

Independent

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Caretaker PM urges Muslim Ummah to get united to overcome challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday underscored the significance attached by Pakistan to fraternal ties with the Muslim world, particularly with the countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

He said the ties were anchored in mutual trust, common understanding and close cooperation on bilateral as well as regional matters of common interest.

The prime minister met the resident ambassadors of Muslim countries from the MENA region over lunch earlier in the day. The meeting was attended by the ambassadors of Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The caretaker foreign

minister, secretary to the PM and foreign secretary were also present, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The caretaker prime minister shared Pakistan's perspective on a number of issues, particularly the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Other challenges confronting the Muslim world such as Islamophobia were also discussed.

Prime Minister Kakar emphasized the need for the Muslim Ummah to continue to work closely and collectively, especially through the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to deal with the complex issues.

He also praised the ambassadors for their efforts to forge stronger ties between Islamabad and their respective capitals.



Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar talking to the resident Ambassadors of Muslim countries from the Middle East and North African (MENA) region over lunch in Islamabad.

IHC tells police to not treat Baloch protesters as 'enemies'

Orders police to present 34 arrested protesters in identification parade, submit report on female protesters' arrest

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) asked the federal capital's police on Wednesday to not treat the Baloch protesters as "enemies".

Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb's remarks came as he heard a petition filed last week challenging the protesters' arrests and denying them the right to protest in Islamabad.

The hearing was attended by the senior superintendent of police (SSP) operations, the advocate general (AG) Islamabad and the lawyer representing the organisers of the protest, the Baloch Yakjehti Committee (BYC).

Expressing his indignation, Justice Aurangzeb asked the SSP operations whether the order to treat

the protesters 'harshly' was given by him. "You make some people sit in your lap while you treat others like this", the judge remarked as he referred to the mass arrests of the protesters were subjected to on reaching Islamabad on foot from Kech, in Balochistan. "They have come [here]. Let them sit".

During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel stated that 34 Baloch protesters were still in custody who were still to be presented in an identification parade. He added that an individual named Zaheer, named in the first information report (FIR) registered at the Kohsar police station, is missing.

At this, the SSP informed that Zaheer was in

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QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Scrutiny of nomination papers of candidates contesting elections on various NA, PA seats continues

Independent Report

QUETTA: The scrutiny of nomination papers of the candidates contesting elections on different seats of National and Provincial assemblies remained continued on third consecutive day i.e., Wednesday.

While the scrutiny of papers of the candidates for general seats of the assemblies is being done by the respective returning officers, the scrutiny of papers of the candidates for the reserved seats is being done by the provincial election commissioner in Quetta.

Meanwhile, the papers of leader of JUI and former Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Malik Sikandar Advocate were found corrected as scrutiny of his papers was completed on Wednesday.

Malik Sikandar Advocate has filed nomination papers for NA-262.

Similarly, the papers of PPP leader and former caretaker Minister Jamal Raisani were also declared correct for NA-264.

Moreover, papers of Khushhal Khan Kakar and Yousaf Kakar were also found corrected. They



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki presiding over a high level meeting regarding law and order situation

Kickstarts PPP election campaign Bilawal Bhutto unveils 10-point election manifesto to deal with challenges being faced country

PPP chairman urges a departure from divisive politics, stressing the importance of focusing on genuine issues affecting the people. Says PPP after forming the next government would double salaries in five years; Pledges to provide housing for those affected by floods, ensuring the construction of 20 lakh houses; Announces plans to establish youth centers in every district, equipped with libraries, digital resources, and sports facilities

GARHI KHUDBUX BHUTTO (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday unveiled a 10-point election manifesto of his party to deal with the challenges being faced the country and provide relief to the people.

If the PPP was voted to power in next election, it would overcome inflation, unemployment, poverty and issues affecting the common people by implementing its manifesto, he vowed while addressing the public meeting organized on the 16th martyrdom anniversary of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

Bhutto.

Bilawal said that they were not afraid of the election, rather they would fully participate in the democratic process to get the people's mandate.

Such a gathering of PPP workers today at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto showed that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto was alive, he added.

He said that it was thought that by martyring Benazir Bhutto the PPP would be eliminated, but the party was very much in the field as "a voice of the poor, farmers, laborers, students and youth".

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LARKANA: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering on the occasion of 16th death anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh.

Qureshi rearrested, shifted to unknown destination

RAWALPINDI (Online): Punjab police have taken PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi into its custody and shifted him to some unknown destination soon after his release.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi was released in cipher case following the acceptance of his bail plea by the Supreme Court (SC). However he was taken into custody by Rawalpindi police soon after he came out of jail and was shifted to some unknown destination in armored vehicle.

Shah Mehmood Qureshi while standing on armored vehicle said in his address on the occasion "I was released by Supreme Court (SC). Arresting me again is injustice. I am being punished for serving the nation."

'Master of Roster' concept alien to Constitution: SC

Court issues detailed verdict on SC (Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 case, decided earlier with a 10-5 majority

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued a detailed verdict in the case pertaining to the law clipping the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP), stating that the "Master of Roster" concept is alien to the Constitution and cannot be considered above the charter even if it is a conventional notion.

The top court issued a detailed verdict in the SC

(Practice and Procedure) Act 2023 case, which was decided in October, with a full court bench — comprising all 15 judges of the apex court — sustaining the law as "constitutional" with a 10-5 majority.

The apex court had struck down a section dealing with retrospective effect of the law, in its decision.

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BHC nullifies teachers tests by SBKW University

QUETTA (INP): In a groundbreaking judgment, the Balochistan High Court (BHC) has nullified the tests and interviews conducted by Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBK).

A division bench, presided over by Mr. Justice Kamran Khan Malakhail and Mr. Justice Shaukat Raskhshani, declared the entire recruitment procedure undertaken by SBK null and void. The court ordered the recovery of fees from both the university and the testing service responsible for the initial assessments.

The decision came following a constitutional petition filed by Bayazeed Khan Kharoti, challenging the legitimacy of the recruitment process.

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RAWALPINDI: View of conducted successful flight test of Fatah-II, equipped with state of the art avionics, sophisticated navigation system and unique flight trajectory.

Pakistan-bound ship from Saudi Arabia attacked in Red Sea

RED SEA (INP): Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi militia claimed responsibility for a missile attack on Tuesday on a Pakistan-bound container ship in the Red Sea and for an attempt to attack Israel with drones.

MSC Mediterranean Shipping said there were no injuries to its crew from the attack on its ship, the United VIII, en route from King Abdullah Port, Saudi Arabia to Karachi.

It said the ship had informed a nearby coalition naval warship that it had come under attack and had taken evasive manoeuvres.

Israel said separately that its aircraft had intercepted a hostile aerial target in the Red Sea area.

Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea in a televised address said the group had targeted the vessel, which he identified as the MSC United, after the crew failed to respond to warnings. He also said the Houthis had carried out a military operation targeting Eilat and other areas in Israel, which he referred to as occupied Palestine. He did not say whether any of the targets were successfully hit.

The president said under CPEC, a network of roads, had been laid across the country whereas infrastructure projects of strategic importance were also included in the mega project.

Termining China as Pakistan's brotherly country and a permanent strategic partner, he said the bi-

lateral ties between Pakistan and China were of special importance.

"China is the largest trading partner of Pakistan and was an important source of Foreign Direct Investment in the country, President Alvi remarked.

Further, he pointed out that the cultural and educational exchanges were important for the strong friendship of the two countries. Congratulating the recently appointed ambassador to China, Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

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Govt committed to solve issues of Islamabad sit-in within constitutional framework: CM

Our doors are always open for meaningful negotiations; Genuine grievances of participants of the Islamabad sit-in would be addressed

Independent Report

QUETTA: Chief Minister Balochistan, Ali Mardan Domki on Wednesday said the provincial government has formed an investigation committee to probe into the Balach Baloch Turbat incident.

CM Domki chaired a high-level meeting in the provincial capital to review law and order across the province.

Caretaker Home Minister Balochistan, Captain @ Zubair Ahmed Jamali, Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, Additional Chief Secretary (Home), Zahid Saleem and other high-level officers attended the meeting.

"Genuine grievances of the participants of the Islamabad sit-in would be addressed", the Caretaker CM assured. He said the federal government has also formed an inquiry committee to probe into the incident.

Addressing the meeting, the CM stated that the provincial government was committed to solving the demands of the Islamabad sit-in within the constitutional framework.

"Our doors are always open for meaningful negotiations", CM Domki stated. CM Domki called for an end to protests and said that his government was committed to addressing issues through political means.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

CPEC helps further strengthen Pak-China relations: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday said the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had helped further expand and strengthen the bilateral relations.

He expressed these views while talking to Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

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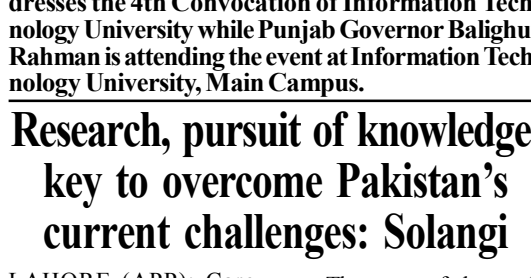
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LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi addresses the 4th Convocation of Information Technology University while Punjab Governor Balighur Rahman is attending the event at Information Technology University, Main Campus.

Research, pursuit of knowledge, key to overcome Pakistan's current challenges: Solangi

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said that research and pursuit of knowledge were imperative to overcome multiple challenges, currently faced by the country.

Delivering the speech at Fourth Convocation of Information Technology University, he said nations did face challenges and Pakistan, with the grace of Allah Almighty, would also overcome multiple challenges being faced now.

The minister said that a country could develop only through the acquisition of knowledge and education.

The motto of almost all the religions, was that humans should become good persons, Murtaza Solangi said adding that education promoted humanity and friendly attitude in the society. He said Pakistan was facing diverse, unprecedented and extraordinary challenges including economic crisis, intolerant and violent behaviour. He said every day, impacts of climate emergency were being witnessed by everyone in the country. He said another challenge was the diminishing hope in youth and younger generation.

He said with the passage of time, traditions were fading away in the society. Additionally, unbridled use of social media platforms has resulted in toxic, slanderous propaganda, full of lies and disinformation.

Stressing the role of students in overcoming these challenges, he said it was necessary to end negative propaganda.

Revamped Wafaqi Mohtasib website breaks language barrier for easy complaint resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a significant stride towards accessibility, Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi on Wednesday unveiled the revamped version of the official website, now boasting essential features in Urdu by removing the language barrier for easy complaint resolution to facilitate the masses.

This move aims to simplify the process for the general public to lodge complaints online, eliminating the need to physically visit offices.

Addressing a ceremony celebrating the website's launch, Qureshi emphasized the pivotal role the website plays in providing basic information and facilitating complaint redressal.

The ceremony, attended by senior officers and online participants from regional offices, highlighted the collaboration with the National Information Technology Board (NITB) in developing the enhanced platform.

Utilizing cutting-edge technology, the website has been transformed into a more efficient and user-friendly interface. The in-

corporation of Urdu content addresses the challenges faced by users who struggled with the English version. Qureshi stressed that this inclusion would boost awareness among the masses about the institution's services.



The revamped website now features all essential content, including complaint redressal mechanisms, practices, procedures, and special initiatives, in the Urdu language. Information related to the Grievance Commissioner for Overseas Pakistanis and the Grievance Commissioner for Children, operating under the Wafaqi Mohtasib Office, has also been made accessible in Urdu. Qureshi underlined that this initiative primarily aims to bridge the information gap for users in remote areas who face difficulties visiting offices. He expressed confidence that the

website's launch would empower all segments of society to seek grievance redressal virtually, bringing essential services to their doorstep.

In a groundbreaking move towards inclusivity, Wafaqi Mohtasib, Ejaz Ahmad Qureshi, has introduced a revamped version of the official website, now equipped with essential features in Urdu. This strategic enhancement aims to streamline the complaint resolution process for the general public, offering a convenient online alternative to physical office visits.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, Qureshi highlighted the website's crucial role in providing information and facilitating complaint redressal. The event, attended by senior officers and online participants from regional offices, acknowledged the collaboration with the National Information Technology Board (NITB) in crafting the upgraded platform.

Harnessing state-of-the-art technology, the website has undergone a transformation for greater efficiency and user-friendliness.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Bu Abdullah, Chairman Bu Abdullah Investment Group UAE meeting Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister of Commerce and Industries to discuss opportunities for investment in Pakistan at the Commerce Ministry.

Politicians pay floral tributes to Benazir Bhutto on her martyrdom anniversary

ISLAMABAD (APP): Leader of political parties on Wednesday paid floral tributes to Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed on her 16th death anniversary and remembered her political struggle and sacrifice for strengthening of democracy in the country which would always be remembered in the political annals of history. On the eve of the martyrdom anniversary of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, Akhunda Chhattan, while talking to PTV news channel, presented salute to her unyielding resilience and unwavering vision for the nation's development.

He said that Benazir

Bhutto always advocated the politics of principles and had firm believe that a true democracy was the ultimate solution to Pakistan's problems instead of sowing seeds of hatred among masses.

MQM leader Sajjid Ahmad added that the services of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto for the cause of democracy in the country would always be remembered. Bhutto family rendered a great deal of sacrifices for the democracy in the country and BB shaheed was a brave a intelligent leader, he added.

Pakistan Muslim league-N leader Shaista

Pervaiz Malik said that the martyrdom of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was a huge loss for Pakistan, adding, there are many ways to admire her lifetime services but to me, her services for democracy trump them all.

Sharmila Farooqi PPP leader also paid a glowing tribute and acknowledged the sacrifices made by Benazir Bhutto that her relentless efforts for the protection of the rights of downtrodden sections of society which will always be remembered.

"We will not let Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's great sacrifice go in vain," she added.

NHA launches strict action against overloading of loader vehicles

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Highway Authority (NHA) has issued a detailed advisory warning the truck drivers and loaders to avoid overloading their vehicles as it had initiated strict action against the vehicles violating the restrictions and burdening the national thoroughfares leading to accidents and damage to important connectivity infrastructure.

The Authority with the cooperation of the National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) has initiated a stringent nationwide drive against overloaded vehicles that were jeopardizing public life, property and infrastructure.

The minimum weight allowed for a two-axle Bedford truck or vehicle

was 17.5 tonnes, 27.5 and 29.5 tonnes for a three-axle vehicle, 39.5 tonnes and 41.5 tonnes for a four-axle vehicle, 48.5 tonnes and 49.5 tonnes of vehicles for a five-axle vehicle, 51.5 tonnes for a five-axle vehicle, 58.5 and 61.5 tonnes for eight axle vehicle.

The overloading of vehicles was leading to risk to life, tyre burst, damage to roads, excessive fuel usage, early damaging of tyres, heavy fines, axle breakage, expenditure of road repairs and wastage of time.

The NHA advised the masses to comply with the laws and abide by the restrictions whereas in case of violation, excessive items would be offloaded from the vehicles being charged with violation.

CDA to Auction More Plots in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to conduct an auction of plots in January 2024, alleviating the budgetary constraints faced by civic body. According to the CDA official, the plot auction is set to take place from the 10th to the 12th of January at the F9 Plots in Gandhara Hall. Plots located on Blue Area, Centers, and Park Road will be included in the auction. The auction list includes petrol pumps, Class Three shopping centres, agro farms, and apartment plots, along with fruit and vegetable shops, IT centres, and hostel plots. A substantial 10 percent discount will be applicable for complete payments made within one month of bid acceptance.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Mr. Khalil-ur-Rahman Hashmi called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Dr. Nadeem Jan says Pakistan to play leading part to strengthen 'health emergency systems' of poor countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan Wednesday on 'International Day of Epidemic Preparedness' stressed the importance of collaborative efforts and said that Pakistan would play its leading part in strengthening health emergency systems of poor countries through hosting its first global health security summit.

Talking to a Private news channel, the minister for health said that the 'Global Health Security Summit' will be held on January 10 and 11 in the federal capital of Pakistan, adding, that Pakistan will finalize its strategic road map to effectively tackle health

emergencies and epidemics in the country.

Holding the summit will be proof that Pakistan will play a key role in the health sector and protect people from global epidemics, he mentioned.

The minister highlighted that ongoing efforts will improve the availability of medicines, resources, infrastructure and increase production. Replying to a query, he said that Pakistan stands ready to contribute to all such endeavors and initiatives at relevant UN and WHO platforms.

In this regard, "We need to develop countries that should be prioritized in terms of equitable distribution of vaccines and

medicines and building their fiscal space to combat the pandemics," he added.

He said that soon Pakistan will also establish a 'global pandemic financial facilities forum' which would provide equal opportunities and distribute equal resources to low-income countries for handling epidemics.

He assured that this international summit will give a positive image of Pakistan globally, adding, that the importance of collaborative efforts in addressing health challenges, improving health systems' performance, and fostering cooperation to mitigate climate change impacts on health globally is a need of hour.

Modi regime misleading world about situation in IIOJK: APHC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has said that the RSS-backed Narendra Modi-led Indian government is misleading the world by falsely propagating that peace is returning to occupied Jammu and Kashmir after its unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said the Modi regime has intensified its efforts to brutalize the Kashmiris and colonize Kashmir since its 5 August move, which further ag-

gravated the already volatile situation in the territory.

However, he said, the Indian militaristic approach cannot suppress the Kashmiris' passion for freedom.

The APHC spokesman paying tribute to the Kashmiri martyrs including the recent victims of custodial killing in Poonch said that their sacrifices would never be allowed to go in vain.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of all those injured due to the torture by Indian troops in custody in Poonch.

Dengue cases exceed 15,060 during year

ISLAMABAD (APP): The number of dengue cases has surpassed 15,060 at Punjab in the current year with four new cases reported during the last 24 hours in the provincial capital.

Secretary Punjab Health Department, Ali Jan Khan told a private news channel that Rawalpindi has so far reported 2,654 dengue cases in the current year. As many as 16 patients of dengue fever were currently admitted to hospitals of the province, he added.

Dengue virus is a mosquito-borne viral disease that has rapidly spread in recent years around the world.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif posing for a group photo graph after ceremony "Digital Pakistan Cybersecurity Hackathon 2023" at local hall in Federal Capital.

EC moved for recovery of Faraz Chaudhry brother of Fawad Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD (Online): Petition has been filed with Election Commission (EC) for recovery of Faraz Chaudhry brother of Fawad Chaudhry.

The petition has been filed by Beena Faraz wife of Faraz Chaudhry.

The petitioner has said in the petition that Faraz Chaudhry went to returning office to file nomination papers of his brother Fawad Chaudhry. He was harassed and threatened on the way to office. He was stopped from filing nomination papers of Fawad Chaudhry.

It was further said in

the petition that participating in the election is right of every citizen. Fawad Chaudhry wanted to file nomination papers from NA-60 and 61 under this constitutional right.

Faraz Chaudhry was not only stopped from filing nomination papers of Fawad Chaudhry but he was also kidnapped. Kidnapping and preventing him from filing nomination papers is flagrant violation of constitution. The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has powers to take action against those found involved in hindering the election.

26 absconders involved in heinous crime held

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have arrested 26 absconders and proclaimed offenders involved in heinous crime during the last 48 hour, a public relations officer said. He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, special tasks were assigned to all senior police officials to ensure the arrest of proclaimed offenders and absconders involved in heinous crimes. During the crackdown, the Islamabad Capital police teams have arrested 48 absconders.

Excise to facilitate citizens for vehicle registration, transfer, token tax at Rose & Jasmine Garden

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a move to streamline services and bring them closer to the community, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Wednesday initiated an exclusive drive set to revitalize the Rose and Jasmine Garden parking lot 1 from 3 to 5 pm.

The excise staff will be on site, offering a hassle-free experience for vehicle owners seeking registration, transfers, and token tax pro-

cessing, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said. This unprecedented initiative not only caters to vehicular paperwork but also introduces the ICT Doorstep Service. Imagine obtaining your Domicile Certificate, Birth Certificate, Power of Attorney, International Driving Permit, Fuel Permit (Domestic/Commercial), or Motor Vehicle Registration, all at one convenient location. The Facilitation Center

Doorstep ICT Vehicle will be present, providing a seamless and efficient solution for various administrative needs. He said that whether you're a vehicle owner looking to sort out your paperwork or in need of essential documents, this event promises efficiency with a touch of convenience. The citizens are urged not to miss this opportunity to simplify bureaucratic processes and get everything done at the Rose and Jasmine Garden.

Madad Ali Sindhi says: Iqbal's poetry, philosophy & thought were universal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi on Wednesday said that Iqbal's poetry, philosophy and thought were, undoubtedly, universal and his message was for the people of the whole world.

Iqbal's message is as fresh as ever and we still need it today, the minister said while addressing the opening session of a two-day international conference on "Iqbal's Thought in the Perspective of 21st Century and Two Great Poets of Islam: Iqbal and Aki" at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU). The conference was organized by the Department of Iqbal Studies AIU in collaboration with Yunus Emre Institute.

Madad Ali Sindhi mentioned that Iqbal's thought provided a solution to the problems of today and served as a guiding light for all human beings. Iqbal's political philosophy is a source of strength for democracy in Pakistan, he said.

He expressed his delight over the presence of eminent intellectuals and Iqbal enthusiasts from all over Pakistan, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey at the conference.

The federal minister congratulated Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor AIU and his entire team for organizing this international conference on Iqbal.

Vice Chancellor AIU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood mentioned that the University was one of the few universities which had established a Department of Iqbal Studies to promote Iqbal's thoughts and poetry. He stated that through this department, we aimed to convey the message of Allama Iqbal to the youth. Dr. Nasir emphasized the need to elaborate and explain Iqbal's thoughts to train the new generation.

Turkish Ambassador Mehmet Pacici and Dr. Halil Tokar commented that Iqbal's poetry had profoundly impacted the Turkish nation. In Turkey, there have been many translations of Iqbal's poetry and research work on Iqbal is being conducted in Turkish universities, he said and added, however, in Pakistan, Muhammad Akif is not recognized, and in collaboration with AIU, the Yunus Emre Institute will promote the poetry and thoughts of the Turkish poet Muhammad Akif in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Haya Fatima Sehgal, author of the book "Resilient Pakistan" called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Garbage burning becomes nuisance for Capital's residents causing diseases

ISLAMABAD (APP): The residents of the federal capital are perturbed over increasing garbage burning as the air pollution was exacerbating in the metropolis causing respiratory diseases and other health complications.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Administration has imposed Section 144 on open waste burning in the federal capital on the request of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) to control the spiking risk of smog due to deteriorating air quality.

The air quality as per the EPA report was unhealthy due to increased ratio of particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5) was beyond the permissible limits of the national environmental quality standards (NEQS).

Sueliman Agha, a resident of Sector G-7/1 told APP that during the evening hours, the ambience of the city got murky after small heaps of garbage being set ablaze could be seen around the public parks and street junctions.

He added that most of the time either people or the sanitary staff put the garbage and dried leaves on fire for heating purposes or otherwise for getting rid of the waste.

He said this practice is extremely dangerous for the masses residing near to such locations especially children, elderly including heart patients and others.

Agha demanded the authorities concerned to launch a massive awareness campaign and action against the perpetrators.

Farha Rabbani, a resident of H-13 complained about the illegal plastic manufacturing units that were burning plastic items for recycling that were emitting dark smoke and causing severe problem for the masses as breathing issue and respiratory ailments were common in the locality.

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ISLAMABAD: Traffic wardens giving challan to motorcyclists due to violation of traffic rules at Islamabad Zoo road in the Federal Capital.

Wanted members of bike lifter gang arrested; seven stolen motorbikes recovered

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police Karachi company police team have arrested two wanted members of a notorious bike lifter gang involved in numerous bike theft activities and recovered seven stolen motorbikes from his possession, a public relations officer said.

He said that, following the special directions of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Islamabad Capital Police had categorically started a crackdown against criminal elements in order to save the precious lives and property of

citizens. Following these directions, the Karachi Company police team used technical and human resources and succeeded in apprehending two wanted members of a notorious bike lifter gang involved in numerous bike lifting activities in various areas of Karachi Company police station.

The accused were identified as Hamad Wali and Saleem Khan. Police team also recovered seven stolen motorbikes from their possession. Cases have already been registered against the nabbed accused and further investigation is underway.



ISLAMABAD: Students and Faculty Members of the International Islamic University, Islamabad visiting Senate Museum at Parliament House.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Thursday December 28, 2023

Inclusive politics

It is encouraging to see that in the upcoming elections, the number of women candidates filing nomination papers has surpassed the figures of 2018 and 2013. While this is a positive indicator of the evolving role of women in politics, the fact that they constitute only 11pc of the total candidates underscores a persistent gender disparity in political representation. This year, 3,139 women candidates have stepped forward, a significant rise from the 1,687 in 2018 and 1,171 in 2013. Such an increase should be celebrated, yet when viewed in the context of over 28,000 candidates overall — in itself a record — the figure is starkly disproportionate.

This discrepancy highlights a missed opportunity by political parties to promote a more balanced representation. The expectation was for parties to this time around actively encourage and support a greater number of women candidates, yet this has not materialised to a satisfactory degree. The situation within the PML-N offers a microcosm of the broader issue. The discord among women candidates in the party, who feel sidelined in favour of a select few — primarily from influential backgrounds — raises questions about the criteria for selecting candidates for reserved seats. This practice not only discourages dedicated party workers but also undermines the essence of reserved seats, which should ideally serve as a platform for diverse and representative female participation. So, what could have been done differently? First and foremost, political parties need to establish and adhere to transparent and equitable criteria for selecting candidates, especially for reserved seats.

This process should prioritise merit and dedication to public service over familial or socioeconomic connections. Additionally, there should be a concerted effort to scout and mentor potential women leaders from various walks of life, ensuring more inclusive and representative choices. Moreover, political parties and the ECP must work together to remove barriers that deter women from political participation. This includes addressing societal prejudices, ensuring the safety of women candidates, and providing the necessary resources and training to potential women politicians. The current state of women's participation in national politics underscores the need for urgent action. Political parties, civil society, and government institutions must shoulder the responsibility to foster an environment where women's political engagement transcends tokenism and becomes a cornerstone of our democratic fabric. This is not just about meeting quotas or surpassing previous statistics; it is about fundamentally redefining the political landscape to be truly inclusive, equitable, and representative of diverse voices. The journey towards this goal is arduous but essential for the health and maturity of our democracy. It is time to embrace a vision where women's voices are not just heard but are instrumental in steering the course of our nation's destiny.



Rafia Zakaria

One of the most terrifying things about the Covid-19 pandemic was that the world was very unprepared for a global pandemic of its nature and scale.

Until it struck, it seemed unfathomable that a country like the United States would run out of things such as masks and basic protective equipment.

Or that all the warnings that doctors in Italy — that, along with the medicines, was hit relatively early by the pandemic — would not be heeded by a large part of the world. In those early days, ventilators were in short supply but sometimes when one country tried to help another, half the things with half the parts would be sent and the body bags would continue to pile up.

It was because of the

alarming lack of preparedness of the world to deal with the pandemic that, in 2020, the United Nations decreed Dec 27 as the International Day of Epidemic Preparedness.

The idea behind the annual commemoration is for countries to take stock of their level of preparedness for epidemics and pandemics.

Every year, the day can serve as an assessment point that make institutions and governments see where they stand in terms of preparedness before the next epidemic strikes, whether on a large or limited scale.

While it is easy to scoff at such things, it bears mentioning that in the US, the National Security Council unit that oversaw this sort of preparedness was disbanded by then president Donald Trump.

There was no international check point that could spur decision-makers to consider what would happen if the world suddenly had to be shut down for months on end.

In the Global South, the terror of the Covid-19 pandemic did not end even when a vaccine had been developed. The mRNA vac-

cines, including Pfizer and Moderna, that led the charge were developed in the Global North where cash-and resource-rich governments had been funding such vaccine research for many years.

Once the pandemic began and scores of people were dying in places such as London and New York, governments began to pour hundreds of millions of dollars into the exercise of speeding up vaccine development and then after that ensuring that their laboratories had the capacity to produce vaccines as fast as possible.

This was the reason that people in the US were some of the first to receive the new vaccine. For many months, this was the status quo with no real plan of how the best vaccines could be procured by the Global South.

One of the big problems was that the drug companies and governments that had funded the development of the mRNA vaccines were not particularly eager to share the data that would have allowed the same vaccine to be developed at a much cheaper cost and made available for the

publics of the poorer countries.

This is why India, itself a major producer of vaccines, saw the large number of casualties that it did. The low availability of the vaccine in that country meant that the vast majority of the population had not been able to get vaccinated against Covid-19 because the government had not been able to procure enough supplies for the population.

The consequence, with thousands dying daily so that even the crematoriums could not keep up with the pace of death, is imprinted as an indelible catastrophe on the nation's psyche.

While Pakistan was relatively more fortunate in that there was never a mega surge of the same proportions, it is also true that the country relied for quite a while on supplies of Covid vaccines from wealthier countries.

Indeed, it was through the US that Pakistan was able to get the first Pfizer vaccine while China provided the first shipment of the (non-mRNA) vaccine. Other countries also sent vaccines to Pakistan.

The point of this is that most countries in the Global South had to rely on the goodwill of wealthier countries to obtain the most effective vaccines.

There was no agreement in place that would allow the vaccines developed in the West to be easily and cheaply mass-produced and be made available to the Global South, despite the fact that their absence was causing tens of thousands of casualties in many countries.

Because of this ongoing impasse, many middle-income countries in Latin America and Africa have started to expand their own research and development capacity to produce vaccines.

Beyond this, it is worthy to note that the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association based in Geneva has opposed any effort to relax intellectual property rights during pandemics because they insist that this will actually hamper the fast and effective production of vaccines.

Instead, it has signed on to the Berlin Declaration, which is a non-binding document that promises

to try and allocate effective vaccines for priority populations located in the Global South. The Berlin Declaration does not get away from the problem of leaving availability to the goodwill of the richer countries.

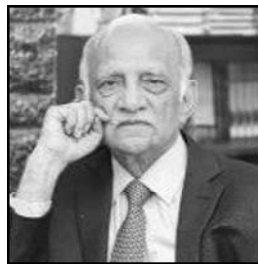
Whether it is individually or through multilateral efforts, Pakistan must make it a priority to develop and publicise epidemic preparedness so that it has a better plan in place than relying on the goodwill of rich countries.

On the national level, an assessment needs to be carried out of the plans that are already in place both in public and private institutions. It is important to remember that some of the economic morass in which the country finds itself can be attributed to the unpredictability of closures, such as during the Covid-19 period.

Planning ahead to minimise the effects of any large-scale disease could ensure that Pakistan is better prepared and less vulnerable to a human and economic catastrophe when the next epidemic strikes. -- Courtesy Dawn

Unprepared for pandemics

Stars never die



Bashir Riaz

After a while, Amir Mir broke the news to me that Bibi was martyred in an attack. I was devastated and the earth felt like slipping away from under my feet. People were angry everywhere and started burning public property to express their distress.

In such volatile circumstances, going to Larkana was like inviting death. I couldn't decide whether to go to Islamabad or Larkana. Eventually, the next day, I decided to go to Larkana. Along the way, we saw torched vehicles and felt the country was in mourning. When we arrived in Garhi Khuda Bux, the burial had taken place already and there was a sea of grief-

stricken faces around us.

When we reached Naudero, we found out that Asif Ali Zardari was not there. He called while we were traveling back, and we tried to console but I could not find any words as my mind felt numb due to a huge sense of loss.

Shaheed Bibi's struggles and achievements flashed across my mind. She was the first woman prime minister of the Muslim world and fought courageously against dictatorship. She was a leader recognized internationally for her political acumen. Programmes have been introduced in universities to honour her legacy.

In 1999, a conference was organized for women and during that time, she invited me to join her in Portugal. At the conference, she spoke about political and social role of women and everyone applauded her talk. She took out the time to answer all the questions and mingled with the participants who were all eager to meet her.

Apart from Europe,

the Arab World also gave Shaheed Bibi immense respect, and she was known as the 'daughter of Islam'. Shaheed BB was a leader who represented a democratic and progressive Pakistan on the international level.

She fought against the tyrannical rule of dictators who actively tried to oppress her and the workers of the Pakistan People's Party. However, Shaheed BB always stood side-by-side along with her people not only during her life but also in death.

Shaheed Bibi simultaneously fought on several fronts. She was a mother as well as a father to her children. Despite personal engagements, she managed to take out time for party work and kept an eye on global politics. She used to work on her computer for five hours every day, writing articles and publishing her statements on various matters.

A beautiful aspect of Shaheed Bibi's personality was that she had a generous soul and

cared for the poor. She used to feel the pain of others just like her own. When she became prime minister, she helped numerous families. She always supported her party workers when in need as well. She had a special fund that she utilized to help people associated with journalism and literature. Once, she gave a tip of Rs100,000 to the caretaker of Pak Tea House, bringing joy to his household.

She helped scores of people through me. She gave employment opportunities to several people. A lot of people benefited from her generosity. Even today, the less fortunate ones remember the kindness of Shaheed Bibi and keep her in their prayers.

After her shahadat, the entire world recognized Bibi as a great leader. Just like her parents, Shaheed BB had a lot of charisma. I witnessed all her traits and her personality firsthand as I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to accompany her everywhere. For this

reason, she referred to me as her shadow. She was very kind to me, and the trust she bestowed upon me is invaluable and an asset for me.

Apart from Europe, the Arab World also gave Shaheed Bibi immense respect, and she was known as the 'daughter of Islam'. Shaheed BB was a leader who represented a democratic and progressive Pakistan on the international level.

She fought against the tyrannical rule of dictators who actively tried to oppress her and the workers of the Pakistan People's Party. However, Shaheed BB always stood side-by-side along with her people not only during her life but also in death. Shaheed Bibi simultaneously fought on several fronts. She was a mother as well as a father to her children. Despite personal engagements, she managed to take out time for party work and kept an eye on global politics. She used to work on her computer for five hours every day, writing articles and publishing

her statements on various matters.

A beautiful aspect of Shaheed Bibi's personality was that she had a generous soul and cared for the poor. She used to feel the pain of others just like her own. When she became prime minister, she helped numerous families. She always supported her party workers when in need as well. She had a special fund that she utilized to help people associated with journalism and literature. Once, she gave a tip of Rs100,000 to the caretaker of Pak Tea House, bringing joy to his household. In her life, she shone like a bright star in the hearts of the people, and in her death, the glow of the star continues to guide her people in the direction of democracy and peace. Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Bakhtawar and Asifa are the custodians of her legacy. I am confident that they will follow in the footsteps of their mother and will carry forward her mission of serving the people. -- Courtesy TheNews

A single vote



Furqan Hyder Shaikh

Prosperity, development, and sustainability in Sindh are linked to the number of people casting their vote — hopefully for someone who has a vision, a plan, and an executable strategy to deal with problems. Socioeconomic challenges, unfortunately, dominate the landscape, with poor education and health systems, water and food scarcity, and a dearth of livelihood opportunities.

This begs the question: is it our vote winners who lack the skills and abilities needed to serve the people, or is it the voters who fail to comprehend the qualities a poll candidate must possess in order to ensure effective governance once elected? The value of a vote is neither taught well, nor comprehended clearly. With general elections scheduled for February, votes are needed to transform Sindh into a well-managed province by a qualified political leadership.

Of course, it is the number of votes that decides who wins and who loses. But what criteria should be employed to assess the likely performance of a candidate in Sindh, the kind of leadership qualities he or she possesses, and what constituency issues matter most to him or her?

Undoubtedly, even a single vote has the potential to make a difference. For example, John F. Kennedy won the American presidential election of 1960 by the very narrow margin of less than two-tenths of a percentage point. Democracy works only if people come

out to show their concern by casting their vote.

Sindh is a poverty-stricken province hit by myriad problems including the impact of climate change. If one were to think of a 'voting policy' for Sindh, what criteria should the electorate keep in mind?

In fact, there are several elements informing well-thought-out voting choices. For instance, one could ask what sort of a plan the candidate has to address Sindh's water woes. What does the candidate, if elected to power, intend to do about economic empowerment in the coastal belt, as well as sea intrusion in the Badin, Sujawal and Thatta districts? Does the candidate have a strategy to put an end to the barbarous practice of abducting girls? Does the candidate have a viable proposal for a state-of-the-art education system in his or her constituency? If elected, would the candidate be willing to take responsibility for a woman dying due to the unavailability of medical facilities in a rural setting? How will the candidate protect the rights of the minorities in his or her constituency?

Such questions need to be reflected on by voters and be posed by them to the campaigning candidates. If today's voters want themselves and their generations to live a healthy life and have all the advantages of a modern education system, prosperity, and development, they need to think now. Only performance will count.

The general aim of elections is to bring to power a government which can make policies that benefit the people at large. But the picture of previous elections shows that before and during elections, some voters are influenced or made to cast their vote for a particular candidate. Sometimes, the

carrot of Rs5,000 against each vote is dangled before them. If vote-seekers can 'organise' themselves to 'induce' voters to cast their ballot in their favour, why can't voters similarly prepare themselves to vote in the best, i.e. those who would actually make a difference?

For prosperity in Sindh, voters from Karachi to Kashmir, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Badin, and Tharparkar have to think of a 'voting policy', keeping in mind the challenges their respective constituencies face. For this, the role of social activists in urban and rural settings is pivotal. They must educate people about the importance of the single vote, and convince them that their vote should not be cast just to perpetuate a 'legacy'; it must be cast for a prosperous future. The electorate should understand that their vote should go towards the fulfilment of their rights

and the future of their offspring. The right decision today will positively impact the future. Unfortunately, so far the votes of Sindh's unaware masses have only enriched the vote winners who are past masters at playing with the rights of the destitute and illiterate.

At the end of the day, it is only voters who can change Sindh's destiny. NGOs, civil society, school teachers, influencers in rural Sindh, and activists with deep knowledge of the importance of elections should act to create awareness, particularly in the province's rural areas, so that voters have an understanding of what they should be looking for in those who want to represent them. They must be made aware that elections ultimately aim to seek good governance — from the village unit to the provincial level. -- Courtesy Dawn

Obliterating Gaza



Mahir Ali

It took several days of diplomatic negotiations for the Security Council to come up with a sufficiently bland Gaza resolution that the US would not feel obliged to veto. Even after it had been diluted to a meaningless plea for unspecified measures that "create the conditions for a sustainable cessation of hostilities" — which Israel would interpret as a green light to persist with its genocidal military campaign — the wretched Biden administration could only bring itself to abstain.

The resolution also called on all parties to "facilitate and enable the immediate, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance at scale" to the Palestinians in Gaza — almost 90pc of whom have been displaced, pushed into ever-diminishing 'safe zones' that are often promptly targeted by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF).

Even if by some miracle the Security Council had managed to clearly demand a ceasefire, Israel would have ignored it, as it has routinely done since 1948, without facing consequences. The protection of its American godfather is paramount. Western media outlets have lately been promoting the impression that the US is striving to persuade Israel to reduce the intensity of its onslaught.

That's the equivalent of requesting a serial killer to be less indiscriminate, while supplying him with weapons to accomplish his aims. Had the US seriously wished to halt the slaugh-

ter in which entire branches of Palestinian family trees are being hacked off, it could have done so by cutting off the military, diplomatic and financial supply chains crucial to sustaining Israel's capacity for monstrosity. But don't hold your breath.

After all, it took decades, plus the relentless efforts of activists, for the US to recognise the horrors of South African apartheid (propped up with surreptitious Israeli back-ing) and endorse sanctions against Pretoria. Going further back, the Nazi regime enjoyed the sympathy of key components of Western elites, from the British royal family to American captains of industry.

Long before that, the US King-Crane commission was dispatched to the Levant in 1919 to solicit popular opinion about the region's future following World War I. It found vast support for a united Syria encompassing latter-day Lebanon and Palestine. Facts on the ground shifted the erudite commissioners' views from backing the Zionist project endorsed by the Balfour Declaration to pointing out that it would entail "a practically complete dispossession of the present-day inhabitants of Palestine" and "the gravest trespass upon the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine".

It presciently reminded the then US president, Woodrow Wilson, that "if the American government decided to support the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, they are committing the American people to the use of force in that area, since only by force can a Jewish state in Palestine be established or maintained".

By then, the US Congress had effectively endorsed the Balfour Declaration, and the State Department decided that publishing the report "would

not be compatible with the public interest". It had little effect when eventually published by Editor & Publisher magazine in 1922, and continued to be disregarded when US backing for Israel went into high gear following the 1967 "pre-emptive" Israeli assault against its neighbours. A Palestine Liberation Organisation pamphlet noted that the population density "jumped in a few weeks from 208 to more than 6,000 persons per square kilometre".

Gaza's population has more than quadrupled since then, and the conditions have deteriorated. The IDF has lately been renewing the status of long-standing refugees — often from territories adjacent to the Gaza Strip, the areas violated by Hamas and its associates on Oct 7 — by casting them into the wilderness. The atrocities committed in the kibbutzim cannot be denied, while acknowledging that some of the deaths and damage can be attributed to the manner in which the IDF response unfolded.

The precise details may never emerge, but the century-long context of repression and dispossession in occupied Palestinian territories cannot be ignored in contemplating today's dire realities as the seeds of hatred are sowed anew. Benjamin Netanyahu's response to the UN resolution was to visit his troops in Gaza on Christmas Day and declare that his war would be intensified, even as Bethlehem marked the occasion with a rubble-strewn Nativity scene. Reading about a Children's Happiness Centre levelled by the IDF in its scorched earth campaign alongside hospitals, homes and schools, I was reminded of Northern Irish freedom fighter Bobby Sands' prison diary entry shortly before he succumbed to the privations of a hunger strike: "Our revenge will be the laughter of our children." -- Courtesy Dawn

Naqvi visits Ganga Ram Hospital, expresses dismay

Also inspects low-cost housing project in Raiwind

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi made a surprise visit to Ganga Ram Hospital on Wednesday where he found cleanliness arrangements inadequate.

There were piles of filth and dirt in the washrooms. Patients and their attendants complained about being charged for surgeries in the hospital. A female patient also complained about having to procure medicines from outside.

Expressing his strong dismay, CM Naqvi issued a final warning to the MS [medical superintendent], stating that hospital affairs should be rectified without further delay.

He said, "I am giving you a final warning; I will visit again soon. If the situation does not improve, you will be held

responsible." He ordered an inquiry into an incident of charging money for surgery by the Chief Minister's Inspection Team and directed the CMIT to immediately reach the hospital to probe the matter and submit the inquiry report to him by evening. He ordered to refund the money and told the MS, "If even a single round of the hospital had been conducted by you, the cleanliness situation would not have been like this. I don't want to see any dirt on my next visit."

He also inspected the upgradation work and ordered to complete the project within the timeframe, emphasizing that there would be no tolerance for delay in the upgradation work.

Meanwhile, the caretaker Punjab

government has successfully revitalised another stalled welfare project, completing the construction of 245 houses under the low-cost housing scheme in Raiwind. These affordable homes are slated to be handed over to deserving government employees on January 15, following special directives of Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi. CM Naqvi inspected the newly constructed houses in Rakhpaji, Raiwind, thoroughly assessing the provided facilities. He ordered for taking immediate steps so that the government employees could reside in these houses. He also emphasised timely completion of sewerage and drainage facilities along with the redress of any outstanding issues related to house allotment.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of Hindko Tahafuz Foundation meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali at Governor House.

Skill-Based Education imperative for societal development: Khokhar

MULTAN (APP): Secretary of School Education South Punjab, Dr. Obaidullah Khokhar stressed the pivotal role of skill-based education in transforming the region's youth into catalysts for societal improvement.

Addressing participants at the National Conference on Life Skills-Based Education Roadmap and Advocacy Strategy for Out-of-School Children, held at the Pakistan Institute of Education Dr. Khokhar outlined the vision of instilling crucial life skills in students through training programs. Under the Life Skills-Based Education Program,

students in government schools across South Punjab will receive training to become invaluable contributors to society, he remarked. The conference brought together education secretaries from the country's four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, South Punjab, and national and international experts, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Highlighting the challenges faced by the younger generation, Dr. Khokhar identified inequality, unemployment, inadequate educational, healthcare resources, early marriages, and maternity issues as primary reasons for school dropouts.

Punjab Irrigation Dept releases annual canal closure timetable

JHANG (APP): The Punjab Irrigation Department on Wednesday has released the province's annual canal closure timetable. Canal cleaning will be finished during canal closure.

The Lower Jhelum and Rasool Qader Bakhsh canals would be closed from December 26, 2023, to January 12, 2024, in accordance with the circular. A similar closure will apply to the Qaderabad Balloki Link canal from December 27 to January 13. From December 29 to January 15, the Lower Bari

Doab and Balloki Sulemanki Canals will be closed.

The Upper Jhelum canal will be blocked from January 15 to January 29 and the Upper Pakpattan Eastern Sadqia canals will be closed from December 13 to January 16.

From January 13 to January 30, the Lower Chenab Canal and the Jhang Branch Canal will be blocked. Similarly, from January 13 to January 30, the Upper Bahawal Canal will be blocked. The Central Bari Doab Canal will close on December 27.



RAWALPINDI: Workers of Pakistan People's Party offering Dua for the departed of Former Prime Minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, on her 16th death anniversary, at Liaquat Bagh in City.

Operation against encroachments continues on 7th day

LAHORE (APP): In an effort to clear Lahore from encroachments, the district administration's anti-encroachment operations continued in various areas of the provincial capital on the seventh consecutive day, on Wednesday.

During the operation conducted at Bedian Road, Jallo Mor, Daroghawala, Manga Mandi, Mugalpura, 27 encroachers were arrested, four FIRs were registered, 76 shops were sealed, 117 signboards, 300 sheds

were removed, and seven truck-load of confiscated items were shifted to junkyard.

In the seven days of the operation, a total of 835 arrests have been made, 89 FIRs were got registered, 2,138 structures, including signboards and sheds have been demolished. Moreover, 903 shops and restaurants have been sealed, 30 trucks of belongings, including 4 handcarts, have been seized.

PoG decides to provide electric bikes to students at low rates

LAHORE (Online): Punjab government has decided to provide electric bikes to students at subsidized rates to contain environmental pollution.

The care taker transport minister of Punjab Ibrahim Hassan Murad said in an interview Punjab is facing big problem of fog. The main cause of this problem is transport. In order to overcome this problem we introduced electric rickshaw on the pattern of China and Thailand and now we are going to introduce electric bike.

In the first phase 2 lac electric bikes will be provided to the students at cheaper rates.

LHC grants protective bail to Cheema

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday granted protective bail to former Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mussarat Jamshed Cheema for five days in cases related to May-9 violence.

Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry heard the petition, filed by Mussarat Cheema. Her counsel argued before the court that his client wanted to join the investigation of cases besides attending the scrutiny process of her nomination papers for general elections.

He pleaded with the court to grant bail as the police might arrest his client. At this, the court allowed the request and granted protective bail for five days to Mussarat Jamshed Cheema for five days.

Three included woman killed in separate incidents

SWABI (APP): Three persons including a woman were killed in separate incidents that occurred in two different areas of the district, police said on Thursday.

According to police, two persons were killed and another injured when a tri-wheeler, motorcycle, and tractor collided with each other in the Jagnat area of the district.

The killed were identified as Attaullah and Shahab.

In another incident that occurred in Chota Lahor armed person broke into the house of Muhammad Sher and started firing.

The wife of Muhammad Sher sustained injuries and later succumbed in the hospital. The reason behind the killing was stated to be a petty incident relating to women.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for information Murtaza Solangi meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. Provincial Minister for information Amir Meer is also present.

CM encourages students to harness their energies positively

Inaugurates Khyber Medical University Hazara campus in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Chief Minister KPK Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah Wednesday distributed laptops to students at Hazara University Manshera under the Prime Minister Laptop Scheme. The Chief Minister also inaugurated the Khyber Medical University Abbottabad Campus and new building of Ayub College of Dentistry in Abbottabad.

Additionally, he unveiled the Online

Complaint Management and Patient Facilitation Center, along with the Cornea Transplant Service at Ayub Teaching Hospital (ATH) Abbottabad. During his address at the event, Chief Minister Arshad Hussain Shah expressed his concern and underscored that Ayub Teaching Hospital is the largest teaching hospital. He assured that all issues at the hospital would be addressed on a priority basis through preferential foundations.

Emphasizing the urgency of a meeting among relevant departments to tackle the hospital's challenges, the Chief Minister outlined the need for swift action. Clarifying the provincial cabinet's stance in response to the caretaker Prime Minister's announcement, Justice Arshad Hussain Shah said that we have granted approval to Ayub Medical College and Khyber Medical College for university status.

Tehrik-e-Jawan rally pays homage to security forces martyrs

KARACHI (APP): Tehrik-e-Jawan Pakistan and Kashmir (TJPK) Sindh Chapter on Wednesday took out the "Security Forces and Shuhada-e-Pakistan Zindabad" rally to pay homage to the brave sons of the soil who sacrificed their lives for the defence of the motherland.

The rally, led by TJPK Chairman Muhammad Hameed Gul, started from the PC Hotel and culminated at Ibrahim Hyderi after marching through Shahrah-e-Faisal, Qayumabad Korangi and other areas of the metropolis. At the culmination point, the rally participants were warmly

welcomed by the people. Speaking on the occasion, Abdullah Gul paid glowing tribute to the martyrs of the Armed Forces of Pakistan who had laid their lives for the security and integrity of Pakistan.

He urged the people to forge unity and discipline among their ranks and file to take the country forward on the path of progress and prosperity.

He said that Allah had bestowed the Pakistan with unique geographic landscape and precious natural resources, and "now it is our collective responsibility to work with honesty and dedication."

Sukkur Barrage to close for 15 days

SUKKUR (APP): Sukkur Barrage, Pakistan's largest irrigation system, has been announced to close for 15 days for maintenance and cleaning.

Barrage administration has announced that all seven off-taking canals of the barrage would be closed from January 6th till January 20, 2024.

The gates of the barrage would be closed for annual cleaning and renovation of the structure, the barrage authority announced.

Annual renovation work of the barrage will begin as the water level will drop in the waterworks, Incharge Control Room of the Sukkur Barrage.



LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman in a group photo with delegation of Pakistan Academy of family Physicians led by its President Tariq Mehmood.

KU VC offers internships to Turbat University students

KARACHI (APP): A delegation of the Department of Chemistry of the University of Turbat, Balochistan, visited the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), and Dr A.Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (KIBGE) of the University of Karachi on Tuesday.

Three faculty members, 17 male and 15 female students all from the final year of the BS and MSc programs were part of the three-day study tour to Karachi.

They also met the KU Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Khalid Mahmood Iraqi at KIBGE and shared their experiences regarding the visit to two centers of excellence institutes of the University of Karachi.

On this occasion, the KU VC Professor Dr Khalid Iraqi offered on-hand training programs and internships to the students of the University of Turbat.

He said that the KU would also provide accommodation, logistics, and transportation facilities to the students visiting the KU from Balochistan.

All set to take action against one-wheeler doers

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Traffic Police completed its preparation to launch a major crackdown against doers of one-wheeler in the provincial capital before new year night.

Chief Traffic Officer Ammara Athar has issued a directive to register cases against violators. According to a spokesperson for the department, strict action would also be taken against facilitators of one-wheeler doers during the crackdown. Ammara Athar said that special checkpoints had been established on 90 locations to curb one-wheeler.



GILGIT: Minister local Govt Gilgit-Baltistan Abdul Hameed giving briefing to Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan about the Department at CM Secretariat.

Minister inaugurates e-Stamping in KP

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: In a significant move towards combating the issuance of fake stamp papers in the province, KP Caretaker Minister for Revenue, Finance, and Excise Taxation, Ahmed Rasool Bangash, announced the initiation of an e-Stamping system. This initiative aims to curb the prevalence of counterfeit stamp papers and facilitate the seamless accumulation of revenues through the Bank of Khyber into the provincial account. The e-Stamping system is a crucial step towards promoting good governance in the province, as it was undertaken as part of an agency agreement signed between the Bank of Khyber and the State Bank of Pakistan.

The launching ceremony witnessed the presence of key officials, including Secretary Finance Aamer Sultan Tarin, Director Revenue, Director Finance State Bank of Pakistan Qadir Bakhsh, and Group Head Conventional Banking Sher Muhammad, along with other relevant authorities from the Bank of Khyber.

Minister Finance Ahmed Rasool Bangash, in his address during the e-Stamping launch, emphasized that the primary objective behind this initiative is to provide instant access to genuine stamp papers without any hassle and to deter fraudulent activities. Previously, the issuance of judicial and non-judicial stamp papers with the manual system took two to three days. The e-Stamping system has streamlined this process to a few hours with its two-step verification mechanism, thereby reducing the possibility of fraud by enabling online verification of e-stamps.

Group Head Conventional Banking Sher Muhammad and Director State Bank of Pakistan Qadir Bakhsh signed the agency agreement in this regard.

During the e-Stamping launching ceremony, Group Head Conventional Banking Sher Muhammad highlighted that the collaboration between the Bank of Khyber and the KPIT Board has made it possible to obtain an e-Stamp from any part of the province in just 15 minutes.



FAISALABAD: Former Opposition Leader Raja Raiz talking to media person after scrutiny in City.

Chief Secretary advocates collaborative approach for GLOF-II Success

GILGIT (APP): The Provincial Project Steering Committee (PPSC) meeting of GLOF-II Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) was convened on Wednesday.

It was chaired by the Chief Secretary GB Abrar Ahmed Mirza and was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary (Dev) Capt. (Retd) Mushtaq Ahmed, Secretary Finance Aziz Ahmed Jamali, Secretary Home Capt. (Retd) Syed Ali Asghar, Secretary Forest Zafar Waqar Taj, Secretary Agriculture Tariq Hussain, Secretary Water Management and Irrigation Riaz Ahmed, Director General GBDMA Safdar Khan, Deputy Chief Planning and Development Department Ali Jabbar, and representatives from various implementing partner organizations.

During the meeting, UNDP Provincial Coordinator Mr Abdul Basit provided a comprehensive overview of the progress achieved by

the GLOF-II project in the year 2023 and presented the proposed work plan, detailing activities and costs earmarked for the year 2024. The forum engaged in a thorough deliberation on the achievements thus far and discussed future strategies. Chief Secretary GB, Abrar Ahmed Mirza, commended the GLOF-II project for effectively addressing climate change issues and their impact on the lives, livelihoods, and natural environment of the region. He specifically praised the installation of early warning systems (EWS) in vulnerable valleys, emphasizing their crucial role in facilitating proactive measures during disasters and emergencies. The CS directed the integration of GLOF-II activities with government departments to ensure synergy and prevent duplication. He highlighted the importance of collaborative efforts to maximize the positive impact of the project.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Candidate, Mustafa Kamal talks with media persons after submitting his nomination papers for constituency NA-247 to Returning Officer for participate in General Election 2024, held at District Central Election Commission Office.

700 kg substandard chips, over 100 kg rotten edible items discarded

PESHAWAR (APP): 700 kg of substandard chips.

Similarly, during operations in different markets of Tehsil Pabbi, district Nowshera, the teams inspected pop and chips wholesalers, chicken and kebab shops, and chips and spices factories.

800 grams of non-food grade color, 5 kg of mislabeled packing material and 50 kg of substandard garlic were seized from a spices factory.

Some 40 kg of substandard chicken meat was seized from three chicken shops and discarded, said the spokesman adding that heavy fines were imposed for violation of hygiene rules, while notices for improvement were issued to several businesses.

During the operation conducted at Bedian Road, Jallo Mor, Daroghawala, Manga Mandi, Mugalpura, 27 encroachers were arrested, four FIRs were registered, 76 shops were sealed, 117 signboards, 300 sheds

Pak first foray into global jobs market with record agreements for manpower export

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, through its Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), participated for the first time in the International Human Resources & Labour Services Expo in Riyadh from December 24 to 27.

The significant step, led by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development

(OP&HRD) Jawad Sohrab Malik, marks a new era in showcasing Pakistan's workforce on the global stage, said a press release.

The SAPM orchestrated Pakistan's participation in the expo and also inaugurated Pakistan's Pavilion there.

Over a dozen agreements with Saudi and international companies were executed during the Expo to boost employment opportunities abroad for the Pakistani workforce.

The agreements would open doors for Pakistani workforce in various sectors such as construction, hospitality, information technology, services industry and various other fields globally, the press release said.

The Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), which is part of Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, was also present at the expo through its Managing

Director Naseer Khan Kashani. Other dignitaries at the expo included Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq and representatives of multinational organizations.

Underlining the importance of the expo, the SAPM stated that the expo served as a pivotal forum, bringing together human resources and recruitment companies alongside reliable and accredited labour services entities.



KARACHI: Commerce Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz chairing a high-level meeting regarding the status of Special Economic Zones in Karachi.



Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis, Muhammad Jawad Sohrab Malik inaugurating Pakistan pavilion at Human Resource and Labour Services Expo 2023 in Riyadh, KSA.

AJA to establish latest industrial units in Pakistan: Alan Xiao

FAISALABAD (APP): Mr. Alan Xiao Managing Director AJA Holding (Hong Kong) Limited visited Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and discussed opportunities for Chinese investment in Pakistan with Engineer Ahmad Hassan, Convener FCCI Standing Committee on R&D.

Mr. Alan said that Dongguan is the third major export city of China which had exported different products worth \$ 139 billion during last year.

He said that China is now exploring new markets as labour is very costly in this country. He said that Pakistan is the number one choice for China as 'we already have the best relations in addition to the CPEC'.

He said that in the first phase, AJA would invest in Pakistan while in the second phase latest industrial units could be established. He said that he would prefer such opportunities which could play a major role in

enhancing exports and help Pakistan to earn precious foreign exchange.

He said that Chinese investment could not only create new job opportunities but also play a major role in technology transfer and producing highly skilled manpower.

Engineer Ahmad Hassan welcomed the Chinese guest and said that China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has bolstered our bilateral relations in addition to offering new opportunities for economic cooperation.

He said that Faisalabad has well-developed industrial zones where a large number of industrial units are already operational. He said that foreign investors are fully supported by the government and similar facilities could also be offered to the new Chinese investors. He said, "Pakistan exports are import based and hence we would welcome import substitution industry which could trim our

President SCCI, Secretary industries visit Peshawar Expo Centre

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president, Fuad Ishaq along with Secretary Industries, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Zulfiqar Ali Shah and Pakistan Expo Centre Private Limited Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mariam Khawar visited the under-construction Peshawar Expo Centre.

During the visit, a detailed briefing was given to Fuad Ishaq and apprised him that the structure of Peshawar Expo Centre has been completed while renovation and other construction work on the Expo Centre would be completed in the next 18 months, with the provision of timely funds, said a press release here on Wednesday.

Fuad Ishaq told the secretary Industries government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Zulfiqar Ali

Shah and Pakistan Expo Centre Chief Executive Officer Mariam Khawar that in his previous presidential tenure, the Expo Centre was approved when former federal minister for commerce Khurram Dastgir visited the chamber house.

Initially, a sum of Rs 500 million had been sanctioned out of the total estimated cost of Rs 2.5 billion, in which over Rs 2.4 billion has so far been spent, the SCCI President elaborated.

He said owing to the increasing cost of construction materials, an additional Rs 4 billion is required to complete this important project for which financial assistance would be needed through the Export Development Fund.

The SCCI president expressed satisfaction with the design and structure of the Peshawar Expo Centre.



HYDERABAD: Labourer place Sindhi ajraks in sunlight for drying purpose at Tando Agha.

Rupee gains 18 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed the 11th consecutive recovery session as it gained 18 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs282.19 against the previous day's closing of Rs282.37.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs282 and Rs284.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by 33 paise to close at Rs311.60 against the last day's closing of Rs311.27, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese Yen came down by 01 paise and closed at Rs1.97, whereas a decrease of 78 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs359.26 compared to the last closing of Rs358.48.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 04 and 03 paise to close at Rs 76.84 and Rs75.24 respectively.

Multiple Pakistani experts shared their research findings on the

Yemeni ambassador meets FCCI president

FAISALABAD (APP): Yemeni Ambassador Mohammad Motaahar Alashabi said on Wednesday that efforts had been expedited to transform brotherly relations between the two countries into economic terms.

In a statement issued by the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry here on Wednesday, the ambassador held a meeting with FCCI President Dr Khurram Tariq and said that both countries shared similar perceptions about international and regional affairs and "we must exploit this factor to get maximum economic benefits for each other".

Dr Khurram Tariq introduced Faisalabad and the FCCI and said that the city alone could fulfill the entire clothing needs of Yemen, whereas Pakistan was also in a position to export rice.

Commerce minister to address status of SEZs in Karachi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz here on Wednesday chaired high-level meeting to address the status of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Karachi by creating investment friendly environment the country and to assess the current status of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) in Karachi.

The meeting was attended by key officials including Sauleh Ahmed Farooqui, Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Rashid Langrial, Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production and Sohail Rajput, Secretary Board of

Investment.

The meeting focused on the operational status of the Port Qasim SEZ, which is now ready for prospective investors.

The Port Qasim SEZ boasts comprehensive utility services, creating an ideal environment for businesses to thrive.

During the discussions, the minister highlighted the importance of diversification and growth, specifically addressing the establishment of a SEZ dedicated to the Information Technology (IT) sector.

The IT SEZ is poised to play a crucial role in fostering innovation and technological advancement

in Pakistan.

A key agenda item centered on initiatives to enhance the skill set of the labor force in Pakistan.

The Ministry of Commerce, in collaboration with other relevant authorities, plans to implement programs to improve the overall skill level of the workforce, with a particular emphasis on IT skills.

This strategic approach aligns with the goal of boosting IT exports and positioning Pakistan as a competitive player in the global IT industry.

The minister reiterated the need for proper incentivization of the public sector to ensure inclusive growth.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor at Khana Bridge is selling seasonal fruit Oranges at Khana Bridge to earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.

Silk Road Wheat Alliance symposium bolsters Pak, China wheat cooperation

BEIJING (APP): The 2023 International Symposium of the Silk Road Wheat Innovation Alliance was held at Northwest A&F University in Yangling, China. The conference holds significant importance in deepening the cooperation between China and Pakistan in the wheat industry.

More than 160 scholars, researchers, and entrepreneurs from 6 countries, including China, Pakistan, and Turkey, participated in the symposium, engaging in academic exchanges on key issues such as innovations in wheat germplasm resources, genetic breeding research, agricultural digitalization and mechanization, crop management in climate change, and the trend of international wheat trade.

Multiple Pakistani experts shared their research findings on the

event. Professor Zahid Akram from Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi, Pakistan, who is also the vice chairman of the first council of the Silk Road Wheat Innovation Alliance, delivered a speech titled Status of Wheat in Pakistan.

"Approximately 80% of farmers in Pakistan are involved in wheat production, occupying nearly 40% of the country's agricultural land. The significance of wheat production in Pakistan cannot be overstated." He also expressed optimism about the prospects of collaboration with member countries of the Silk Road Wheat Innovation Alliance.

Karim Bux Laghari, a researcher from the Wheat Research Institute in Sindh Province, Pakistan, made an academic report titled Innovative Solutions for Future Food Security: A Collaborative Approach.



LAHORE: Vendors are busy in altering the useable stuff from warehouse for supplying it to the flea markets of the Provincial Capital.

Economic outlook stays optimistic despite challenges: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Despite significant challenges, the overall economic outlook remained optimistic, marked by receding inflationary pressures, positive prospects in agriculture, signs of potential recovery in the industrial sector, imports, and a favorable external environment.

According to Monthly Economic Update and Outlook for December issued by the ministry of finance, the optimistic economic outlook is also evident by the 2.13 percent growth achieved in the first quarter of FY2024, largely contributed by agriculture

and industry.

Further, the report says, the twin deficit is on a downward trajectory signifying better economic management to reduce the macroeconomic imbalances.

"This lays the foundation for progressing towards higher and sustainable economic growth. It is therefore expected that this positive momentum will further strengthen in the upcoming months," the report adds.

Meanwhile, the report says for the Rabi season 2023-24, wheat crop has been cultivated on an estimated area of 8.733 million hectares against the target of 8.998 million

Gold rates up by Rs.1,000

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,000 and was sold at Rs. 220,600 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs. 219,600 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 857 to Rs. 189,129 from Rs. 188,272 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs. 173,368 from Rs. 172,582, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver increased by Rs.30 to Rs.2,680 whereas that of ten gram Silver went up by Rs.25.72 to Rs.2,297.66. The price of gold in the international market increased by \$13.

Ministry announces BoP improvement of \$5.6b

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Ministry of Commerce on Wednesday announced remarkable trade Performance and Year-on-Year Balance of Payments (BoP) Improvement worth \$5.6 billion as a significant achievement in Pakistan's trade sector.

Caretaker Minister of Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that the positive trade figures and upward trend showcased Pakistan's resilience, said a press release issued here.

The minister said, "We will continue to work towards enabling our exporters and to find new destinations for exports."

According to the Ministry, for a Year-on-Year Increase in exports in the first 20 days of December 2023, Pakistan experienced an outstanding year-on-year increase in exports, amounting to \$479

million, reflecting an impressive growth rate of 33.1 percent. On Year-on-Year decrease in Imports, conversely, imports during the same period saw a substantial decrease of \$405 million, marking a -12.8 percent reduction.

This positive trend contributed to an \$884 million improvement in the balance of trade for December 2023. According to the data, from July 1st, 2023, to December 20th, 2023, Pakistan's exports soared to \$14 billion, showcasing a remarkable year-on-year increase of \$709 million, translating to a substantial 5.3 percent improvement.

Import figures during the same period (1 July 2023 to 20 December 2023) dropped to \$24.3 billion from \$29.2 billion in FY-2022, reflecting a notable year-on-year decrease of \$4.9 billion.

JazzCash to become First Digital Wallet to bring Tap-and-Pay Service

ISLAMABAD (APP): JazzCash, a pioneering force in the fintech sector, is announcing its strategic collaboration with Mastercard, positioning itself as the first mobile wallet in Pakistan to bring tap-and-pay functionality and wallet tokenization through Mastercard.

The announcement made headwinds at Mastercard's MENA East Business Forum, where

JazzCash was recognized as "Mastercard's First Digital Front-End Partner", making it the first to bring digital wallet tokenization to Pakistan said a news release.

This esteemed recognition solidifies JazzCash's commitment to innovation and excellence in digital finance.

Aamir Aftab, Chief Product Officer at JazzCash, said.



SIALKOT: Senior Trainer National institute of Management, Masood Ahmed addressing to the delegation at SCCI.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity remained active at the port where three ships, MSC Jemima, Pacific Victory and Simaisma carrying Containers, Coal and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Bulk Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Tuesday.

Meanwhile three more ships Maersk Cabo Verde, Cap Andreas and Neutron Sound with Containers, and Mogas also arrived at outer anchorage of the port during the last 24 hours.

PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 1,692 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Wednesday turned around to bullish trend, gaining 1,692.64 points, a positive change of 2.86 percent, closing at 60,863.62 points against 59,170.98 points the previous trading day.

A total of 669,356,605 shares valuing Rs.16.115 billion were traded during the day as compared to 670,859,618

shares valuing Rs.17.129 billion the last day.

Some 357 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 274 of them recorded gains and 63 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 20 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 102,249,598 shares at Rs.4.89 per share, Fauji Foods Ltd with 58,130,290 shares

the decrease of 3.2 percent in September. During Jul-Oct FY2024, 12 out of 22 sectors witnessed positive growth. These include, food, beverages, coke & petroleum products, wearing apparel, leather, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, non-metallic mineral products, rubber products, fabricated metals, machinery and others (Football).

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation recorded at 29.2 percent on a YoY basis in November 2023 as compared to 23.8 percent in November 2022. During Jul-Nov FY 2024, CPI stood at 28.6 percent against 25.1 percent in the

same period last year. On basis, it increased to 2.7 percent in November 2023 compared to an increase of 1.0 percent in the previous month.

The Sensitive Price Index (SPI) for the week ended on December 21, 2023, recorded a decline of 0.51 percent as compared to previous week. Prices of 9 items declined, 24 items remained stable and 18 items increased.

A substantial increase in revenues compared to expenditures brought down the fiscal deficit to 0.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) (Rs.861.7 billion) in Jul-Oct FY2024 from 1.5 percent of GDP (Rs.1265.8 billion).

Russia unhappy with Japan over providing Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A move by Japan to provide Patriot air defence systems to Ukraine will have "grave consequences" for Russia-Japan ties, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on Wednesday.

Relations between Moscow and Tokyo, already difficult, have deteriorated sharply since Russia sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine in Feb. 2022. Japan has joined its Western allies in imposing sweeping economic sanctions on Russia.

Last week, Japan said it would prepare to ship Patriot air defence missiles to the United States after

revising its arms export guidelines, in Tokyo's first major overhaul of such export curbs in nine years.

Although Japan's new export controls still prevent it from shipping weapons to countries that are at war, it may indirectly benefit Ukraine in its war with Russia as it gives the United States extra capacity to provide military aid to Kyiv.

"The Japanese side loses control over the weapons with which Washington can now do whatever it wants," Zakharova told a weekly briefing. "It cannot be ruled out that under an already tested scheme Patriot missiles will end up in Ukraine."

Such a scenario would be "interpreted as unambiguously hostile actions against Russia and will lead to grave consequences for Japan in the context of bilateral relations", she said.

Earlier this month, Japan and South Korea both scrambled jets to monitor joint flights by Chinese and Russian bombers and fighters near their territories.

Russia and Japan have yet to conclude a treaty formally ending World War Two hostilities due to an old territorial dispute involving a chain of Pacific islands known in Japan as the Northern Territories and in Russia as the Southern Kuriles.



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov shakes hands with India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar during a joint press conference following their talks in Moscow, Russia.

Iraq slams US after deadly strikes on pro-Iran forces

Monitoring Desk
BAGHDAD: US air strikes targeting pro-Iranian forces in Iraq claimed at least one life and drew an angry response from Baghdad on Tuesday amid high regional tensions over the Israeli aggression against Gaza.

Iraq condemned as "a clear hostile act" the overnight US strikes, saying they had killed one member of the security forces and wounded 18 other people, including civilians.

Washington has repeatedly targeted sites used by Iran and pro-Tehran forces in Iraq and Syria in

response to more than 100 attacks on American and allied forces since Oct 7.

Yet another rocket barrage was fired later on Tuesday morning at US and allied forces in Syria, at an American patrol base in Al-Shaddadi, but without causing casualties or damage, said a US military official.

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin earlier announced the overnight strikes, saying that "US military forces conducted necessary and proportionate strikes on three facilities used by Kataeb Hezbollah and affiliated groups in Iraq".

Iranian Guards vow revenge against Israel over general's killing

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) warned Israel on Wednesday that it or its allied groups would take "direct" action to avenge the killing of senior commander Razi Mousavi. The general was killed on Monday in an Israeli missile strike near the Syrian capital, according to state media, at a time of heightened regional tensions around the Israel-Hamas fighting raging in Gaza.

The Israeli army, which has launched hundreds of strikes on Iran-

linked targets in war-torn Syria in recent years, said only that it does not comment on foreign media reports. The body of Mousavi, a commander in the Guards' foreign operations arm the Quds Force, was taken to Iraq for funeral rites in holy sites ahead of his burial in Iran planned for Thursday.

IRGC spokesman Ramezan Sharif warned that "our response to Mousavi's assassination will be a combination of direct action as well as [from] others led by the Axis of Resistance."

Palestinians work to identify 80 dead handed over from Israel

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Israel has handed over the bodies of 80 Palestinians killed in the conflict in Gaza, the Palestinian Ministry of Health said on Wednesday after they were buried and the authorities recorded details to help with later identification.

Gaza authorities were trying to figure out when and where the men were killed and who they were. Israeli officials did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The health ministry said the bodies were handed over by Israel through the Kerem Shalom border crossing. According to the Islamic Waqf, or religious affairs ministry, the bodies had been collected from the northern part of the Gaza.

Azerbaijan expels two French diplomats

Monitoring Desk
BAKU: Azerbaijan's foreign ministry has declared two employees of France's embassy persona non grata over "conduct that is not compatible with their diplomatic status", it said on Tuesday.

The ministry said it had summoned the French ambassador to complain, without providing any details of the incident which prompted the move.

Russia, India closer to joint military equipment production: Russian FM

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia and India have made tangible progress in talks on plans to jointly produce military equipment, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Wednesday, after talks with his Indian counterpart Subrahmanya Jaishankar in Moscow. Speaking at a news conference, Lavrov said such cooperation was of a strategic nature and was in both countries' interests and would help ensure security on the Eurasian continent.

He said Moscow respected India's desire to diversify its military hardware suppliers and was ready to support New Delhi's desire to manufacture things needed by India in India. Kremlin spokesper-

son Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin would meet Jaishankar later on Wednesday. Jaishankar said he expected Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to meet next year. Jaishankar said he and Lavrov had discussed the conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, as well as bilateral trade and investment. India has become one of Russia's core economic partners since the West in 2022 imposed sweeping sanctions on Moscow over the war in Ukraine.

Russia has diverted much of its oil exports to India and stepped up diplomacy within the BRICS group of nations, a grouping of which both countries are founding members.

South Korean capital drills to guard against surprise attack by North

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: More than 1,000 South Korean military, police and emergency personnel joined rare defence drills on Wednesday that simulated an attack by North Korea on Seoul, to counter fears the city is in striking distance of Pyongyang's weapons and covert attack.

The exercise comes amid heightened tension after the North tested an intercontinental ballistic missile and launched its first military spy satellite, with the neighbours reinstating last month some military measures eased after a 2018 pact.

towns in Israel, which killed more than 1,200 people at the time, showed that superior military capabilities did not mean much if the enemy mounted a successful surprise attack.

Wednesday's drills simulated attacks on a major water supply facility, telephone network stations, and an underground communications and power cable corridor.

Seoul's distance of just 38 km (24 miles) from the military border with the North makes it particularly susceptible to an attack at any time, Oh added.

The densely populated centre of government, business and finance is home to 9.4 million people, with an additional 1.4 million who work and go to school there each day.

Oh has adopted a hardline position against North Korea, arguing that the South must possess its own nuclear weapons as the only way to neutralise the threat from Pyongyang.

US delegation heads to Mexico as nations see migrant numbers jump

Monitoring Desk
TAPACHULA: Secretary of State Antony Blinken heads Wednesday to Mexico in hopes of showing headway in tackling surging migration, which has climbed to the top of political headlines for President Joe Biden as he enters an election year.

The unusual Christmas week trip by the top US diplomat was abruptly scheduled as the rival Republican Party presses Biden for a migration crackdown in return for agreeing in Congress to one of his key priorities - support for Ukraine.

focus on processing migrants. Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador discussed migration in a telephone call Thursday with Biden, who agreed to send Blinken, who is accompanied by Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas and White House migration official Liz Sherwood Lopez. Obrador told reporters Friday that Mexico would "reinforce our plans" to deal with US-bound migrants - few of whom are Mexicans - after his government also said it was at the breaking point on enforcement.

Around 10,000 people have been seeking to enter without authorization each day on the southern US border, nearly double the number before the pandemic, with a new caravan of hundreds if not thousands of people leaving by foot from southern Mexico on Sunday.

US border authorities have been so overwhelmed that they have suspended several legal crossings to

Congo deploys riot police ahead of banned anti-election protest

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: Riot police massed in the centre of Democratic Republic of Congo's capital Kinshasa on Wednesday as the authorities moved to block a protest by the opposition who are calling for a re-run of last week's chaotic national election.

Five of President Felix Tshisekedi's challengers in the race have called on their supporters to join a march against the poll, which they say was fraudulent and should be annulled.

They have vowed to proceed even after the government banned the protest on Tuesday, saying it was intended to undermine the work of the national election commission (CENI) as it compiles results that for now show Tshisekedi with a strong lead.

that has hampered development in the country, the world's top producer of cobalt and other industrial minerals and metals.

Police surrounded the headquarters of one of the incumbent's main challengers, Martin Fayulu, where protesters were meant to gather in the morning. Some were in riot gear while others held rifles, a Reuters reporter said.

The march was scheduled to begin at 0900 GMT but there was no immediate sign of large crowds gathering amid the heavy security presence.

Protests against the election also broke out in the eastern city of Butembo, where participants blocked roads and disrupted traffic with burning tires, another reporter said.

After a sometimes violent campaign, the Dec 20 vote itself was chaotic, with destabilising poverty-stricken Congo, which is already grappling with a security crisis in its east



Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez attends a press conference at Moncloa Palace in Madrid, Spain.

NY Times sues OpenAI, Microsoft for infringing copyrighted works

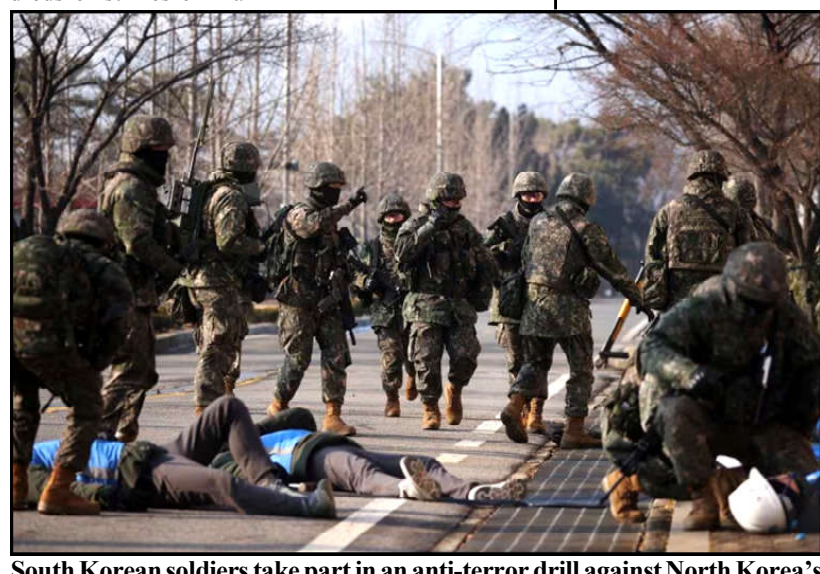
Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: The New York Times (NYT) sued OpenAI and Microsoft (MSFT) on Wednesday, accusing them of using millions of the newspaper's articles without permission to help train artificial intelligence technologies.

The Times said it is the first major U.S. media organization to sue OpenAI and Microsoft, which created ChatGPT and other AI platforms, over copyright issues.

It said the defendants were trying to "free-ride on The Times's massive investment in its journalism by using it to build substitute products without permission or payment," according to the complaint filed in Manhattan federal court. "There is nothing 'transformative' about using The Times's content without payment to create products that substitute for The Times and steal audiences away from it," the Times said.

Self-driving cars could be on UK roads by 2026 -minister

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Self-driving cars could be on some British roads by 2026, the country's transport minister Mark Harper said on Wednesday. Cars with full self-driving technology are not currently permitted on Britain's roads but the government's Automated Vehicles (AV) legislation is going through parliament, meaning that a legal framework for them should be in place by the end of 2024, said Harper.



South Korean soldiers take part in an anti-terror drill against North Korea's possible provocations amid mounting tensions on the Korean peninsula, in Seoul, South Korea.

Floods in Congo kill at least 22, official says

Monitoring Desk
KINSHASA: Flooding triggered by heavy rains in central Congo killed at least 22 people, including 10 from the same family, a local official said Tuesday.

The hours-long rainfall in the district of Kananga in Kasai Central province destroyed many houses and structures, the province's governor, John Kabeya, said as rescue efforts intensified in search of survivors. Five more deaths were confirmed later on Tuesday in addition to the initially reported death toll of 17, he said. "The collapse of a wall caused 10 deaths, all members of the same family in Bikuku,"

said Kabeya.

There was significant material damage caused by the floods, according to Nathalie Kambala, country director of The Hand in Hand for Integral Development nongovernmental organization. Flooding caused by heavy rainfall is frequent in parts of Congo, especially in remote areas. In May, more than 400 people died in floods and landslides brought on by torrential overnight rains in eastern Congo's South Kivu province. Among the structures damaged in the latest flooding was the Higher Institute of Technology of Kananga, as well as a church and a major road that was cut off.

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 in some areas. Other parts of North India, including the states of Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, reported similar weather conditions on Tuesday morning.

"Very dense fog" was observed in the city, where the temperature was just 9 degrees Celsius, 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.

UN appoints top Dutch diplomat to supervise Gaza aid

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations has appointed a senior Dutch politician and seasoned diplomat on Tuesday to oversee crucial aid cargo entering into war-ravaged Gaza, filling a crucial role called for in a Security Council resolution adopted last week.

In a statement, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said he had selected Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch finance minister and a deputy prime minister, to

be the senior humanitarian and reconstruction coordinator for Gaza.

The Security Council resolution called for the coordinator to be responsible for "consulting all relevant parties" on aid shipments and for "facilitating, coordinating, monitoring and verifying" that aid cargo entering Gaza is humanitarian in nature.

In this role she will facilitate, coordinate, monitor and verify humanitarian relief consignments for Gaza," the U.N. chief said.

China warns rocket remnants to hit South China Sea

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China warned that remnants of a rocket would hit an area in the South China Sea on Tuesday, following the sixth deployment of its most powerful launch vehicle eleven days ago.

Rocket debris, which generally burns up in the atmosphere on re-entry, is expected to fall off the coast of China's island province of Hainan between 11:00 a.m. (0300 GMT) and noon (0400 GMT), said the China Maritime Safety Administration.

China launched a Long March 5 rocket on Dec 15 from Hainan's Wenchang launch site, a sixth launch of the rocket type since its first flight in 2016.

Kenya rights groups say move to block phone fraud is surveillance

Monitoring Desk
NAIROBI: Kenyan digital rights campaigners warn a phone tracking programme the government said it was pressing ahead with to trace counterfeit devices and curb fraud could lead to increased state surveillance and invasion of privacy.

Kenya's Ministry of Information, Communication and the Digital Economy Eliud Owalo said this month that the government intends to go ahead with plans to roll out a Device Management System (DMS) to allow authorities to access the unique identification number of mobile phones and block services to fake devices.

Owalo said the measure would curb the widespread proliferation of counterfeit and stolen devices in the east African country, prevent the loss of millions of dollars through evaded taxes and fraudulent calls, and boost cybersecurity. Kenya imposes customs and excise duties on imported phones as well as a retail sales tax. It also taxes internet usage and money transfer transactions conducted via mobile phones, a widely used method to pay for goods and services in the country. But campaigners, who lost a six-year legal battle in April against the Kenyan government to halt the introduction of the DMS, argue the technology will violate users' privacy rights.

Japan to impose sanctions on Hamas leaders

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: The Japanese government will freeze assets and impose sanctions on payments and capital transactions on three senior Hamas members, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said on Tuesday.

The three individuals were believed to be involved in the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas on Israel and in a position to use funds to finance such terrorist activities, the top Japanese government spokesperson said.



Police officers examine a scene where South Korean actor Lee Sun-kyun was found dead at a park in Seoul, South Korea.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 5th meeting of the Board of Governors of Special Technology Zones Authority.

Govt taking steps to boost foreign investment in IT sector: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said the government was taking steps to boost foreign investment in the Information Technology sector.

"In this regard, positive progress has already been made," the prime minister said while chairing the 5th meeting of Board of Governors of Special Technology Zones Authority.

In a bid to promote and develop IT sector in the country, he directed the authorities concerned to chalk

out necessary policies to attract international IT experts in Pakistan.

PM Kakar highlighted that the Information Technology sector could play a vital role in strengthening the country's economy as Pakistan had huge potential in this sector.

During the meeting, various matters linked to the Special Technology Zones Authority, came under discussion.

The meeting endorsed the decisions, concluded during the 4th meeting of the Board of Governors of Special Technology Au-

thority.

It approved the restructuring of the finance, audit and technical committees of the Board of Governors of the Authority.

Furthermore, the meeting also approved the presentation of drafts of the Authority's licensing framework, procedures and regulations before the technical committee.

Federal Secretaries of Cabinet, Finance, Information Technology, Science and Technology, Chief Secretaries of all the provinces and other Board members, attended the meeting.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed visiting Haji Camp.

CDWP approves seven projects worth Rs 85.24b

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan on Wednesday presided over a meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) that approved five projects worth Rs 13 billion.

Besides it recommended two development projects of Rs72.240 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for further consideration, a news release said.

Secretary Planning Awais Manzur Sumra, senior officials from the Planning Commission and Federal Ministries/Divisions, and Chairman/ACS (Dev) from Provincial Governments participated in the meeting.

Two projects namely "Upgradation of Transmission Network & Replacement of Optical Fiber Cable, AJK & Gilgit Baltistan (revised)" worth Rs. 1999 million and "Prime

Minister's Initiatives Support for IT Startups, Specialized IT Trainings and Venture Capital (revised)" worth Rs 5000 million were approved.

Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, presented a projected "Establishment of Infectious Disease Laboratory" worth Rs 8289.913 million which the forum recommended to ECNEC for approval.

The project envisages the establishment of state of the art R&D Laboratory to detect/analyze microorganisms. Upon completion of the project after PC-I, the NIH will have a better capability for the detection of novel, exotic, emerging and re-emerging pathogens and their timely control as well as R&D facility which is an absolute necessity. The CDWP also okayed two projects of the Ministry of Law & Justice namely "Construction of Litigants Facilitation center for Litigants and Lawyers in Sector G-10/1 Islamabad".



QUETTA: PPP activates lighting candle on 16th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Shaheed Benazir Bhutto at Assembly Chowk.

In affairs of domicile certificates Hamza stresses need to prepare mechanism for bringing transparency

Independent Report QUETTA: The Commissioner Quetta Division, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat has underlined the need to prepare such a mechanism for bringing transparency in preparation of domicile certificates so that no citizen especially youngsters and students may not face any issue and inconvenience.

The Commissioner Quetta was chairing a meeting held to review the issues related to the domicile certificates here on Wednesday.

The officials of NADRA were in attendance at the meeting.

Also present on the occasion was Deputy Commissioner Quetta Ft Lt. (Retd) Saad bin Asad.

During the course of meeting, different aspects

regarding domicile certificates were discussed. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said that one window operation facility is being provided to the public for domicile certificates in the Deputy Commissioner office.

The meeting decided to prepare new software by NADRA end DC office through which the complete scrutiny of the documents and biometric would be done.

Moreover, it was also declared to computerise all the domicile certificates prepared during last 40-50 years.

This would end to the bogus and fake domicile certificates as well, besides making their verification for the jobs from anywhere in the country, it was strongly believed.

Mushtaq Ghani's nomination papers rejected

ABBOTTABAD (INP): The nomination papers of Mushtaq Ghani, the Speaker of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, have been rejected.

The decision came after the Returning Officer for PK-45 Abbottabad found that Mushtaq Ghani was absconding and had failed to return despite providing a travel guarantee.

The Returning Officer stated that due to Mushtaq Ghani's absence, his nomination papers were rejected. However, the papers submitted by Mushtaq Ghani's wife, Farzana Mushtaq, were approved.

It is important to note that objections to Mushtaq Ghani's nomination papers were raised by Fayaz, leading to the rejection of his candidacy for the election from PK-45. Mushtaq Ghani had originally submitted his papers for consideration in this constituency.

Solangi, Naqvi discuss steps for solution of journalists problems

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday met Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

Provincial Information Minister Aamir Mir was also present on the occasion.

They discussed issues of mutual interest, solutions of media industry problems and initiatives for welfare of the journalist community. Murtaza Solangi appreciated the steps taken by Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi to execute and complete public projects at fast pace.

Aneeq reviews measures for convenience of pilgrims at Haji camp

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed reviewed the necessary measures for the convenience of pilgrims here on Wednesday.

Talking to media persons, the caretaker federal minister said all necessary measures are being taken for the convenience and ease of the pilgrims.

After 50 years, the Haji camp is being painted and the renovation work

will be completed soon, Aneeq Ahmed said. He directed to make Hajj more convenient and said through the "Sponsorship Hajj Scheme" not only the overseas Pakistanis get quality facilities at low cost but the country will earn dollars through it.

He said that more than 70,000 applications have been received in the regular Hajj scheme and the Hajj lottery will be held on Thursday.

Qambar Dashti says: Highways, connecting roads essential for development, prosperity of province

Independent Report QUETTA: The Secretary Communications and Works, Qambar Dashti has stated that the effective and strong infrastructure and communication system is guarantor of the development of Balochistan.

The Secretary directed to the concerned authorities to expedite the pace of development work on all development projects.

The Secretary C&W was chairing a meeting held to review the development projects of roads sector in the province here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by chief engineers, officers and other con-

cerned high ups of all the circles of Quetta, Khuzdar and Sibi zones.

Addressing the meeting, Secretary said that there is an important role of highways and link roads in the development and prosperity of the province.

He said that if the roads would be solid and complete, there would be positive impacts on development of the province.

It may be mentioned here that the Secretary had visited and reviewed the development projects and different roads all over the province.

During the visit, he had issued certain orders for completion of the projects.



QUETTA: A delegation of labour leaders led by Muhammad Ramzan Achakzai meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Domki

BHC declares names of successful candidates on posts of Add. D&SJ

Independent Report QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) has announced the names of successful candidates on the posts of Additional District & Sessions Judge (D&SJ) to serve in BPS-20.

According to an official notification issued here by the High court on Wednesday, those declared successful on the posts of Additional D&SJ are included: Muhammad Yousaf son of Gulam Yasin, Gulam Mustafa s/

o Muhammad Iqbal, Atif Faizan s/o Ghous Bakhsh, Khan Muhammad s/o Taj Wali, Muhammad Ashraf s/o Abdul Habib, Nissr Hussain s/o Gulam Hussain. Similarly, Kalimullah s/o Jan Muhammad and Shahid Javed s/o Muhammad Sarwar Javed have also been declared successful on the posts of Additional D&SJ.

The notification mentioned that primarily the successful candidates would perform for one year on probation.

TLP election candidate shot dead in Kharian

KHARIAN (INP): An election candidate of Tehrik-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) was shot dead in a firing incident in Kharian on Wednesday morning. As he was about to launch his campaign from PP-29, Malik Saqib Nawaz was sprayed with bullets by his rivals over a land dispute in the suburban village of Jalalpur Sotbiyan in Kharian city. The police have registered a case against seven accused on the complaint of Saqib's father Muhammad Nawaz and arrested two accused.

Protection of Pakistan's cyberspace under PECA Act is very important: Dr. Umar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Cybersecurity Hackathon. The event was organized by the National Technology Fund (Ignite), an organization of the Ministry of IT Telecom.

Dr. Umar Saif further said that there was no specific organization to act against cybercrime, so a cybercrime wing was created in FIA to look after these issues.

"We have established a separate agency called the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency equipped with all the required equipment and skills," he said. The minister said

gradually, the authority to act against cybercrime is being transferred from the FIA Cybercrime wing to this particular organization which will be able to take effective action against cybercrime.

He was of the view that with Pakistan's cyberspace, data of public and private institutions, business transactions, and online activities of citizens can be secured effectively.

The IT Minister said that the first National Cyber Emergency Response Team (National CERTS) has also been es-

ablished in Pakistan, and Sectoral CERTS will be formed under this organization.

In other words, the government of Pakistan has created an entire infrastructure under an effective strategy against cybercrimes, which is being rapidly implemented to make it fully functional.

Dr Umar Saif, extended his gratitude to all participants, sponsors, and organizers who played an instrumental role in making the Digital Pakistan Cybersecurity Hackathon an undeniable success.



ISLAMABAD: The CDWP meeting presided over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan here in Islamabad on December 27, 2023. The forum approved 5 development projects with a cost of Rs.13bn & recommended 2 projects worth Rs.72.240bn to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for further consideration.

President displeased over delay by HEC to attest student's degree; directs inquiry

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has expressed displeasure over the delay by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) for not attesting the degree of a former student on flimsy grounds and upheld the orders of the Wafaqi Mohtasib, directing HEC to attest her degree within seven days.

The president also instructed for initiating an inquiry against the delinquent official responsible for wasting precious months of the student.

He issued these directions while rejecting a representation filed by HEC against a decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing it to attest a female student's BA degree within seven days.

As per details, Savera Afridi (the complainant) had applied to HEC for attestation of her BA degree and DMC but she was informed that since the session of her degree was 2020, it could not be attested as HEC had phased out two-year conventional B.A/B.Sc. programme and the universities were not allowed to enroll students in conventional B.A/B.Sc. program after the academic year 2019. Feeling aggrieved, the complainant approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib who passed the orders in her favour. The HEC then filed a representation with the Mohtasib, which were rejected.

Later, the Commission filed a representation

against the orders of the Mohtasib with the President. The President held personal hearing of the case and rejected HEC's representation.

He observed that the complainant was given admission by the University of Peshawar for the session 2019-2020 and the complainant had produced a letter of the University dated 01.09.2022 which showed that the complainant's session for her BA degree was 2019-2020 and she was given admission in January 2020. He added that since the complainant was given admission by the University for the session 2019-2020, therefore, there was no fault on the part of the complainant and she should not suffer for the acts.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri says Our aim is not to become MPA or MNA but to serve people, solve their problems

Independent Report HUB: Senior Leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and President of Hub District and Spokesperson for Balochistan and Spokesperson of former president Asif Ali Zardari, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has said that our aim is not to become MPA or MNA but our aim is to serve our people and solve their problems. He expressed these views while addressing the tribal and social leaders and workers who joined the Pakistan People's Party in a public gathering at Sarawan Colony in Hub. Khalid Khan Kakar, owner of Al

Saudia Hotel, Lala Khair Khan, Haji Iqbal and social and political figure Haji Malik Banglazi welcomed and expressing confidence in Mir Ali Hassan Zehri's people-friendly initiatives, dignitaries from Kakar community and other communities of Sarawan Colony joined the People's Party. On this occasion, Mir Hamza Kakar, Shah Mohammad Kakar, Usman Kakar, Abdul Samad Kakar, Lala Khan Kakar and hundreds of colleagues formally joined the People's Party. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri wore the party muffler and said that I am grateful to all the dignitaries.



PESHAWAR: Police officials fired tear gas and restore baton-charged to repel government teachers during their protest demonstration for the upgradation of the pay scale, at GT road.

ANP can't be defeated if rigging not done, says Asghar Khan Achakzai

Independent Report QUETTA: The provincial president of Awami National Party (ANP) Asghar Khan Achakzai has stated that the ANP can't be defeated if there would be no rigging in the upcoming general elections.

The ANP provincial president was addressing the ceremony in which tribal and political elders announced to join the party in Chaman on Wednesday.

Malik Habibullah Adozai, Wazir Khan, Saleh Zai, Nazir Achakzai and Abdul Wali Khan along with large number of companions joined the party after resigning from different parties.

They reposed confi-

dence on the leadership of Asghar Khan Achakzai saying that we have joined the party seeing his character and services.

Meanwhile, the ANP provincial Chief welcomed those who joined the party.

He said that ANP is emerging as the only representative party of Pashtoons. He said that the people are joining the party in large number, he added.

He said that if there would be no rigging in the elections, then no party and even any alliance can defeat ANP in the upcoming elections.

He said that we would succeed in the elections once again with the support of masses.

PMIC chairman stresses upon timely completion of Kachhi Canal Project

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Inspection Commission (PMIC) Chairman Brig (Retd) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha on Wednesday, while taking cognizance of the Caretaker Prime Minister's concerns over the unwarranted delays in the completion of Kachhi Canal (PSDP) Project, stressed for its completion in true letter and spirit.

The chairman chaired a meeting over the project which was attended by

PMIC officers Engr Aamir Hasan, member Muhammad Saleh Narejo, director and the officers of Ministry of Water Resources and all other relevant stakeholders (Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, WAPDA and Irrigation Department, Government of Punjab) of the project, a press release said.

After showing dissatisfaction over the implementation status, the monitoring task was given to

Engr Aamir Hasan, member PMIC (former retired federal secretary) for ensuring effective supervision of the project, currently under Monitoring, Evolution and Inspection at the PMIC.

The progress report of the project would be submitted to the prime minister. The representatives of ministries of water resources and planning, development & special initiatives, WAPDA and irrigation department, Government of Punjab briefed the

PMIC chairman on the latest progress of the project while the project director of the Kachhi Canal gave a briefing about the issues pertaining to restoration of flood damages. After detailed deliberations, it was resolved that an immediate meeting might be called with all the relevant stakeholders of Kachhi Canal Project under the chairmanship of deputy chairman of Planning Commission to resolve the issues for its timely completion.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Chairman All Pakistan Oil Tanker Owners Association Mir Shams Shahwani meeting with Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi