myriad mental health disorders.

This crisis is exacerbated by the lack of adequately trained healthcare providers who can recognise and assist victims and violence — a shortfall highlighted by the Unicef-initiated mental health and psychosocial support services programme in 2021. Medical studies corroborate this gap. In Pakistan, the intersection of mental health and human rights is brought into sharp relief by the impact of blasphemy laws on the mentally ill. Between 1986 and 2010, an alarming surge in blasphemy accusations resulted in over 50 extrajudicial deaths.

The existing laws, increasingly stringent and far-reaching, ensnare individuals with mental health conditions such as schizophrenia and autism, often misused to conceal abuse against them. There is a critical need for legal reforms that provide robust

protections for those with mental health challenges, ensuring that blasphemy laws are not weaponised against them.

Pakistan stands at a critical juncture, with recent legal reforms pointing towards progress in mental health care. The decriminalisation of attempted suicide was a commendable step away from punitive measures, signalling the emerging recognition of mental illness as a public health matter and not a criminal one.

However, the realities of mental health care in Pakistan, as evidenced by high suicide rates juxtaposed with an insufficient number of mental health professionals and facilities, particularly in the rural areas, highlight a landscape in desperate need of reform.

With a budget that fails to adequately address mental health and a medical community yet to fully acknowledge psychiatric subspecialties, Pakistan's mental health framework is alarmingly inadequate. Forensic psychiatry in Pakistan is at a pivotal juncture, facing the challenge of reconciling its colonial legacy with contemporary human rights and psychiatric practices. Our legal system, which often places an unreasonable onus on defendants to prove mental illness with insufficient support, calls for urgent modernisation.

Pioneering decisions like the Supreme Court's ruling in the Safia Bano case are indicative of an increasing awareness of these critical issues and underscore the imperative for systemic legal reforms. Pakistan's struggle with mental health stigmatisation and human rights breaches requires a legal overhaul. The justice system, failing to shield vulnerable groups, particularly the mentally ill, highlights the need for incorporating psychiatric evaluation into judicial processes. — Courtesy Dawn

Plantation drive



Shahzad Sharjeel

Electors are in the air, and potted plants are being transplanted to suitable soil with the most earthworms and compost available. Sunshine is essential, but the time to make hay is later. In a no-holds-barred environment, logic is the first casualty. How does one explain a televised interview by an 'encounter specialist' accusing the leadership of a political party of all manner of crime? Some people believe he did it at the instigation of the powers that be. Fine. How do you then explain ministers resigning from the caretaker cabinet to join the same party, again, ostensibly at the same power's behest?

Electoral and constitutional democracy demands constant vigilance by 'we the people.' Stamping a ballot paper can neither be the starting nor the high point of the democratic process. Due diligence of election manifestos of political parties, their past record in delivering on their promises, and an utmost commitment to hold them accountable throughout their tenures in office is the bedrock of a functioning, representative polity.

The most common refrain during the election season is 'We will turn Larkana into Paris'. While the French capital's reputation has so far not been compromised, many a chateau in the south of France routinely becomes the stumping ground for these peddlers of promises from Larkana to Raiwind.

Take Karachi and most of its iconic land-

marks; for instance, Frere Hall was built by the bad old Brits when they ruled us. How greedy, unscrupulous, shameless, and downright evil the colonisers were has been recorded quite sufficiently and is being rubbed in these days by Shashi Tharoor and many others. That we have no love lost for the colonisers and their Raj is axiomatic.

However, it is worth summarising that the British conceived and constructed most structures worth declaring as monuments or heritage sites in their metropolis. Take Denso Hall, Merewether Tower, Empress Market, Jehangir Kothari Parade, Pavilion, and Bandstand at Clifton. The Brits built them with much help from the city's Parsi and Hindu communities. Rupchand Bilaram Park, a magnificent facility, was made possible by its namesake. It has now been conveniently appropriated as Bagh Ibn-i-Qasim. Many a committee tasked to give a similar 'Islami-touch' must have rued their inability to rename the Hindu Kush range.

One can argue that since foreign masters and conqueror-despots like the Mughals were not accountable to the populace, they could spend from the exchequer as they wished on grand schemes and fantastic monuments to themselves and their loved ones. In modern times, elected, accountable administrations can only undertake public works for the good of the populace and not for mere aesthetics and leaving a name for themselves. The problem today is that the only such 'public welfare' schemes that come to mind are overhead bridges and underpasses. While most of these are helpful to the public, they tend to crumble and flood, without any accountability and much too quickly for any chance of attaining an iconic status.

Not sure where the

'chimpanzee delivery' got its name. It is the same with 'china cutting. While the former is widely known in the world of cricket as a left-arm spin delivery, the latter is restricted to Karachi, though just the name as the practice of appropriating public property for personal gain is rampant country-wide. In the spirit of fair representation, let us look at Rawalpindi. Here, the textbook practice is putting a trash dumpster on any spot with commercial potential. Rest assured, we will dump all sorts of trash everywhere but in the dumpster. Soon, the place becomes a hell of miasma for the residents and commuters.

The next step is to remove the dumpster, level the plot, and grant the prime piece of land for a nursery. The change of scene could not be more dramatic, from a mountain of trash with accompanying flies, stray dogs, feral cats, and hovering kites to pots of saplings and flowerbeds amidst rows of terracotta ornaments. Everybody breathes a sigh of relief. The civic bodies and cantonment boards are praised instead of being asked how the lease for the nursery was granted and on what terms. The grantees are kicked out after a couple of years, and a spanking cash-and-carry is built. The process has been honed to perfection.

The same community that created the trash problem and was first nauseated and then relieved on its evolution now throngs the shopping centre with their trolleys laden with stuff, a lot of it from China soon to be turned into trash. Another public amenity plot, another trash site, another nursery, more saplings, more transplants; the cash-and-carry business continues. — Courtesy Dawn

Sindh cabinet approves funds for election expenditures, payment of govt power bill

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh cabinet on Tuesday approved several financial allocations for various development projects, including Rs. 29.379 billion for the payment of government electricity bills, Rs. 768.6 million for the operation of 50 electric buses on the city roads and a subsidy of Rs. 579.756 million for intra-district people's buses.

Additionally, the cabinet also approved Rs. 1.1 billion for the construction of a Link Road Interchange, Rs. 33.956 million for Khirthar National Park boundary demarcation and fixing of boundary pillars, Rs. 1424.720 million for the reconstruction of three West district schools, and Rs. 115 million for the restoration of the Hindu Gymkhana.

The meeting was chaired by Caretaker Chief Minister Justice @ Maqbool Baqar at CM House, Provincial caretaker ministers, Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Chairman P&D Sahkil Mangnejo and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam told the cabinet that an amount of Rs 300 million (Rs10 million to each of all 30 DCs), may be provided to all the Returning Officers and Deputy Commissioners for election expenditures. In case of any shortfall, further funds may also be provided separately, on a case-to-case basis.

The cabinet also approved an amount of Rs168 million to be given to deputy commissioners to clear the old liabilities of the local bodies elections.

The cabinet was told that a central payment process against all the Sindh government electric connections throughout the province started in 2019. A lump sum budget was being fixed for payments every year. However, due to continuous increases in electricity prices and increases in Sindh government connections, the allocated budget of Rs 41.5 billion is insufficient.

The Energy dept said that against an allocated budget of Rs 41.5 billion, they have paid Rs 35.736 billion to HESCO, SEPCO and KE up to September 2023 and now they were left with only Rs 5.764 billion which was hardly enough for one and half months of electricity charges.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the under construction work of Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-III Project.

Punjab Governor says: Circumstances under which Bangladesh separated reminded of a painful past

LAHORE: High Commissioner of People's Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique called on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and discussed promotion of bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and education during a meeting at the Governor's House, here on Tuesday.

The Honorary Consul General of Bangladesh Qazi Humayun Fareed was also present on the occasion, says a handout issued here by the Governor's media team.

Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman and Bangladesh High Commissioner expressed concern over the Israeli bombardment and atrocities on the Palestinian people. Muhammad Balighur Rehman said the circumstances under which Bangladesh was separated reminded of a painful past. He said Pakistan and Bangladesh have once been a nation and country, and both of them share common faith, history, and culture.

The Governor Punjab said both countries can move forward as good neighbours, adding that the goodwill existing between both countries needs to be translated into even stronger economic, trade, investment, educational, and cultural linkages to the benefit of both nations.

He said it is heartening to know that Pakistani medical and dental students are studying in Bangladesh on scholarships. He said that there should be maximum exchange of student delegations in the educational institutions of the two countries. He said that he would also talk to the Higher Education Commission for scholarships for Bangladeshi students in Pakistani educational institutions.

Naqvi reviews progress on Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project

LAHORE: The Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project marks a significant stride towards completion, reaching the 60 percent milestone.

Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive review of the ongoing progress at Adda Plot Raiwind, personally inspecting the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3 project.

The chief minister examined the ongoing construction activities spanning 8 km from Adda Plot Raiwind to Maraka Multan Road. He closely observed the works on the entire route, including the construction of bridges. In response, the CM issued directives for the expeditious completion of the project.

During a meeting at the FWO (Frontier Works Organisation) camp office chaired by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Colonel Jamal and Colonel Ahmed provided a detailed briefing on the project's progress. The meeting addressed various issues related to the project. Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi emphasized that the completion of Ring Road Southern Loop 3 would enhance transportation facilities for the public. He highlighted the adherence to high standards in executing the project and expressed confidence in achieving its timely completion.

Speaking to the media after the visit, he underscored the significance of SL 3, Gujranwala Expressway, and Band Road projects. He assured relentless efforts to complete these projects with the highest quality, overcoming challenges and working around the clock.



LAHORE: Bangladesh High Commissioner in Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman.

Election 2024: Candidates blow horns to attract voters after submitting nomination papers in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): The candidates of all mainstream politico-religious parties and independents have expedited election campaigns and corner meetings to inform the masses about their election manifestos after submitting nomination papers for different constituencies for general election 2024.

The scrutiny of nomination papers continued in the respective offices of returning officers in all 37 districts of KP where the process would be completed by December 30, 2023. Eying on national and provincial assemblies, the stalwarts of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N), Awami National Party (ANP), Jamaat-ul Ulema Islam-F (JUI-F), Jumata Islami Pakistan and Pakistan Tehrik e Insaaf (PTI) have mostly fielded political heavyweights to clinch maximum seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and form government for next five years. On NA-28 Peshawar-I, a total of 33 candidates filed papers including former member national assembly, Noor Alam Khan of JUI-F, former minister KP, Taimur Salim Jhagra of PTI and ex-speaker KP assembly, Kirmatullah Khan Chagarmatti of PPP.

Similarly, on NA-29 Peshawar-II, as many as 22 candidates submitted their nomination papers including former MNA Amir Ayub Khan, former MPA Sobia Shahid and Tahir Nadeem while 27 candidates would try their luck on NA-30 Peshawar-III including former MNA Shah Gul Afridi of PML-N, ex MNA Nasir Khan Musazai of JUI-F and ex MPA Khalid Waqar Chamkani. On NA 31-Peshawar-IV, a total of 30 candidates filed nomination papers.



HYDERABAD: Members of Hyderabad Union of Journalists (HUJ) are holding protest demonstration against attack on private news channel, at Hyderabad press club.

Governor KPK highlights women's educational achievements

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has emphasized the crucial role of education in global competitiveness.

He said that the enrollment of female students in the province now surpassed their male counterparts in both primary and higher education. He not only highlighted the greater number of female students but also their excellence in getting prominent educational positions.

Addressing at the first convocation of the Government Women's College of Commerce and Management Sciences here Tuesday, the Governor urged the female students not to let their education go to waste, emphasizing the transformative impact educated women can have on societal and national development. Expressing pride in educated women, he recognized them as a source of family pride and contributors to the nation, underscoring their potential to initiate businesses from home using modern technology.

In a broader context, Governor Ghulam Ali stressed the importance of equipping all students, regardless of gender, with modern technology to prepare them for future challenges. During the convocation, the Governor personally distributed degrees among 136 students who successfully completed their education in Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Commerce and Associate Diploma of Commerce. He extended congratulations to the successful students, their parents and dedicated faculty members.

CM visits Bibi Pakdaman shrine

LAHORE (APP): With the completion of 97 percent of the renovation and expansion works, the historic Bibi Pakdaman shrine is set to reopen its doors to pilgrims before December 31st.

Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the site on Tuesday to review the progress firsthand. Accompanied by provincial ministers and officials, Chief Minister Naqvi closely inspected the ongoing finishing touches on the main shrine structure and iconic domes. He emphasized the importance of high-quality craftsmanship and directed officials to prioritize the completion of the widened pathway surrounding the shrine to ensure smooth movement for pilgrims. Furthermore, Chief Minister Naqvi stressed the need for a dedicated space for lamp-lighting rituals and instructed the installation of aesthetically pleasing lighting.

Kundi calls for free, fair general elections

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Central Information Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party and candidate from NA-44, DI Khan-I, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Tuesday called for ensuring free and fair elections scheduled for February 8 2024, adding that it is imperative for democracy.

While addressing the press conference in DI Khan, he demanded a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the general elections to ensure a free, fair, and transparent electoral exercise. He asserted that no party should be coerced or marginalized in the political process, advocating for equal opportunities for everyone to engage in politics.

"The masses will not accept any government unless free and fair elections are ensured. The credibility of the Parliament will be nothing if transparent elections are not conducted in the country," he added.

He said that this time if the selection process was adopted instead of transparent elections, the nation would not accept it because now there was a majority of conscious young people, and they would not accept the selection. Kundi said that the PPP has its ideology and believes in the power of people and democracy.

Two die, 7 injured in separate accidents in Jamshoro

HYDERABAD (APP): The road accidents on the highways in Jamshoro district on Tuesday claimed 2 lives and left 7 others injured including 4 policemen in separate incidents.

According to the police, a car traveling from Karachi to Jamshoro overturned on the M9 Motorway near Nooriabad, leaving 2 men dead and a woman and her daughter injured. The police identified the deceased as Haji Gulzar Arain, owner of a travel agency, and Abdul Rehman. Arain's wife Razia and daughter Hafiza were injured in the accident and they were shifted to Liaquat University Hospital. In another accident of a car on the Indus highway near Petaro toll plaza.

Minister visits MMC inquires health of patients

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Industries, Technical Education, and NMDs Affairs Amir Abdullah visited Mardan Medical Complex (MTI) last night and inquired about the health of the patients and the availability of medicines and doctors.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (General), Saeedullah Jan, was accompanying him. On the arrival of the caretaker minister, Dr Azam Manan, DMS of Mardan Medical Complex, welcomed him.

The provincial minister visited various wards of Mardan Medical Complex, including the OPD, Accident and Emergency Ward, Neurosurgery Ward, Orthopedic Ward, Medical Ward, and CCU (Cardiology Ward).

The Caretaker Minister said that the provincial government has launched the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa program to improve the provision of various services, under which the ministers are going to review the facilities provided to the people to improve them further.

Two die, jeep plunges into deep ravine

BALAKOT (Online): A jeep is reported to have plunged into deep ravine in the area of Ghanol Thanwan in Balakot leaving two persons including a local councilor dead.

According to Rescue authorities the accident was so fatal that two persons including local councilor who were on board the jeep died on the spot.

Rescue is shifting the bodies to hospital.



KARACHI: Volunteers conducted Search and rescue works after a fire broke out in Saddar's mobile market as more than 100 shops in the market were damaged and the trades suffered the loss of millions of rupees.

Javed stresses citizens to take 'seasonal influenza vaccine' amid rising cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Punjab Health Minister Dr Javed Akram Tuesday urged extra caution from the public, as Punjab is being affected by air pollution due to heavy smog and cases of the illness causing flu-like symptoms among people, especially among elderly citizens are increasing.

Talking to a private news channel, the minister of Punjab hinted that the new virus could be "COVID", adding, that currently, various types of viruses are affecting the health of citizens, and children and elderly people are more affected by this virus. He also asked citizens and residents to immediately take the seasonal influenza vaccine.

An alarming increase in the cases of respiratory infections including influenza A, B and others were being reported in hospitals, he added.

He advised citizens to use face masks, avoid close contact, and wash their hands to avoid the influenza virus as it is easily transmissible from an infected person to others. He also advised to adopt a healthy lifestyle as it played the main role in fighting against ailments.

The minister urged the authorities to take necessary measures to spread awareness about the flu while apprising the participants about the symptoms and precautions of influenza A and B. Patients with chronic diseases such as asthma, diabetes.

Transgender killed in firing incident

PESHAWAR (APP): A transgender was killed in a firing incident by unknown assailants riding a motorcycle near Government College Chowk within the jurisdiction of Shaheed Gultaf Hussain police station on Monday.

Upon receiving the report, Superintendent Police Faqirabad Division Osama Amin Cheema and ASP Faqirabad Muhammad Aleem promptly responded, securing the crime scene and initiating an investigation. The victim's body, lacking any identification documents, has been taken into custody and transferred for post-mortem examination. Police are actively working to identify the victim while collecting empty shells and other crucial pieces of evidence from the scene.

Mayor Karachi for need to focus on basic health issues in Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the PPP-led Sindh government has worked on improving the National Institute of Cardiology (NIC) and Jinnah Sindh Medical University (JSMU) during the last 12 years and there was a need to focus on basic health issues in the province.

He said this while speaking as chief guest on the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the NIC, JSMU and the Association of Pakistani Descent Cardiologists of North America and at the opening ceremony of the JSMU's Landhi campus for prevention and treatment of heart diseases, blood pressure and diabetes.

The Mayor said that the establishment of a health center for the treatment of heart diseases and diabetes in Landhi area was a good omen for Karachi, which would help the citizens.

IGP expresses police resolve to eradicate terrorism

PESHAWAR (APP): In a resolute stance against terrorism, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, announced the launch of a robust campaign to eradicate terrorism from the region.

During the inauguration of a new police station in Khyber Bara, he underscored the police force's unwavering commitment to protecting the lives and property of the citizens.

Besides tribal elders, CCPO Peshawar, Aijaz Khan, DPO Khyber, Saleem Abbas Kolachi and other officials were present.

IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Akhtar Hayat Gandapur also held meetings with tribal elders, emphasizing complete cooperation and mutual collaboration to combat criminals, drug traffickers, and social issues.

He praised the tribal elders, stating that the community and police must work together as one entity for the region's security, addressing issues like lawlessness, drugs, and other serious crimes.

While acknowledging the sacrifices of the people of Khyber district in collaboration with national institutions, he highlighted the importance of collective efforts to control crimes, including the menace of drugs.

He urged the police force and the public to unite in eliminating these crimes and ensuring the region's peace and security.

Tribal elders expressed gratitude for the government's concern for the well-being of the people.

The IGP provided instructions to police officers and youth, emphasizing alertness, avoiding mobile phone use during duty, and using helmets and jackets for personal safety.

He also instructed the police to maintain a respectful attitude towards the public and prioritize solving their issues on a preferential basis.



RAWALPINDI: Workers of Pakistan Peoples Party light up the candles in memorandum of Former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (Shaheed), at her targeting place, Liaquat Bagh in City.



GARHI KHUDA BUX: Inspector General (IG) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar reviewing security arrangements in connection of 16th anniversary commemoration of slain PPP Chairperson Benazir Bhutto in Garhi Khuda Bux.

IPO, PITB join hands for automation, digitalization of IPO-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) on Tuesday joined hands and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the digitalization and automation of IPO-Pakistan.

The MoU was signed by Director General, IPO Ms. Shazia Adnan and Director General, PITB Saima R. Shaikh for automation and digitalization IPO to facilitate the common masses and business in the country.

On this occasion, Chairman IPO, Ambassador Farukh Amil said that the visibility on indifferent platforms and public awareness are the major priority of IPO at this time, which will make

it accessible to the business classes and especially the youth.

The Chairman IPO said that at present we were working on digitalization of IPO with the support of PITB, which was an important tool for modernizing institutions in the modern world, which provided facilities to the public and business classes.

He said that a large part of the population of Pakistan consisted of youth and the youth were currently mostly connected to IT and social media and after this facility, they would be able to make online complaints or other facilities in IPO.

Farukh said that IPO was currently making the youth aware of IPO in universities and educational institutions,

which would increase the trend of financial education among them.

He said that after automation in the IPO, there would be transparency and simplification of processes in the institution.

On this occasion, Director General, IPO, Shazia Adnan said that after this agreement with PITB, online payments and another documentation process would be made easy in the next two months and this would also promote Ease of Doing Business (EODB) in IPO.

She said with this agreement, you can do documentation or payment processes through 27 different channels including online banking which will provide convenience to people.



Caretaker Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gohar Ejaz interacting with the members of the Chairman Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Commerce Ministry in Islamabad.

80mn commuters utilized BRT Peshawar during the year 2023

PESHAWAR (APP): Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system has achieved an impressive ridership of approximately 80 million people during the outgoing calendar year 2023, contributing to a total commuter of 215 million since its inception in August 2020, said annual report shared by the TransPeshawar operator of the urban transport system here on Tuesday.

It said that a noteworthy shift was observed in the gender dynamics of ridership, with women constituting 30% of the total

commuters—a significant surge compared to the meagre 2% estimated before the implementation of the BRT system. Due to the increasing popularity and demand, the system is constantly expanding. “Zu Peshawar is unwavering in its commitment to fostering inclusivity and embracing technological advancements. Our ongoing efforts to make the system more welcoming for specially-abled individuals reflect our dedication to ensuring that everyone can access and benefit from our services seamlessly, said the Chief Executive Officer

(CEO) of TransPeshawar, Dr. Tariq Usman Saeed.

The transformative upgrades to the Zu app enhance user experience, offering features like recharging through Omni Shop, comprehensive travel histories, and NFC-supported balance uploads, he added. He said that their focus on network expansion for wider city coverage through new feeder routes aligns with our vision of creating a world-class transit system that caters to the diverse needs of our community while duly accounting for social equity.



ISLAMABAD: Chair-Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan (IPO) Farukh Amil, witnesses the Signing Ceremony for the IPO-Pakistan & Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) landmark agreement regarding launching of PayZen Agreement at IPO-Pakistan Headquarters.

Punjab shift from conventional transport to electric vehicles: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Provincial Minister for Transport, Livestock, and Mines & Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad Tuesday said that the Punjab government was making a big push for electric vehicles to provide a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transportation to control air pollution.

“Punjab wants to become a ‘global hub of manufacturing of electric vehicles’, he said while talking to a Private news channel.

The government is also planning to offer incentives for manufacturing electric vehicles and batteries to boost economic growth and encourage local manufacturing, he said, adding, that other provinces should also focus on shifting their auto industry towards EV systems.

The minister stressed that the use of electric rickshaws and bikes in Punjab will substantially decrease both air and noise pollution.

With the provision of additional insights, these electric rickshaws boast an impressive range, capable of travelling up to 150 km on a single charge, he said.

The adoption of electric vehicles, including cars and bikes, has gained prominence worldwide due to their efficiency, fuel-saving benefits, and zero emissions, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable environment, he explained.

Many charging stations have already been established, with commitments to construct even more. It is a clear indication that the industry is committed to enabling widespread EV adoption, he added.



LAHORE: Skilled worker busy making gift baskets at his roadside setup.

Pakistan’s agricultural experts participate in training program in China

BEIJING (APP): As many as 20 agricultural experts from Pakistan, Egypt and other Belt and Road countries participated in the international training program on kiwifruit industry technology in Chengdu and Deyang, Sichuan province of China. Ministry of Science and Technology of China, in collaboration with the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resources Sciences, organized the 15-day training program.

The experts exchanged knowledge on kiwifruit breeding, cultivation, pest control, post-harvest storage and preservation techniques, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. China is the birthplace of kiwifruit, and Sichuan is the second-largest kiwifruit producing region in China.

With over 40 years of development, Sichuan has cultivated kiwifruit on an area of 750,000 acres, with an annual production of 440,000 tons. During the training period, the members visited numerous local kiwifruit farms, where they had the opportunity to taste the distinctive red-fleshed and yellow-fleshed kiwifruit varieties. They also had the chance to visit the China-New Zealand Kiwifruit Joint Laboratory. Wang Yongzhi, Deputy Director of the Sichuan Provincial Academy of Natural Resources Sciences, emphasized the importance of international scientific and technological cooperation. In 2014, the academy established the China-New Zealand Kiwifruit Joint Laboratory in partnership with the New Zealand Royal.

Rupee gains 15 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Tuesday witnessed the 10th consecutive recovery session as it gained 15 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs282.37 against the previous day’s closing of Rs282.52. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs282.7 and Rs285.2 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 47 paise to close at Rs311.27 against the last day’s closing of Rs 310.80, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs1.98; whereas a decrease of Rs 17 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs358.48 compared to the last closing of Rs358.65. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 05 and 04 paise to close at Rs 76.88 and Rs75.27 respectively.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 2,534 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 2,534.12 points, a negative change of 4.11 percent, closing at 59,170.98 points against 61,705.09 points the previous trading day. A total of 670,859,618 shares valuing Rs.17.129 billion were traded during the day as compared to 671,550,776 shares valuing Rs.13,709 billion the last day. Some 369 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 43 of them recorded gains and 315 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 11 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 97,358,482 shares at Rs.4.44 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 72,516,907 shares at Rs.1.36 per share and Bank of Punjab with 41,014,387 shares at Rs.5.72 per share. Sapphire Fibres Mills witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.109.12 per share price, closing at Rs.1,566.00, whereas the runner-up was Ibrahim Fibres Limited with a Rs.23.45 rise in its per share price to Rs.363.90. Unilever Pakistan Foods witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.355.00 per share closing.

Modern technology can make agriculture more profitable: UAF VC

FAISALABAD (APP): Modern trends and tangible researches should be disseminated at doorsteps of farmers to make agriculture profitable in addition to achieving food security in the country, said University of Agriculture Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan. Chairing a meeting of the Punjab Agriculture Strategy Plan 2023-2033, he said that agriculture was facing soil fertility, inputs, mechanizations, markets, water, seeds, fertilizers and other issues. He said that the fertility of land was decreasing with the passage of time for which a g r i c u l t u r a l recommendations would

have to be adopted.

He said that most of the agricultural land of Punjab was utilized on wheat and rice cultivation. If effective irrigation is promoted in these crops, a huge amount of water can be saved, he maintained.

He called for boosting cooperation among government, private and other institutions for agricultural development. “Adaptation of mechanization in this agricultural sector is the need of the hour for improving the economic condition of farmers and increasing production. Efforts are being made on problem-solving research so that workable strategies can be developed by solving

Growers advised to water wheat crop timely

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised growers to water their wheat crops on time to get healthy and bumper production.

A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that in most of wheat areas, growers did not care about timely watering wheat crops, which affected the quality as well as quantity of the production. He advised the growers to water their crop first time after 20-25 days of its cultivation whereas the second watering should be made after 70-80 days. The third watering should be made after 110-115 days of sowing, so that the grains could become fully developed, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Customers selecting and purchasing second hand shoes from the roadside vendors.

Hybrid seed can increase sunflower production manifold: experts

FAISALABAD (APP): Agriculture experts have advised farmers to use hybrid seed of sunflower varieties as it can increase its production manifold.

A spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension) Department said here on Tuesday that Pakistan had to spend Rs.300 billion per annum on the import of edible oil and the amount could be saved by promoting cultivation of oil-seed crops in the country.

He said that sunflower was a precious oil-seed crop as its seed had 40 to 50 percent oil and its production could play a major role in trimming down the export

bill of edible oil in addition to catering to domestic needs. He said that the growers should prefer seed of hybrid varieties as it could give maximum production and help them mitigate their financial constraints.

Among the approved hybrid varieties of sunflower included Hi-Sun-33, T-40318, Egora-4, S-278, US-444, US-666, NKR Money, Aug-Sun-5264, HSF-350, A-Sun-7, Ori-Sun-648, Ori-Sun-516, Ori-Sun-675, Ori-Sun-701, Ori-Sun-741, Ori-Sun-751 and Par-Sun-3, etc.

He said that the growers of southern and central Punjab including Faisalabad, Mianwali,

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Five ships namely, Msc Singapore, Al-Jalaa, Leena, Saehan Kostar and Lila Fortrier scheduled to load/offload Container, Fuel oil, Cement, Palm oil and Chemicals, berthed at Container Terminal, Oil Terminal, General Cargo Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Engro Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Jemima, Pacific Victory and Simaisma also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours to load/unload Containers, Coal and LNG respectively.

A total of seven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship ‘MSC Singapore’ left the Port on today morning on Tuesday.

Cargo volume of 51,350 tonnes, comprising 27,049 tonnes imports cargo and 24,301 tonnes export cargo carried in 1,293 Containers (420 TEUs Imports and 873 TEUs export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 05 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, MSC Jemima,



PESHAWAR: Youngster busy in repairing vehicle headlight at Shoba Bazar.

Call to equip youths with latest technologies to root out poverty, unemployment

FAISALABAD (APP): Youths must be equipped with latest skills and technologies to root out poverty and unemployment and in this connection government institutions must play their key role, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

In a meeting with Madam Bushra Nawaz, Senior Manager Public Relations and Marketing of the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVT), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that youths are our most precious asset but we are not utilizing their capabilities for the uplift of the country. He said that China and other countries had successfully revolutionized their economies by efficiently utilizing their youths. He said that 20 million youths were unemployed and we must devise strategies to train them in different market-driven skills.

“It will not only make them productive for themselves but also for the country”, he said and added that the skilled human resource could start their own businesses instead of running after jobs. He said that Pakistanis in the world were sending hefty remittances which had saved Pakistan from bankruptcy. “The skilled force could also be exported to potential foreign markets through proper channels instead of their illegal immigration,” he maintained.

He stressed the need to upgrade the syllabus and include skills which were in demand all over the world. He said that courses on artificial intelligence and e-commerce should be given priority as young girls could earn 10 to 20 thousand dollars by working from their homes.

Madam Bushra Nawaz said that the government had fixed an ambitious target to produce a skilled,

and Karachi. Senator Mandviwalla, declaring Turkey as their second home, pledged support and encouragement for Turkish

Mandviwalla for exploring more investment chances, multifaceted collaboration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Mandviwalla began by recalling his visit to Turkey in 2010, where he

met with Prime Minister Mr. Erdogan and President Gull.

Highlighting the desire to strengthen ties, Senator Mandviwalla called for exploring more investment opportunities and multifaceted collaboration.

Emphasizing the importance of bilateral relations, both parties expressed mutual support for promoting business and trade ties. The Consul General shared that two Turkish companies were keen on investing in Pakistan to establish solar systems near Islamabad



Following the Consul General’s advice, Senator Mandviwalla expressed intent to meet with Kalayon in Karachi and also showed interest in meeting the representative of Aysis company involved in cleaning work in the southern areas of Karachi.

In a friendly gesture, Senator Mandviwalla extended an invitation to Mr. Cemal to attend his son’s wedding, concluding the meeting with a reaffirmation of the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Turkey.

Foods exports surge by 37.12% to \$2.64b

ISLAMABAD (APP): The food exports from Pakistan increased by 37.12 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. Food exports during July-November (2023-24) were recorded at \$2,640.905 million as compared to the exports of \$1,925.969 million in July-November (2022-23), a surge of 37.12 percent,

according to latest PBS data. The food products that contributed in the positive growth in of food trade included rice, the exports of which increased by 49.37 percent, from \$749.407 million last year to \$1,119.406 million during the ongoing fiscal year.

Likewise, the exports of fruits increased by 15.27 percent, from \$111.160 million to \$128.139 million, leguminous vegetables by 79.01 percent.



KARACHI: Stockbrokers monitor the share prices during a trading session at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in Karachi, Pakistan, 26 December 2023. The Pakistani benchmark 100 index 59,170.97 was down 2534.12 with points during the trading session.

Tokyo markets close slightly higher

TOKYO (AFP/APP): Tokyo stocks ended slightly higher Tuesday in the absence of any major cues for investors, with many markets around the world still closed for the Christmas holiday.

The benchmark Nikkei 225 index was up 0.16 percent, or 51.82 points, to end at 33,305.85, while the broader Topix index edged up 0.06 percent, or 1.46 points, to 2,338.86. The dollar fetched 142.26 yen, against 142.35 yen in Tokyo on Monday, when US and UK

markets were closed. “Many investors were on Christmas holiday, and in the absence of fresh clues, (the Nikkei) zigzagged in directionless trade,” IwaiCosmo Securities said. “A wait-and-see mood took over.” In the region, financial markets in Australia, Hong Kong, Indonesia and New Zealand were closed Tuesday for public holidays. Shortly before the opening bell, the Japanese government said the nation’s unemployment rate in November.

US carries out air strikes on sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US military carried out strikes on three sites used by Iran-backed forces in Iraq on Monday after an attack wounded three American personnel earlier in the day, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said.

Washington has repeatedly targeted sites used by Iran and its proxy forces in Iraq and Syria in response to dozens of attacks on American and allied forces in the region since the October 7 outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war.

"US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups in Iraq," Austin said in a statement.

"These precision

strikes are a response to a series of attacks against US personnel in Iraq and Syria by Iranian-sponsored militias, including an attack by Iran-affiliated Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups on Arbil Air Base earlier today," he said.

That attack wounded three US military personnel, one critically, US National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement.

President Joe Biden was briefed on the attack — which was carried out with a one-way attack drone — and directed the strikes in a call with Austin and other national security officials after ordering the Defense Department to prepare a response, the statement said.

Biden "places no

higher priority than the protection of American personnel serving in harm's way. The United States will act at a time and in a manner of our choosing should these attacks continue," the statement added.

The drone attack was claimed by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a loose formation of armed groups affiliated with the Hashed al-Shaabi coalition of former paramilitaries that are now integrated into Iraq's regular armed forces.

A tally by US military officials has counted 103 attacks against its troops in Iraq and Syria since October 17, most of which have been claimed by the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, which opposes US support for Israel in its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.



King Charles, Queen Camilla, Prince William, Princess Catherine, Princes George and Louis, and Princess Charlotte, arrive at St Mary Magdalene's church to attend the royal family's Christmas service.

Turkey's parliament set to debate Sweden NATO bid

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: The Turkish parliament was Tuesday set to resume debate on approving Sweden's bid to join NATO, a thorny issue that was further complicated after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan linked it to Ankara's request for F-16 fighter jets from its ally the United States.

NATO members except Turkey and Hungary. The two ultimately relented and Finland was accepted as NATO's 31st member in April.

Turkey and Hungary remain the only North Atlantic Treaty Organization members left to ratify Sweden's bid 19 months after it applied for membership.

In November, the Turkish parliament's foreign affairs committee failed to reach agreement on a text for a full floor vote and will meet again on Tuesday afternoon.

Baghdad condemns US strike on Iraqi military positions

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: Iraq's government condemned on Tuesday overnight US air strikes on Iraqi military positions that it said killed one serviceman and wounded 18 other people, calling them a "clear hostile act".

The United States has carried out retaliatory air strikes on Monday in Iraq after a one-way drone attack earlier in the day by Iran-aligned militants that left one US service member in critical condition and wounded two others.

The government condemned the US strikes as "an unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty."



Palestinians inspect the site of an Israeli strike on a house, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip.

Iran undoes slowdown in enrichment of uranium to near weapons-grade: IAEA

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran has reversed a months-long slowdown in the rate at which it is enriching uranium to up to 60 per cent purity, close to weapons grade, the UN nuclear watchdog said on Tuesday. Many diplomats believed the slowdown, which had begun by June, was the result of secret talks between the United States and Iran that led to the release of US citizens held in Iran earlier this year.

Iran already has enough uranium enriched to up to 60pc, if enriched further, to make three nuclear bombs, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) theoretical definition, and more at lower enrichment levels. Iran denies seeking nuclear weapons. Iran has "increased its production of highly enriched uranium, reversing a previous output reduction from mid-2023", the IAEA said in a statement summarising a confidential report to member states seen by Reuters that was sent minutes earlier.

Indian navy to deploy guided missile destroyer ships after strike off its coast

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India's navy will deploy guided missile destroyer ships in the Arabian Sea after an Israel-affiliated merchant vessel was struck off the Indian coast over the weekend, in an effort to "maintain a deterrent presence," it said late on Monday.

The Indian navy was investigating the nature of the attack on the vessel, MV Chem Pluto, which docked in Mumbai on Monday, and initial reports pointed to a drone attack, the statement said.

"Further forensic and technical analysis will be required to establish the vector of attack, including type and amount of explosive used," the statement added.

A spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry on Monday called a US claim that Iran had attacked the ship near India "baseless".

Indonesia presidential candidate Prabowo cements lead in the poll

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Indonesian defence minister and presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto cemented his lead in the polls after candidates took part in televised debates ahead of the looming Feb 14. A Dec 23-24 poll released by Indikator Politik Indonesia on Tuesday showed that Prabowo, who is running with President Joko Widodo's 36-year-old son Gibran Rakabuming Raka, would secure 46.7% of the vote.

Indikator placed former Central Java governor Ganjar Pranowo as his closest opponent, with 24.5% of the vote, while former Jakarta governor Anies Baswedan had the support of 21% of those polled. A poll by Kompas this month gave Prabowo 39.3% of the vote and placed Anies as his closest opponent with 16.7%, followed by Ganjar.

Indonesia nickel smelter furnace fire kills 13 workers, injures 46

Monitoring Desk
JAKARTA: Thirteen workers were killed and 46 injured on Sunday in a fire at a nickel smelter furnace owned by Indonesia Tsingshan Stainless Steel (ITSS) on Sulawesi island, the owner of the industrial park where the smelter is located said.

The fire occurred when workers repaired the furnace and installed plates at 5:30 am on Sunday (2130 GMT on Saturday), killing nine Indonesian workers and four Chinese workers, Indonesia Morowali Industrial Park (IMIP) said in a statement. The fire was extinguished at 9:10 am local time, it added.

It had said earlier that an explosion killed eight Indonesian and five Chinese workers. The furnace was shut off the day before to prepare for maintenance, IMIP said, but during the maintenance process excess iron slag flowed from the furnace.

"The furnace walls then collapsed and the remaining iron slag flowed out, causing a fire and resulting in some workers at the location suffering injuries and even fatalities," IMIP spokesperson Dedy Kurniawan said in the statement.

Ukraine carries out air assault on Crimea's port of Feodosia

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine carried out an air attack on Feodosia in Crimea, Ukraine's air force commander said on Tuesday, after the Russian-installed governor of the Crimea said that the assault sparked a fire in the town's port area. The commander of Ukraine's air force, Mykola Oleshchuk, said on the Telegram messaging app, without providing evidence, that the attack destroyed a major Russian Navy vessel, the landing Novocherkash ship.

Philippines is not provoking conflict in South China Sea, its military says

Monitoring Desk
MANILA: The Philippines is not provoking conflict in the South China Sea, its military spokesperson said on Tuesday, responding to China's accusation that Manila was encroaching on Beijing's territory.

It was the latest salvo amid rising tension as the two have traded accusations in recent months over a series of maritime run-ins, including China allegedly ramming a ship this month carrying the Philippines' military chief.

"The Philippines is not provoking conflict," Medel Aguilar told state broadcaster PTV.

"We follow international law and we are only

implementing our domestic law, meaning the limits of our territorial waters and exclusive economic zone, where we have sovereign rights."

The comments came a day after the People's Daily, the mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party, wrote that the Philippines had relied on US support to continually provoke China.

This "extremely dangerous" behaviour seriously harmed regional peace and stability, it added.

Aguilar said Philippine activities would not put vessels and seafarers in danger, instead accusing China of carrying out dangerous manoeuvres that sometimes result in collisions at sea.

Israel launches more Gaza strikes as Netanyahu says Hamas must be destroyed

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Israeli shellfire slammed into central Gaza on Tuesday after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged no respite in attacks on Hamas, as residents of the coastal enclave mourned more dead in a war that has cost more than 20,000 Palestinian lives.

Israel is determined to pursue its goal of destroying Hamas despite global calls for a ceasefire in the 11-week-old war, amid concerns the conflict could spread with U.S. and Iran-aligned forces attacking each other elsewhere in the region.

Since Hamas made the deadliest Palestinian militant attack on Israel in the country's 75-year history, Netanyahu has responded with an all-out assault on Hamas-ruled Gaza. On Tuesday, the Israeli military said 160 soldiers have so far been killed in Gaza since ground operations began

on Oct 20.

"Seventy-five years of suffering, our rights taken, our country seized, and our people slaughtered. Our rights, as people, are justifiable. What can we do?" said Mariam al-Omsi, walking along an alleyway after an air strike in Shaboura camp, near the town of Rafah in southern Gaza.

At Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, the largest medical facility in the southern Gaza Strip, medics said 10 Palestinians had been killed in two separate Israeli air strikes.

Khan Younis resident Salah Shaat said he had heard a huge explosion at sunset on Monday that destroyed a building.

"There were displaced people and residents inside the house, more than 20 people, children and women. We managed to rescue some children, but the rest were martyred," he said.

King Charles urges compassion, care for environment in time of conflict

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's King Charles called on people on Monday to help those less fortunate during a time of economic hardship and global conflict, using his Christmas Day message to emphasise the importance of kindness, compassion and care for the environment. In his second Christmas message since becoming king, Charles also paid tribute to volunteers, charity workers and people working over the holidays in roles caring for others.

"This is all the more important at a time of real hardship for many, when we need to build on existing ways to support others less fortunate than ourselves," the 75-year-old monarch said. In a further nod to Charles' decades of work on environmental issues, the tree contained natural and sustainable decorations including pine cones and paper.

Taiwan expands Russian sanctions to stop tech being used for weapons

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's economy ministry said on Tuesday it had expanded a list of sanctioned goods for Russia and its ally Belarus in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine to prevent Taiwanese high-tech goods from being used for military purposes.

Russia. Announcing its latest round of sanctions, Taiwan's economy ministry said the move was made "in order to fulfil international cooperation and prevent the export of our high-tech goods for military purposes".

The list includes equipment for making semi-conductors, the production of which Taiwan is a world leader in, as well as certain chemicals and medicines, adding to previous announcements which already targeted the chip industry.

Philippine actions in South China Sea 'extremely dangerous' - Chinese state media

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Chinese state media accused the Philippines on Monday of repeatedly infringing on China's territory in the South China Sea, spreading false information and colluding with extraterritorial forces to cause trouble.

The Philippines has relied on U.S. support to continually provoke China, with such "extremely dangerous" behaviour seriously harming regional peace and stability, China's Communist Party mouthpiece, the People's Daily, wrote in a commentary on Monday.

Afghans marry in mass ceremony in bid to cut costs

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: Fifty couples married on Monday in a joint ceremony in the Afghan capital — a growing practice to reduce the astronomical cost of traditional weddings in the impoverished country.

The couples were joined in matrimony in one of the dozens of glitzy wedding halls that punctuate Kabul, but the ceremony itself was somewhat austere. Since the return of the Taliban in August 2021 weddings have become low-key affairs, with dancing and music effectively banned after authorities deemed such activities un-Islamic.

In front of the City Star wedding hall near the airport, around a hundred turbaned men dressed in traditional shalwar kameez chatted in groups — not a single woman present. They decorated cars with green ribbons and red plastic roses forming hearts to carry the newlyweds away.

Roohullah Rezayi, 18, due to leave with his wife in a few hours, said he could not afford a solo wedding.

"A traditional wedding would have cost us at least 200,000 to 250,000 Afghanis (\$2,800 to \$3,600), but this time it will be between 10,000 and 15,000 Afghanis," he said.

Kidney patient, 10, separated from family in Gaza, fears he won't see them again

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Nasseem Mohra, a 10-year-old kidney patient, fears he may never see his family again after Israeli forces arrested his father while he was taking the boy to a hospital in southern Gaza for urgent dialysis treatment.

A neighbour brought Nasseem, who needs regular dialysis treatment, to Abu Yousef Al Najjar hospital in Rafah on Sunday after the boy was separated from his relatives amid continued heavy Israeli bombardment of Gaza. "I am afraid to die before seeing my family and relatives, and my siblings," Nasseem said.

Japan's moon lander enters orbit

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Japan's SLIM space probe entered the Moon's orbit on Monday in a major step towards the country's first successful lunar landing, expected next month. The Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) is nicknamed the "Moon Sniper" because it is designed to land within 100 metres (328 feet) of a specific target on the lunar surface. If successful, the touchdown would make Japan only the fifth country to have successfully landed a probe on the Moon, after the United States, Russia, China and India.

Ethiopia becomes Africa's latest sovereign default

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Ethiopia became Africa's third default in as many years on Tuesday after it failed to make a \$33 million "coupon" payment on its only international government bond.

Africa's second most populous country announced earlier this month that it intended to formally go into default, having been under severe financial strain in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and a two-year civil war that ended in November 2022.

It had been supposed to make the payment on Dec. 11, but technically had up until Tuesday to provide the money due to a 14-day "grace period" clause written into the \$1 billion bond.

According to two sources familiar with the situation, bondholders had not been paid the coupon as of the end of Friday, Dec. 22, the last international banking working day before the grace period expires.

Ethiopian government officials did not respond to requests for comment on Friday or over the weekend, but the widely expected default will see it join two other African nations, Zambia and Ghana, in a full-scale "Common Framework" restructuring.

The East African country first requested debt relief under the G20-led initiative in early 2021. Progress was initially delayed by the civil war but, with its foreign exchange reserves depleted and inflation soaring, Ethiopia's official sector government creditors, including China agreed to a debt service suspension deal in November.

On Dec. 8, the government said parallel negotiations it had been having with pension funds and other private sector creditors that hold its bond had broken down. Credit ratings agency S&P Global then downgraded the bond, to "Default" on Dec. 15 on the assumption that the coupon payment would not be made.

Dense fog disrupts flights and trains in New Delhi

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Flight and rail services in India's capital city of New Delhi were disrupted on Tuesday morning as a thick layer of fog enveloped the region, reducing visibility to barely 50 metres (164 feet) in some areas.

"Very dense fog" was observed in the city, where the temperature was just 9 degrees Celsius (48 degrees Fahrenheit), India's weather department said, adding "dense to very dense fog" was likely in the early hours of the day in some areas until Wednesday.

"Dense fog" contains particulate matter and other pollutants, according to the weather department, which warned of the impact this may have on the health of the city's 20 million residents.

New Delhi's air quality index stood at 376 on Tuesday morning, rated as "very poor", according to the Central Pollution Control Board's website. Lev-

els of 0 to 50 are considered to be good.

At least 30 flights that were to land at or depart from the Delhi airport, including on international routes, experienced delays because of the dense fog, according to Indian news agency ANI, in which Reuters has a minority stake.

About 14 trains travelling along routes in North India were similarly affected, ANI reported.

"While landings and takeoffs continue at Delhi Airport, flights that are not CAT III compliant may get affected," the Indira Gandhi International airport said on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter. CAT III is a navigation system that enables aircraft to land even when the visibility is low.

Airlines like India's SpiceJet also took to social media to warn passengers that departures and arrivals from New Delhi may get affected "due to bad weather".



A woman uses a fan as she walks at a park amid an alert for heatwave in Shanghai, China.



KARACHI: President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi addressing the Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) Convocation 2023.

35th Convocation ceremony of PNEC Self-sustenance inevitable for success in the world: President

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday said that self-sustenance is inevitable for the success in the world and expressed the confidence that Pakistan would progress and develop. Addressing as chief guest on the occasion of the 35th Convocation ceremony of Pakistan Navy Engineering College (PNEC) at Baharia Auditorium here, he said that the world needed intellect at the moment and there was no dearth of it in Pakistan.

Rector National University of Science and Technology (NUST) Lt General @ Mehmood and Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem were also present. During the convocation, a total of 368 graduates were awarded Bachelors' and Postgraduate degrees including the foreign students. The President also awarded 39 medals to the students on their outstanding performance.

Addressing the convocation, President Dr. Arif Alvi appreciated the efforts put in by the PNEC for maintaining high standards of education by providing quality engineers to the evolving industry of Pakistan. He emphasized that responsibility of PNEC has further increased in present realm of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence and Robotics. He also acknowledged that foreign students were a testimony to the College's credentials in the engineering sector. He highlighted that NUST PNEC will continue with its legacy of being the premier engineering and technology institution, fulfilling present day engineering needs of the country.

The President felicitated the graduating students and their parents and advised the graduates to be active members of society in building a stronger and prosperous Pakistan and keep themselves abreast and with fast changing advancements in technology. President Dr. Arif Alvi termed the completion of degrees by students as an opening of the doors to the knowledge for the students and said, they must learn more and more. Earlier, Commandant PNEC Commodore Tauqeer Ahmad Khawaja apprised that PNEC was making all out efforts to provide the best engineering education to its students in multiple disciplines.

Further, he highlighted the achievements of students in various events held at national and international levels. He highlighted the opportunities provided to the students at different forums in order to groom and nurture the young engineers. The ceremony was attended by a large number of military and civil dignitaries and parents of graduating students.

Government to follow Senate recommendations on employees' salaries, allowances: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday assured the Senate that the government would follow House recommendations regarding the salaries and allowances of government employees, including Balochistan.

In response to questions during the question hour regarding the less representation of officers from Balochistan at the federal level, the minister asked the lawmakers to formulate a policy and make recommendations if there was any perceived injustice.

Responding to questions from Senators Fauzia Arshad, Mohsin Aziz, and Danesh Kumar, he welcomed the suggestions from

Senate members regarding the use of zig-zag technology in rural areas for making bricks.

He acknowledged that zigzag technology was effective in reducing emissions of pollutants and increasing efficiency, though it was still expensive.

The minister said that currently, no caretaker minister was using bulletproof vehicles. He said that all details regarding the use of bulletproof vehicles by ministers and advisors during the previous government had been shared with the House.

Murtaza Solangi said that Senators have the right to criticize the decisions and policies made by the previous government regarding the provision of bulletproof vehicles to ministers and advisors.

issue of F14, F15, and Bhara Kahu sectors should be sent to the relevant standing committee. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani referred the matter to the concerned committee for further investigation.

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Govt to extend all-out support for uplift of KP merged districts: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that despite the availability of limited resources, the government would extend all possible support to the provincial government for uplift and welfare of the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The prime minister, chairing a meeting to discuss the matters about KP, said that being cognizant of their problems, the federal government stood with the government and people of the province.

He also instructed the authorities concerned to resolve the issues confronting the KP province that had rendered immense sacrifices against terrorism. The prime minister instructed to form a secretarial committee to resolve the KP's financial matters and formulate recommendations regarding the payment of net hydel profits and the royalty of oil and gas. To be headed by the federal finance secretary, the committee would consist of federal secretaries of planning, water resources, and petroleum.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafiqat presiding over a meeting regarding digitalization of revenue record.

PEMRA prohibits broadcast, distribution of surrogate company ads

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) on Tuesday prohibited "broadcast/distribution" of advertisement of surrogate companies in any manner whatsoever with immediate effect.

The Authority, in its prohibition order, warned all the licensees, including satellite television (TV) channels, radio stations, all landing rights permission holders and distribution network operators of legal proceedings under relevant provisions of PEMRA laws in case of non-compliance and/or on repeated violation.

It said that the order was issued in continuity of its earlier letters "wherein office memorandum/advisory issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Islamabad with regard to "Zero Tolerance for Surrogate Companies" were circulated among licensees for compliance".

"The Authority, while exercising powers vested under Section 27(a) of the PEMRA Ordinance 2002 as amended by PEMRA (Amendment) Act 2023, hereby prohibits broadcast/distribution of advertisement of surrogate companies (in any manner what so ever) with immediate effect which are promoting gambling/betting in different sports events being telecast/broadcast/rebroadcast in the country and refers the matter to Council of Complaints (Islamabad) for appropriate recommendations to the Authority. " it added.

Gwadar University delegation visits Pakistan-China Institute

ISLAMABAD (APP): An eleven-member delegation of students of the University of Gwadar has visited the Pakistan-China Institute (CPI) under the Balochistan Youth Engagement Programme.

"This multifaceted endeavour, strategically crafted to deepen bilateral relations between Pakistan and China, unveiled a comprehensive agenda, aimed at enriching the understanding and collaboration between Pakistan and China," a news release said on Tuesday.

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on Balochistan. Beyond a conventional information-sharing session, this forum facilitated dynamic and thought-provoking discussions, fostering a nuanced and deeper comprehension of this transformative strategic initiative.

The students had an exclusive session with Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director of the Pakistan-China Institute, which provided a unique space for a rich exchange of ideas and perspectives, amplifying the depth of understanding for both the delegation and the hosting institute.

intricate legislative processes shaping the nation's policies. Renowned communication strategist at Institute of Regional Studies Reema Shokat brought her expertise to the forefront, emphasizing the paramount role of effective communication in both academic and diplomatic spheres between Pakistan and China.

In another session, Moin ul Haque, former Ambassador of Pakistan to China, shared experiences and perspectives, offering a historical lens on the evolution of diplomatic relations.

The initiative's primary focus is to empower the vibrant youth of the Balochistan region, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping the future landscape of both nations.

At the core of this enlightening experience was the 8th CPEC Media Forum, providing an immersive platform for the delegation to gain profound insights into the far-reaching impact of the China-

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The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has already vowed zero tolerance against the surrogate companies of the "betting houses".



QUETTA: Nawabzada Haji Mir Lashkari Raisani talking with mediamen.

EC directs to provide name of DC, IG Islamabad till today

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has directed to provide name of Deputy Commissioner (DC) and IG Islamabad till today (Wednesday).

On the other hand interior secretary has requested the EC not to transfer both the officers in view of the security threats facing the federal capital.

Regarding outsourcing of airports in the country, the Advisor mentioned that a Transaction Advisory Services Agreement (TASA) had been signed between the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a subsidiary of the World Bank Group. This agreement, approved by the then Federal Cabinet in line with the Public

Non provision of level playing field: PTI files contempt of court plea in SC on non implementation its orders

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI has filed contempt of court plea in the Supreme Court (SC) on non implementation of court's orders related to level playing field.

The PTI has requested SC to ensure implementation of its December 22 orders.

PTI in its petition has made federal government, provincial governments and

the concerned authorities to complete it at the earliest.

According to the official sources of planning and development department, the state of the art project being constructed with mutual financial cooperation and partnership of the federal and provincial governments.

The project would play important role in socio-logy-economic development of the province.

The project that would cost Rs 1656.936 million would include truck & bus terminals, taxi stand, Dual road and mosque.

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The case regarding transfer of DC and IG Islamabad came up for hearing before 4-member bench of EC Tuesday.

Interior secretary appeared before the commission. He told the commission that EC orders with reference to advisor to Prime Minister have been implemented. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) inquired has he brought its notification.

PIA's privatization being carried out under govt's policy: Senate informed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Adviser to Prime Minister on Aviation Air Marshal (Retd) Farhat Hussain Khan on Tuesday informed the Senate that the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) was being carried out under the government's policy to privatize loss-making entities.

Private Partnership Authority (P3A) Act and its relevant regulations, aims to outsource the operations of three international airports in Islamabad, Karachi and Lahore, he told.

The Advisor highlighted that the IFC would act as a transactional advisor for the outsourcing of airports. Islamabad International Airport has been selected as the first airport to be outsourced. The outsourcing period for Islamabad International Airport is set at 15 years, while the time frames for the remaining two airports will be determined by the Federal Government based on a detailed study prepared by IFC, he added.

Senate unanimously approves first Parl. Caucus on Water Resources

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Upper House of the Parliament on Tuesday unanimously approved the first ever Parliamentary Caucus on Water Resources by adopting a motion moved by Senator Saadia Abbasi of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in this regard.

The 334th session of Senate was presided over by

Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani. Presenting the motion, Senator Abbasi maintained that under Rule 204 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012, the House might authorize the Senate chairman to appoint a Parliamentary Caucus on Water Resources in the country, comprising the members of the Senate and the Minister for Water Resources as an ex-officio member. She said since the Parliament only comprised of the Senate as the National Assembly did not exist so nominations for the Caucus should be made from the Senate. "The honourable Chairman Senate may also be authorized to make nominations from the Senate to the Caucus and make changes in its composition as and when required.

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QUETTA: Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai photographed with participants of a workshop organized by Women Media Center.

Pakistan determined to take fraternal ties with China to new heights: PM

ISLAMABAD (Online): Newly appointed Ambassador of Pakistan to China Khalil Hashmi called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in Islamabad Tuesday.

Project of fruit & vegetable market Chaman enters in final stages of completion

Independent Report QUETTA: The crucial project of fruit and vegetable market Chaman has entered the final stages of completion.

to the concerned authorities to complete it at the earliest.

The Prime Minister expressed his best wishes for Ambassador Khalil Hashmi assuming office.

Ambassador Khalil Hashmi took guidance from the Prime Minister regarding China-Pakistan relations.

The sources of Planning and Development Department, Government of Balochistan informed that the vital project is likely to be formally inaugurated in mid February next year.

It may be mentioned here that the caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki had taken special interest in the project of fruit and vegetable market in the border town Chaman and directed

the project that would cost Rs 1656.936 million would include truck & bus terminals, taxi stand, Dual road and mosque.

Court grants bail to Pashteen in two cases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Anti-terrorism Court of Islamabad on Tuesday granted bail to Manzoor Pashteen in two separate cases filed against him at the CTD Police Station.

Step afoot to provide health facilities to people in hospitals of Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: Balochistan Secretary Health Abdullah Khan on Tuesday said that practical measures were being taken to provide quality health facilities to patients in official hospitals in respective areas of Balochistan.

Medical Superintendent (MS) Dr Sanaullah Riki gave a presentation about the hospital to the Health Secretary.

ATC Judge Abual Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain heard the bail application of Manzoor Pashteen. During the hearing, the prosecutor pleaded that Pashteen's application should be rejected as he had spearheaded a gathering, where he spoke against the state institutions.

He shared these views while visiting the District Headquarters Hospital (DHO) Surab area of Kalat district. The Secretary said that the DHO Surab would be strengthened by providing consultants, doctors and technical staff to provide quality healthcare to the people.

The Secretary said that the surgery would begin with the launch of MNCH services including Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and New Born Care (CEMOC) at the hospital, a state-of-the-art ICU and blood bank to be established.

He said that the hospital would be provided with standard medical equipment and beds for facilitating patients in the area. Secretary Health also appreciated MS, DHO and DHO for making efforts for the provision of health facilities to patients in the hospital.

Soyem of GM Taj to be held today

Independent Report QUETTA: The soyem of the Ex Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan and former officer of the civil services of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Taj is scheduled to be held between Zuhr and Asr prayers today (Wednesday) at Arman Manzil, opposite Saryab Police station, Saryab Road, Quetta. Dua would be held at 3:30 pm.

The late Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Taj was the father of Secretary Government of Balochistan, Sheryar Taj and brother of Engineer Umar Farooq, Fateh Hussain and Fateh Ali Taj.



Divisional Director Health Kalat Dr Tahira Kamal, Director Health Dr Shaukat Ali Baloch, DHO Surab and Staff Officer Secretary Health Shaukat Baloch were also present on.

Zardari pays to tribute to Shaheed BB, vows to continue her mission

KARACHI (INP): Former President of Pakistan and President of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Asif Ali Zardari paying tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on martyrdom anniversary and reiterated to continue her mission regarding struggle for a free and independent Pakistan, empowered Parliament and the rule of the Constitution.

In his message on the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, he said that eliminating poverty, unemployment and economic misery

from the country was the mission of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and the completion of this mission was top priority of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Asif Zardari said that the martyred party chairperson was neither afraid of dictators nor did she fear the extremists. Her bravery was the legacy of the leadership and workers of Pakistan Peoples Party, he added. He said that the time was not far away when Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan will be the realization of a Pakistan free of political, social and economic exploitation.



HUB: Members of Civil Society are holding protest demonstration for the establishment of local committee, outside Civic Center building.