

# Independent

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## Pak calls for permanent ceasefire in Gaza, investigation into attacks by Israel on medical facilities

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan while calling for permanent ceasefire in Gaza has said investigation into attacks by Israel on medical facilities centers be got conducted.

Indian forces brutalities are continuing in Occupied Kashmir. India should stop terrorism in Kashmir valley. The terrorists attacks from Afghanistan and terrorists safe havens therein are matter of grave concern, this was said by Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch during weekly press briefing here Friday.

She said care taker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar ul Haq Kakar is on his visit to Dubai to represent Pakistan in opening session of World Climate Action summit Cop-28 conference. He has visited UAE and Kuwait as

well. He met UAE president and held talks on bilateral relations and regional issues.

She said Pakistan has once again asked Afghan authorities to take immediate and effective steps against terrorist entities operating from their soil.

She voiced concerns over the presence of terrorist sanctuaries in Afghanistan. She said these terrorists continue to attack Pakistan and cause loss of life. The spokesperson said Pakistan desires to have peaceful and friendly relations with Afghanistan. We have great sympathies with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan who have suffered a great deal because of difficult humanitarian and security situation. She said Pakistan has advocated internationally that humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan must continue. Responding to a ques-

tion, Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said Pakistan is strongly committed to protection of workers and projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). She said we will defeat designs of any terrorist entity against CPEC or any other investment project in Pakistan.

Expressing concerns over the situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the spokesperson urged India to repeal its draconian laws and stop using the bogey of terrorism to suppress dissent in the occupied territory.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's call for a durable and sustained ceasefire in Gaza to enable supply of extensive and robust humanitarian assistance, urgently needed medical aid to the injured and shelter to those displaced by the indiscriminate and in-humane bombing by Israeli occupation forces.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar being received by the President of the United Arab Emirates His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres on his arrival at Dubai Expo City to attend the High Level Segment of United Nations' 28th Conference of Parties.

## Let people make decisions of Pakistan: Bilawal pledges to move ahead and serve masses & country burying politics of hatred, division & ego

Chairman PPP says he can change destiny of country together with people; urges people not to let decide those destiny of country who have made politics of hatred and division; emphasizes upon giving up traditional thinking and approach of politics & rule

**Independent Report**  
QUETTA: The Chairman Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has reiterated his pledge to move ahead and serve masses of the country burying the politics of hatred, division and ego.

The Chairman PPP said that let people of Pakistan make decisions about fate of the country, as when they (people) take any decision then no power of the world can stop them from doing so.

Bilawal Bhutto said that we are being told that the person who remained Prime Minister of the country thrice would resolve the problems and steer out of

the hardships after becoming Premier for fourth time. The PPP chief was addressing the Balochistan High Court Bar here on Friday morning.

He said that we have full confidence on the people of Pakistan that they would hear us. He said that he can change the destiny of country together with the people.

Chairman PPP thanked the people of Balochistan for the wholehearted participation and response in the party's foundation day gathering in Quetta.

He said that the people of Balochistan gave the message that they are with Pakistan Peoples Party.

Referring the 8th August 2016 tragedy of civil hospital Quetta, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that he knew Balochistan and well aware of the agony the people have gone through.

He said that he has gone through the agony and grief, which the people of Balochistan have passed.

He said that my grandfather Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was hanged to death while his mother and uncles were martyred too. "Today, when I see a mother in Balochistan sad because of her son's target killing or disappearance, I understand her pain," said Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

## PM holds informal interactions with world leaders on COP28 margins

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday held informal interactions with multiple world leaders, on the sidelines of the COP28 summit.

Among those whom the prime minister interacted with informally, included British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

The prime minister also held an informal interaction with British King Charles III as they participated in the family photo of High Level Segment of 28th Conference of Parties.

At the Summit, the prime minister is accompanied by Caretaker Ministers including Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jalani, Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Climate Change Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam and Energy Minister Muhammad Ali.

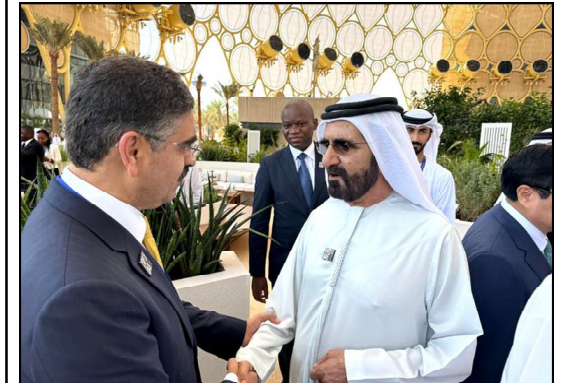
Meanwhile Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-

Haq Kakar on Friday visited the Pakistan Pavilion, established here at the venue of United Nations' 28th Conference of Parties (COP 28). The prime minister was briefed on the efforts being made by Pakistan with regard to the negotiations and facilitation in the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund.

He was also briefed on the 'Living Indus Initiative' which is designed to rehabilitate the health of the Indus Basin in Pakistan through climate-resilient approaches and nature-based solutions.

The prime minister also met the Pakistani climate experts at the Pavilion and appreciated their efforts with regard to climate change risk mitigation.

Caretaker ministers for Foreign Affairs and Climate Change, and Pakistan's ambassador to the United Arab Emirates also accompanied the prime minister.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets with Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and the Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on the sidelines of the high level segment of COP-28.

## NAB files reference against Imran, Bushra and 6 others

ISLAMABAD (INP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Friday filed a reference against PTI Chairman Imran Khan and seven others, including the ex-premier's wife Bushra Bibi and property tycoon Malik Riaz, in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust case.

The case alleges that Imran and his wife obtained billions of rupees and land worth hundreds of kanals from Bahria Town Ltd for legalising Rs50 billion that

was identified and returned to the country by the UK during the previous PTI government.

Imran was initially arrested in the case earlier this year from the premises of the Islamabad High Court but was later released after the Supreme Court declared the arrest unlawful.

On Nov 14, the PTI chief, who is already imprisoned in Adiala Jail in the cipher case, was again arrested by the accountability watchdog in the case.

## Decision taken to auction precious imported vehicles provided to CJP

ISLAMABAD (Online): The imported luxury vehicles provided to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) will be put to auction. Registrar Supreme Court (SC) has written a letter to cabinet secretary and chief secretary Punjab for auctioning these vehicles.

It has been said in the letter that the Mercedes Benz which was purchased at the cost of Rs 61 million in 2020 will be auc-

tioned. Bullet proof land cruiser provided by Punjab government will also be put to auction. Importing luxury vehicles for those holding constitutional slots is not proper. The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has not used both the vehicles. The amount to be acquired from the auction of the vehicles will be spent on public transport.



QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to Balochistan High Court Bar Association.

## President directs MCB to investigate corrupt officials involved in scam

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Muslim Commercial Bank (MCB) to investigate and initiate criminal proceedings, including the registration of FIRs, against corrupt bank officials of Gojra Road Branch, Jhang.

The bank officials were involved in bank fraud.

He also directed MCB to return Rs 3.093 million

to a customer who had been swindled out of his money through the connivance of a tea boy and bank officials posted at the branch.

The president gave these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by MCB against the decision of the Banking Mohtasib directing the bank to pay the complainant a sum of Rs 3.093 million.

## Mushaal Mullick briefs UK Parliamentarians on human right violations in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick Friday attended a meeting of cross-party British Parliamentarians, convened by Member Parliament, Chairperson APPG on Jammu & Kashmir, Debbie Abrahams at a virtual platform from London.

Besides British Parliamentarians, members of the civil society and human rights organisations

also participated in the virtual debate, which circled around the state of human rights affairs in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mushaal Mullick briefed the parliamentarians about human rights abuses by the Indian government in the occupied valley.

She particularly raised the issue of gross violations of human rights against women and children in IIOJK.

## PM attends COP28 in Dubai

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday joined the world leaders at the high-level segment of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP 28) of the United Nations to discuss actions on climate change.

The prime minister was received by President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Secretary General of the United Nations Antonio Guterres on his arrival at the venue, Dubai Expo City.

## Chairman PTI moves court against order for his jail trial

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chairman PTI has filed petition in the court against the order of his jail trial.

The petition has been filed in Special court established under official secret act led by judge Abual Hasnaat Zulqarnain here Friday.

The petitioner has taken the plea this court issued order on November 23, 2023 that the accused be presented in Judicial complex on November 28.

## Pakistan Navy deploys ship for regional maritime security patrol in Goa

ISLAMABAD (APP): Amidst the prevailing maritime situation in the Middle East, Pakistan Navy has deployed PNS TUGHRIL to ensure safety and security of merchant ships carrying shipments to and from Pakistani ports passing through one of the world's busiest choke points.

Pakistan Navy is committed to ensure freedom of navigation on high seas and safety of international sea lanes of communication besides safeguarding national maritime interests and trade through sea, a Pakistan Navy news release on Friday said.

Pakistan Navy is well cognizant of its national obligation with regards to maintenance of rule based order in the region.

In the same spirit, Pakistan Navy regularly deploys its ships on Regional Maritime Security Patrols and also contributes to collaborative maritime security efforts under the ambit of Combined Maritime Forces.



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## ECP moves closer to elections, releases the final list of constituencies

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has released the final list of constituencies derived from the 7th Population and Housing Census 2023 for the upcoming general elections. According to the notification issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan, the number of general seats has been reduced from 272 to 266. The 12 seats originally designated for elsewhere FATA have been abolished, with six seats reallocated to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa based on population.

The Election Commission reports that the National Assembly will have 266 constituencies for general seats, and there will be 593 constituencies for gen-

eral seats in the provincial assemblies nationwide. According to the finalized constituencies, Islamabad is allocated 3 general seats in the National Assembly, Punjab will have 141 general seats, and the Provincial Assembly is set to have 297 general seats. Sindh is designated 61 general seats in the National Assembly and 130 in the Provincial Assembly. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is allotted 45 general seats in the National Assembly and 115 in the Provincial Assembly. Meanwhile, Balochistan holds 16 general seats in the National Assembly and 51 in the Provincial Assembly. As outlined by the Election Commission, the National Assembly will include 60 seats for women and 10 reserved seats for minorities. The total membership of the National Assembly will be 336, comprising 266 general seats. Providing specifics on reserved seats for women, the election commission stated that the National Assembly will allocate 32 seats for women from Punjab, 14 from Sindh, 10 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 4 from Balochistan. Providing a breakdown of the 141 general seats in Punjab, the final list of constituencies issued by the Election Commission indicates that Attock district will have 2 National Assembly seats, Rawalpindi will have 6, and Rawalpindi and Murree combined will have 1 National Assembly seat. Likewise, Chakwal is

allocated 1 National Assembly seat, while Talagang and Chakwal combined will have 1 seat. Jhelum will hold 2 seats, and Gujrat will have 4 National Assembly seats. Wazirabad and Hafizabad will each have 1 seat, Mandi Bahauddin will have 2, Sialkot 5, Narowal 2, and Gujranwala 5 seats. Similarly, sargodha is set to have 5 National Assembly seats, Khushab 2, Mianwali 2, while both Bhakkar and Chinioit will each have 2 seats. Faisalabad will account for 10 National Assembly seats, Toba Tek Singh 3, Jhang 3, Nankana Sahib 2, and Sheikhupura 4. Lahore is allocated 14 seats in the National Assembly, Kasur 4, Okara 4, Pakpattan 2, Sahiwal 3, Khanewal 4, and Multan

will have 6 National Assembly seats. The number of National Assembly seats for Lodhran will be 2, Wahari 4, Bahawalnagar 4 and Bahawalpur 5 while Rahim Yar Khan will have 6, Muzaffargarh 4, Kot Addu 2, Lyiyah 2 and Taunsa will have one seat. According to the conclusive list of constituencies issued by the Election Commission, Dera Ghazi Khan is assigned 3 National Assembly seats, while Rajanpur is also allocated 3 seats. Sindh province is allocated 61 general seats in the National Assembly. The final constituency list indicates that Jacobabad district in Sindh will have 1 National Assembly seat, with Jacobabad and Kashmir jointly forming 1 constituency.

Shikarpur will be represented by 1 National Assembly seat, and combined, Kashmir and Shikarpur will share 1 seat. Additionally, Larkana and Qambar Shahdadkot will jointly hold 2 National Assembly seats. Ghotki, Sukkur, and Khairpur will each have 3 National Assembly seats, while Nauwshero Feroze and Shaheed Benazirabad will both have 2 seats. Sanghar is allocated 2 National Assembly seats, Mirpur Khas 2, Umarnot 1, and Tharparkar will have 2 seats. The final constituency list indicates that Matiari, Tando Allahyar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Sajawal, Thatta, and Jamshoro will each hold 1 National Assembly seat. Hyderabad is set to have 3 seats, while Badin

and Dadu will each have 2 seats in the National Assembly. According to the final list of constituencies from the Election Commission, Malir district in Karachi will have 3 National Assembly seats, Korangi 3, Karachi East 4, and Karachi South 4 seats. Kemari will be represented by 2 seats, Karachi West 3, and Karachi Central is designated 4 National Assembly seats. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will have 45 general seats in the National Assembly. According to the Election Commission's final list of new constituencies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there will be 1 seat each for Lower and Upper Chitral, 3 for Swat, 1 for Upper Dir, and 2 for Lower Dir. Additionally, Bajaur, Malakand, Buner, Shangla, and

Battagram will each have 1 seat. Upper Kohistan Lower Kohistan, and Kolai Pass Kohistan will collectively have 1 seat. Manshra will have 1 seat, and Manshra and Toor Ghar will share 1 seat in the National Assembly. Abbottabad is allocated 2 National Assembly seats, Haripur 1, Swabi 2, and Mardan will have 3 National Assembly seats. Charsadda will have 2 seats, Khyber 1, and Mohmand is designated 1 seat in the National Assembly. Balochistan is allocated 16 general seats in the National Assembly. As per the Election Commission's list of new constituencies in Balochistan, there will be 1 National Assembly Constituency comprising Shirani, Zhob, Qila Saifullah, Musakhel, Barkhan, Loralai.

Daily Voice of Masses  
**Independent**

**Half victories**

The entire point of an independent judiciary arises from the need for neutral arbiters who can determine, through objective assessment of facts and a dispassionate interpretation and application of the law, whether any member(s) of society has broken the social contract.

It is our great misfortune that our justice system repeatedly fails on this count. Nowhere are the implications of this failure more evident than on the political stage, where careers are made and ended on court cases that seem to be decided not on facts and laws but on the whims of the powers that be. The latest such example is the exoneration of PML-N supreme leader Nawaz Sharif in the Avenfield case. The charges brought against him had seemed enough five years ago for the judiciary to convict him and end his political career but have now disappeared at the stroke of a pen. Were the judges wrong then, or are they wrong now? It is a pity that it depends on whom one asks. In a just society, innocence — especially in cases involving allegations of moral turpitude — cannot be a matter of perspective alone. Mr Sharif's position has not been helped by the fact that the case against him has been dismissed because NAB, which had once relentlessly hounded him and his family, suddenly has no interest in prosecuting him.

People will ask what prompted this change of heart and wonder if it had something to do with Mr Sharif's perceived status as the 'new selected'; few will bother to consider the weaknesses of the original case.

Therefore, while the PML-N supremo may have technically been deemed innocent, the shadow of his conviction will continue to linger and may even turn against him in case he steps out of line again.

It would have been far wiser for Mr Sharif to have returned to the country much earlier to fight his legal battles and secure a more compelling victory in them.

It would have established some distance between his acquittals and the accusation being made by other parties that the state is going all out to skew the playing field in favour of the PML-N. But perhaps Mr Sharif knew better than to have faith in a system that had failed him thrice.

If one considers where his primary rival, PTI's Imran Khan, is today, Mr Sharif cannot be considered irrational for lacking faith in the judicial process. The treatment being meted out to Mr Khan parallels what Mr Sharif was forced to endure some five years ago. In the former's case, too, it seems to matter little what the facts and the laws say. And this, again, is the tragedy of the Pakistani judicial system: that justice is rarely ever seen to be done.



**Zubeida Mustafa**

Do our children read books? In the absence of reliable statistics, one must turn to anecdotal evidence, which suggests that the book reading culture does not exist in Pakistan — be it among adults or children. I have yet to meet a publisher who is satisfied with his sales. School textbooks are the publishing industry's bread and butter. Hence publishers do not focus much on storybooks for younger readers.

It's no wonder then that Pakistan has traditionally lacked a thriving children's books industry. Popular authors such as Sufi Tabassum and poets like Allama Iqbal notwithstanding, the industry never picked up. Educators noticed this vacuum and individuals stepped in. The Bookgroup, Nigar Nazaf of Gogi fame and the Alif Laila Book Bus Society emerged in the 1980s and 1990s, with exciting, innovative books that attracted children. But they were not enough to turn around the non-reading culture.

To break this resistance to book-reading, a massive multidimensional effort is clearly needed. First, attractive and colourful books based on our own cultures have to be published for children. Second, these publications must be made accessible to all students through a network of school libraries. Third, the concept of the 'book mentor' must be developed.

Librarians can play a role only if they understand clearly what is expected of them. They are not just 'book keepers', who arrange their ware on

**To read or not**

shelves and issue them to students, ensuring that the books are returned on time. More important, they should stimulate children's interest in the books they issue and be capable of discussing it meaningfully with them. That presupposes that librarians too have read the books in their care.

A beginning has been made in this direction and the much-needed massive push has come from the Idara-i-Taleem-o-Agahi (ITA), organisers of the Pakistan Learning Festival (previously the Children's Literature Festival). It has set the ball rolling, with countless storytelling sessions apart from other enjoyable learning activities. True, the child also learns informally from her experience and exposure. But will she start reading books by attending festivals on and off when they are held? Unlikely.

Still, ITA director Baela Jamil, an incurable optimist, is hopeful, as she is also a doer. Baela is working on a number of fronts. To make children's books easily available, she has gone into publishing and setting up libraries. ITA's activities have been diversified. It has set up a number of low-cost libraries, such as the rickshaw library in Karachi and the Digi Kutub-khana in Mubarak Village, which was initially housed in a trunk. They serve as inexpensive models for others.

Recently, 48 stand-alone libraries and 200 classroom libraries with open shelves and 2,000 books were set up in 68 government schools in Lahore and Bahawalpur districts, thanks to an agreement between ITA and Room to Read (RtR), a California-based non-profit organisation that seeks to promote literacy and gender equality in education in many Afro-Asian countries in the latter's own languages.

ITA has also been taking initiatives to boost children's book publish-

ing in Pakistan. It instituted the Young Authors' Awards a few years ago to encourage children with writing skills to write books. Promising authors were provided mentoring by Rumana Husain, a writer, an illustrator of 75 books and co-founder of the Bookgroup.

The RtR agreement goes much further. In the first phase, Rumana as team leader selected 28 English books from RtR's cloud collection and had them published in our languages. They became instant hits. The next phase promises to be more significant; it will induct local publishers, writers, illustrators and editors into the children's book industry. Training workshops have been conducted by RtR's resource person and 15 titles are in the pipeline; 6,000 copies of each will be printed to be distributed free of cost to public and low-fee schools. The publishers will be allowed to print and sell more than the stipulated number at affordable prices.

The project has made remarkable progress in just three years and should succeed if expanded exponentially, especially to higher levels. Promoting the culture of reading among children calls for the deep engagement of 'book mentors', including principals, teachers and librarians. They have been trained by RtR and a library period has been included in the timetable. But the real challenge is to get teachers genuinely interested in reading, which is not a solitary activity as is widely believed. It has to be followed by an interactive discussion between the participants who are also engaged with the book. The book culture is a collective pursuit to encourage further reading. That is why the success of the project will ultimately depend on the mentors. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Rooted in evidence**



**Arif Azad**

In our times, in line with the ascendancy of empirical evidence in global policy frameworks, nations are embarking on a new chapter of governance, driven by data, research, and real-world insights. Their 'evidence-based policymaking' means that better utilisation of evidence and research can help save lives, reduce poverty and optimise limited resources.

One such case is that of Pakistan. Despite a rich history and a concentrated focus on policy research matters, evidence-based policymaking is less practised. Reasons range from the urgent necessity of delivering on political manifestos without waiting for the slow evidence-generation processes, non-availability of relevant evidence and research, and underutilised research departments, to research-policy gaps and lack of sustained political and institutionalised will to erect policymaking on the foundation of concrete data. However, these challenges are being addressed. At the heart of Pakistan's evolving governance paradigm is practising evidence-based policymaking. Policies must be anchored in credible research, ensuring they are not only politically aspirational but also grounded in reality. Two domains where this approach is making its presence felt are social protection and social health protection.

This fresh approach is evident in the policy matrix at the federal and provincial levels. The matrix at both levels retains a vision centred on citizen welfare. The Benazir Income Support Programme, for instance, is not just a policy initiative but, as borne out by its philosophy of focusing on a safety net for the people, is also a reflection of a commitment to the most vulnerable. Similarly, the Sehat Card initiative has been a tangible stride towards broader universal health coverage, with a view to bringing quality healthcare within the reach of every Pakistani. And yet, despite sound intentions and efforts, the spectrum of policy ambition stretching from conceptualisation to on-ground realisation is replete with challenges. At the centre of these challenges is the need for continuous feedback loops, agile policy adaptability to new research and evidence, and most importantly, a culture of ongoing research and insights into policymaking processes.

The Research Hub, that focuses on social protection and social health protection, represents a strategic answer to this challenge. Conceptualised as a nexus, this new initiative brings together Pakistan's eminent research institutions, NGOs, development partners and policy architects from various areas including KP, Punjab and the federal government. A collaborative approach is stressed, where research agendas are co-developed and a balance between academic pursuits and real-world policy exigencies is maintained.

The initiative comes at a time of a global momentum towards increasing evidence in policymaking (as also evidenced in the formation of the multi-nation

Global Evidence Commission). The usefulness of a collaborative research approach can be seen in its first study on the population's willingness to participate as co-contributors towards the health insurance programme in KP. The study offers insights into people's perceptions about the programme, and allows decision-makers to fine-tune modalities to make the programme financially sustainable.

Such research projects, based on evidence-based policy research in health, can help health managers shape their respective programmes to absorb the financial squeeze while keeping their nets wide and inclusive.

An earlier multi-country initiative, Strengthening Evidence Use for Development Impact, has focused on increasing the use of evidence in policymaking in Uganda, Ghana and Pakistan. Its flagship report on policymaking in the areas of child labour, education and economic development in Pakistan spotlighted the centrality of using evidence. But there was no further follow-up.

The Global Evidence Commission, in its 2022 report and the follow-up 2023 update, further reinforced the importance of improving the use of evidence by formalising domestic evidence-support systems, leveraging global evidence architecture and placing evidence at the heart of policymaking at all levels. In addition to promoting a culture of evidence-based policy making in line with the recommendations of the Global Evidence Commission, there is an urgent need for more studies in other policy sectors such as education, housing and the environment to broaden the practice of on-demand evidence generation in Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

**Commerce News**

**PM invites Dutch firms to invest in Pakistan's agriculture, energy sectors**

DUBAI (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday met Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte wherein he invited the Dutch firms to invest in agriculture, horticulture, water management and renewable energy sectors of Pakistan.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of COP 28, they appreciated the celebrations held in Islamabad and The Hague to mark 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

This was the second meeting of both leaders after the one held in New York, United States on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session.

The two leaders discussed bilateral relations, and exchanged views on international and regional issues of mutual interest, including situation in Afghanistan.

They also discussed the evolving human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza.

Prime Minister Kakar

underscored that Pakistan and the Netherlands should work together bilaterally as well as through the European Union on matters of mutual interest.

Both the leaders expressed satisfaction on the upward trajectory in bilateral relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands.

The prime minister highlighted the importance of concrete outcome on climate action and referred to Pakistan's climate vulnerabilities despite being one of the lowest carbons emitters.

**Pak heading towards self sufficiency in maize seed production**

MULTAN (Online): Pakistan's share in producing maize seed will rise from 50 to 70 percent within next five years in the world market leading to self sufficiency in the commodity, hoped CEO Kisan Saeed, Shafiq Ur Rehman.

Taking to APP here Friday, he informed that thirty years back, Pakistan used to import 100 percent seed while it had its 50 percent production share in world market now and will

increase up to 70 percent within next five years. He stated that maize had two crops named "Masoomi and Bharaiya" which were grown in summer and winter respectively. He informed that a group of govt officials including Federal Seed Certification department DG, Director Registration and Plant Readers Breeders Rights Registry Registrar, Director and Deputy Director and others visited two farms in Multan.

**MoST to establish Pak Advanced Research Project Agency**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Science and Technology has entered into final stages of establishing the Pakistan Advanced Research Project Agency to create a linkage between defence, academia and industry.

In a tweet, the Minister of Science and Technology, Dr. Umar Saif said, "At the final stages of establishing Pakistan Advanced Research Project Agency.



DUBAI: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets the Prime Minister of Netherlands Mr. Mark Rutte on the sidelines of the high level segment of the UN's 28th Conference of Parties.

**Pakistani engineers from CPEC transmission project receive training in China**

BEIJING (INP): Muhammad Talha is one of 11 Pakistani engineers who have recently attended a technical training program in China's State Grid technical college of Tai'an city in east China's Shandong province. Talha is serving as a supervisor of a converter station at ±660kV Matiari-Lahore high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The training program focused on skill development as well as exploring Chinese culture

and society. "I am really happy in China with my team for our training. It has been a great experience for me to embrace Chinese culture and of course, learn technical knowledge from the best professionals at the college," he told Xinhua recently while expressing excitement about his first trip to China.

The training program, which started in October, comprised around 47 professional courses, including converter station equipment inspection, direct current power

adjustment, and operation and maintenance of converter station, in order to help them enhance techniques of HVDC operation at Matiari-Lahore project. This was Pakistan's first HVDC transmission project funded, constructed and operated by the State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC) under the CPEC framework. The project was officially put into commercial operation in September 2021. It has the maximum capacity to transmit electricity of 35 billion kilowatt-hours annually.

**CDNS collect Rs 730bln targets in fresh bond**

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 730 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to November, 30. The CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Friday.

**Rupee gains 20 paise against Dollar**

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistani Rupee on Friday gained 20 paise against US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 284.96 against the previous day's closing at Rs 285.16. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs 285.35 and Rs 287.9 respectively.

**Mega KPEC project under construction in district Khyber: Aamir**

PESHAWAR (APP): KP Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) Affairs, Dr Aamir Abdullah has said that a mega communication sector project of Khyber Pass Economic Corridor comprising a wide expressway from Torkham to Peshawar is under construction, which will also be connected to the motorway.

He expressed these views while addressing a

girja of the tribal elders and elites from various tehsils of district Khyber at District Jirga Hall, Landi Kotal on Friday.

The caretaker minister for NMDs Affairs paid a one-day visit to district Khyber, where he also attended a Tribal Jirga as chief guest and met local youth.

He also took briefings from both district administration and district police regarding administrative affairs, uplift process, and law and order.



MULTAN: Director General Federal Seed Certification & Registration Department, Muhammad Azam Khan and the Registrar Dr. Hayatullah Tareen along with their staff visit the Maize Research Station of Kissan Seed Corporation at Qasba Marral.

**Trade deficit shrinks by 33.59 percent, export grow by 1.93% in 5 months**

ISLAMABAD (INP): The country's merchandise trade deficit contracted by 33.59 percent during the first five months of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 17.32 percent and were recorded at \$21.550 billion compared to \$26.064 billion last year. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 7.66 percent in November compared to the exports of the same month of last year.

increased by 1.93 percent to \$12.172 billion compared to the exports of \$11.942 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad chairing a meeting of Privatisation Commission Board, in Islamabad.

## CM Punjab lays foundation stone of Dadocha Dam

**Independent Report**  
RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Chief Minister (CM) Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi here on Friday laid the foundation stone of the Dadocha Dam, and also inspected the site of the project.

He said that the construction work of the dam, which was stalled for 13 years, had finally started.

The CM said that Rawalpindi city was facing a severe water shortage. The water supply situation deteriorates in summer as the shortfall reaches up to 60 MGD, he added.

Emergency work had been started on Dadocha Dam to meet the water shortage, said Mohsin Naqvi. The Dadocha dam project which would be

completed at a cost of 14 billion, would help meet the water shortage issue, he added.

After its completion, this dam would provide 35 million gallons of clean drinking water per day to Rawalpindi city, the CM informed.

The construction of Dadocha Dam would address the long-standing water problem being faced by the citizens, he said and appreciated the efforts and hard work done by the Chief Secretary Punjab and Commissioner Rawalpindi Division.

Mohsin Naqvi said that Dadocha Dam would be completed in two years period.

Frontier Works Organization (FWO) which is working on the Ring Road Rawalpindi

project would also complete the dam swiftly, the CM informed.

The dam project was pending for a long time, the CM said and informed that the preparations were being made in Murree for the winter season. Solid steps would be taken to increase tourism, said Mohsin Naqvi.

Special operation against illegal housing societies had been launched, he informed.

The CM said, "Upgradation work of the hospitals would continue and we will not allow anyone to obstruct this project."

During a briefing, the CM was informed that work on the dam site was progressing rapidly, with 26% financial progress and 12% physical progress.



RAWALPINDI: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating Dadocha Dam.

## Pakistan attaches great importance to bilateral ties with the Netherlands

**Independent Report**  
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman attended a ceremony held at Lahore Fort to celebrate the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the Netherlands as a special guest. Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan, Henny de Vries, Honorary Consul of Netherlands Asma Hamid, former Federal Minister Khurshid Kasuri, Tahir Khalil Sindhu, former Governor

Shahid Hamid and other distinguished guests were present in the ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rahman said that Pakistan attaches great importance to bilateral relations with the Netherlands.

He said that Pakistan appreciates the cooperation of the Netherlands in political, economic, climate change, education, culture, and multilateral fora. Governor Punjab said that both

## ANF seizes 142 kg drugs in 13 operations

**RAWALPINDI (APP):** Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in a crackdown against drug smugglers managed to recover 142 kg of drugs and arrested 16 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that in an operation, 474 grams of Ice drug was recovered from the possession of a passenger netted at Islamabad International Airport. The accused, a resident of Peshawar, was leaving for Jeddah by flight number PA-270.

## AJK PM denies social media reports about abolishment of NTS system

**MIRPUR (AJK) (APP):** Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while refuting the social media reports about the abolishment of the NTS system, has said that the NTS system was still in force and will continue in future as well.

He stated this while addressing the AJK legislative assembly session in the State

metropolis on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the AJK prime minister regrettably noted that on the basis of social media information, it was propagated that the government was scrapping the Recruitment Amendment Act.

He said that nobody even bothered to fact check the source of information to ascertain whether it was real or fake.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with Ambassador of Netherlands to Pakistan, Henny de Vries, Honorary Consul of Netherlands Asma Hamid and others on the eve of ceremony held to celebrate completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and Netherlands.

## Govt land worth millions embezzled Major corruption scandal unveiled in Abbottabad

**ABBOTTABAD (APP):** The Anti-Corruption Department Abbottabad on Friday has exposed a major corruption scandal involving the misappropriation of government land amounting to millions of rupees. The illicit activities include fraudulent transactions and clear forgery, leading to the

arrest of two suspects.

Under the guidance of the Director of Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, legal proceedings have been initiated against six persons including a former Tehsildar, land revenue officer, patwari, and a member of the cantonment board.

## Homosexuals festival challenged in LHC

**LAHORE (Online):** Festival of homosexuals has been challenged in Lahore High Court (LHC). Petition in this regard has been filed by a citizen Ammar Hanif through his counsel advocate Nadim Sarwar.

Through the petition DC Lahore, IG Punjab and others have been made respondents.

## Free glucometer distributed among diabetic patients

**PESHAWAR (APP):** The Mercy Teaching Hospital (MTH) in Peshawar has organized the ceremony for the free distribution of glucometers among diabetic patients. The event witnessed the active participation of doctors, healthcare workers, and patients, marking a significant initiative during the diabetes awareness month as scheduled by the hospital's Diabetes Unit.

## Development projects in merged areas will bring change in lives of tribal

**PESHAWAR (APP):** Caretaker Minister for merged districts affairs, industries, commerce and technical education, Dr. Aamir Abdullah on Friday paid a one-day visit to District Khyber and participated in a large Jirga and Kuli Kacheri of the tribal elders and interacted with the tribal youth at district headquarters Landi Kotal.

During the visit, the district administration and

police department also gave separate briefings to the minister regarding the performance and activities of the district administration and police in the district. Deputy Commissioner Sanauallah Khan briefed the caretaker minister about the overall security situation in the district, administrative matters, education, health, communication, construction and other sectors of life.

## 21.6m children vaccinated during anti polio campaign

**LAHORE (APP):** At least 21.6 million children were administered polio drops during the last four days across the province.

Friday was the last day of anti-polio campaign in the Punjab province.

According to a spokesman, more than 1.6 million children were given polio vaccine in Lahore, seven lakh children in Rawalpindi, 1.2 million in Faisalabad, more than 990,000 children were administered polio vaccine in Multan.

## Punjab launches prison health initiative screening AIDS

**Independent Report**  
**LAHORE:** Punjab's Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Dr. Jamal Nasir, announced that, on Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi's directive, 52,000 prisoners across 43 Punjab prisons underwent screening for AIDS, hepatitis B & C, TB, and non-communicable diseases.

Addressing a program on World AIDS Day on Friday, the minister disclosed the commencement of AIDS treatment for affected prisoners following PCR

tests. Additionally, regular biannual screenings for prisoners in Punjab have been mandated. Free diagnosis and treatment facilities for HIV patients are available in 45 clinics across 36 districts under the Punjab AIDS Control Program. Presently, over 21,000 registered AIDS patients receive free medicines and counseling.

Dr. Jamal Nasir highlighted the role of syringe use among drug addicts in AIDS transmission and emphasized cautious blood transfusions.

## International News

## Ukraine's military says Russia launched its largest drone attack since the start of the invasion

**Monitoring Desk**  
KYIV: Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.

In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine's air force said.

"Kyiv was the main target," Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleschuk wrote on his Telegram channel.

The attack was "the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv," said Serhii Popko, head of the

Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yuriy Ilnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.

At least five civilians were wounded in the hours-long assault, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten. The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

In the city's Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown

out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby.

The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m., local time, continuing in waves for more than six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko. Ukraine's Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged.



Palestinians check the damage in a street in the aftermath of an Israeli raid in Jenin.

## WHO says Gaza's health system must be protected as disease spreads

**Monitoring Desk**  
GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) on Wednesday called for Gaza's vulnerable health infrastructure to be safeguarded as the war-torn enclave faces an increased risk of epidemics and challenges in detecting infectious diseases.

A fragile truce agreement between Israel and Hamas last week has allowed WHO and aid organizations to increase their deliveries of essential supplies but these have been far from enough to meet the

needs of Gaza's 2.3 million people. Speaking at a press conference in Geneva, World Health Organization Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said only 15 of Gaza's 36 hospitals were still functioning and were completely overwhelmed.

"Of the 25 hospitals north of the Wadi Gaza (river) before the conflict began, only three are functioning at the most basic level, but they lack fuel, water and food," Tedros said.

"The remaining health system capacity

must be protected, supported and expanded."

WHO has sounded the alarm about the spread of infectious disease in Gaza, where the internal displacement of the population has caused overcrowding in shelters and other temporary living facilities.

The agency has noted a staggering increase in cases of diarrhoea, especially among infants and children, and detected "very serious signals around acute jaundice syndrome" in the enclave.

## Israeli forces kill seven Palestinians in West Bank, Palestinian officials say

**Monitoring Desk**  
JENIN: Israeli forces killed seven Palestinians, including two minors and at least one gunman, in the occupied West Bank late on Saturday and early Sunday, medics and local sources said. The West Bank, among territories where Palestinians seek statehood, has experienced a surge in violence parallel to the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, now in its eighth week. Five of the overnight deaths occurred in the city of Jenin, which the Israeli military said it raided to

detain a Palestinian wanted for alleged involvement in a lethal West Bank ambush in August as well as 20 other suspects. During the raid, Israeli forces "engaged with armed terrorists and killed five of them", the military said in a statement. The Jenin Brigades, a local armed group, said its fighters battled the Israeli troops. It did not immediately provide details on any casualties, but local witnesses said at least one of the Palestinians killed in Jenin was a known Brigades member.



Pro-Palestinian environmental activists participate in a sit-in demonstration at the Expo City in Dubai in support of a ceasefire in Gaza.

## Erdogan to visit Budapest next month as Turkey and Hungary hold up Sweden's membership in NATO

**Monitoring Desk**  
BUDAPEST: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will visit Hungary's capital in December, his second trip to Budapest this year at a time when both countries remain the only NATO members not to have ratified Sweden's accession into the trans-Atlantic military alliance.

During his visit on Dec. 18, Erdogan will take part in a meeting of the Hungarian-Turkish Strategic Cooperation Council, and celebrate the 100th anniversary of the opening of diplomatic ties between the two countries, Bertalan Havasi, the press chief for Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, told local news outlet ATV in a re-

port broadcast on Monday. Havasi didn't immediately respond to further questions from The Associated Press on Tuesday about the trip.

It wasn't clear whether Erdogan and Orban would discuss Sweden's NATO membership, which has been delayed for more than a year by Hungary and Turkey. All 31 NATO allies must endorse the accession of a new member.

Erdogan's government has delayed Sweden's ratification over accusations that Stockholm is too soft on Kurdish militants and other groups Turkey considers to be security threats. But Hungary has expressed no such concrete concerns.



Pro-Palestinian demonstrators march across the Mandela Bridge downtown Johannesburg, South Africa.

## Brazil's Lula appoints his justice minister to Supreme Court

**Monitoring Desk**  
BRASILIA: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said on Monday he will appoint his Justice Minister, Flavio Dino, to a Supreme Court seat that has been vacant since the retirement of Justice Rosa Weber in late September.

Lula also said he would nominate Paulo Gonet as the country's new prosecutor general.

Dino, 55, is Lula's second appointment for Brazil's top court since he took office in January for

his third non-consecutive term as president. Earlier in June, he tapped his former defense lawyer Cristiano Zanin for another Supreme Court seat. Previously, former President Michel Temer appointed his own justice minister, Alexandre de Moraes to the court while Lula's predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, picked Andre Mendonca for a seat.

Dino, whose nomination will now be voted on by the Senate, has been serving in Lula's cabinet since January.

## UK gov't steps in to stop Telegraph deal

**Monitoring Desk**  
LONDON: Britain's media minister said on Thursday she would intervene in the acquisition of the Telegraph Media Group by Abu Dhabi-backed RedBird IMI, on public interest grounds as it might impact the accurate presentation of news or free expression of opinion. The right-leaning Daily Telegraph broadsheet and Spectator magazine, favourites of politicians in the leading Conservative Party, are being sold after Lloyds Banking Group in June seized control following a long-running dispute with former owners, the Barclay family. But the government told RedBird in the letter that the minister was concerned about the potential for it to influence the Telegraph's operations.

"My Department has today written to the Barclay family and RedBird IMI, the current and proposed owners of Telegraph Media Group (TMG), to inform them that I will be issuing a Public Interest Intervention Notice (PIIN)" media minister Lucy Frazer said in a statement.

## South Africa march demands a permanent Gaza cease-fire on day of solidarity with Palestinians

**Monitoring Desk**  
JOHANNESBURG: Members of South African political parties, civil society organisations and other supporters marched through the streets of Johannesburg on Wednesday demanding a permanent cease-fire in Gaza as they marked the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

Rival political parties including the ruling African National Congress and the leftist opposition Economic Freedom Fighters were among the scores of demonstrators who

marched across the Nelson Mandela Bridge to protest against Israel's military offensive in Gaza against Hamas.

Several other protests were planned around South Africa, where many including President Cyril Ramaphosa have compared Israel's policies in Gaza and the West Bank with South Africa's past apartheid regime of racial segregation.

Veteran anti-apartheid activist Ronnie Kasrils called for the boycott and isolation of Israel over the current war.

## Italy pledges 100mn euros to COP28 climate damage fund, PM Meloni says

**Monitoring Desk**  
ROME: Italy will provide 100 million euros (\$108.91 million) to a new fund to help poor countries cope with "loss and damage" due to climate change, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Friday, adding she would invest 70 percent of her 4.2-billion euro Climate Fund in Africa. "We are contributing to the loss and damage fund with 100 million euros to help achieve the goals of this COP28," she told an event at the COP28 climate conference in Dubai.

## Pakistan-Uzbekistan connected by centuries-old cultural ties: Jamal Shah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah on Friday said that Uzbekistan and Pakistan are connected by a centuries-old cultural relationship, which has strong roots in history.

He said this while addressing the opening ceremony of the Photo Exhibition on Joint Cultural Heritage, along with the Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Pakistan, Oybek Arif Usmanov, organized by the patronage of Federal Minister for Culture and National Heritage, Syed Jamal Shah. The minister said that 30 years after the independence of Uzbekistan is a small part of mutual modern cultural history, the two countries have been engaged in a mutual

the influence of which is still present in our folk literature. He said that the literary and cultural heritage of both countries is common and the writers and poets of both countries are equally popular on both sides. He said that Pashto literature is closely related to the literature and culture of Uzbekistan, like Pashto Sufi poet Rehman Baba is also influenced by the culture and literature of Samarkand and Bokhara.

The minister said that Uzbekistan's ambassador to Pakistan understands Pashto and other regional languages very eloquently. He said that Uzbekistan is a significant part of the ancient silk route, from here there was trade between the countries of the region and other continents as well. Jamal Shah said that

lic and Diplomatic representatives the retrospective and historical photos demonstrating the very active dynamic interaction of Uzbek and Pakistani leaders - Presidents, Prime Ministers and federal ministers.

He said that after 3 decades of our active interaction let's focus on the connectivity strategy of our two regions South Asia and Central Asia - implementation of the projects for boosting trade and economics, transport linkages and cultural and people-to-people re-connectivity.

He said that this strategic approach is also actively promoted by our country's governments, experts community and most importantly supported by our young gen-



venture of literature, music and architecture for centuries, which is moving forward and strengthening after each passing day.

Jamal Shah said that the folklore in Pakistan literature has been adopted from the literature of Samarkand and Bokhara,

Samarkand Bukhara is famous in the world for carpets and spices since ancient times and the commercial goods made by them are very popular here.

Ambassador of Uzbekistan in Pakistan, Oybek Arif Usmanov said that today, "we are able to show to Pakistani pub-

eration. "Our connectivity logically emanates from the closeness of cultures and religious traditions - caravan's roads of Central Asia with South Asia - Pakistan, China, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh."

## HEC, NDF to collaborate for success of green youth movement

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the National Dialogue Forum (NDF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on one of the development projects of HEC, "Green Youth Movement (GYM)-Prime Minister's Youth Programme."

According to the terms outlined in the MoU held here the other day, the NDF will actively engage with university students, offering both technical guidance and financial support for capacity-building training and social action projects. These initiatives are designed to address environmental challenges and instigate positive transformations within local communities. The collaborative efforts underscore a shared commitment to fostering environmental awareness, education, and tangible so-

lutions for a more sustainable future. Executive Director HEC Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum and Executive Director NDF officially sealed the partnership by signing the MoU. Advisor (Planning and Development) HEC Dr. Mazhar, Project Director GYM Irfan Ullah and the Project Management Unit attended the ceremony. On this occasion, Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum said that climate change was an imminent threat that demands a collective attention and action. "The collaboration through the GYM project holds the promise of mobilizing Green Youth Movement Clubs to actively combat climate challenges," he said. Dr. Zia emphasized the importance of engaging the youth in environmental initiatives and stated, "The future belongs to our youth and their involvement is crucial in finding sustainable solutions."

## NIMA holds focused talk on Indian Kashmir policy, implications and way forward

M. Ilyas  
PESHAWAR: National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA) organized a focused talk on the 'Indian Kashmir Policy - Implications and Way Forward' at NIMA Islamabad on 01 Dec 23. Former Chief of the Naval Staff & Chairman NIMA BoA, Admiral (Retd) Muhammad Zakaullah graced the occasion as Chief Guest. He said that Kashmir issue is unfinished agenda of partition

that the plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions is the only way forward. She also highlighted that Pakistan needs to unveil human right atrocities and international laws violations being committed by India. She further elaborated the need to guard against Indian agenda of changing the demography of Indian occupied Kashmir and suggested to hold census on both sides of divide under UN arrangements. Vice Ad-



of 1947 whereas India has continuously disregarded its own commitments to international community for plebiscite under UN arrangements. He further reiterated that Kashmir is an inalienable part of our body and soul. Special Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights & Women Empowerment Ms. Mushal Hussein Mullick was guest of honor. She elucidated

miral (Retd) Ahmed Saeed, DG NIMA in his welcome remarks stated that Kashmir is the core issue between India and Pakistan. Post 2019 annulment of Article-370 & 35-A, Indian Government is systematically destroying Kashmiri identity and culture. During the discussions, prominent speakers shed light on the current situation of Kashmir.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister Primary and Secondary Healthcare of Punjab Dr Jamal Nasir, Bangladesh High Commissioner to Pakistan Ruhul Alam Siddique and others cutting the cake during 52nd Bangladesh Armed Forces Day ceremony, at a local in Federal Capital.

## BISP largest social protection programme of Pakistan: Amjad

MULTAN (APP): Chairman Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, said on Friday that BISP was the largest Social Protection programme in the country.

During his visit to BISP Zonal Office South Punjab and District Office Multan, Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib showcased his commitment to the welfare of needy women and the sustainability of the programme.

Dr. Amjad Saqib heard the concerns of needy women and directed relevant authorities to resolve their issues promptly.

He further directed the staff to ensure transparent payments, and also emphasized dialogues with POS agents, and in-

structed the team to facilitate needy people with available resources.

Dr. Amjad Saqib stressed the importance of maintaining cleanliness standards in offices and treating needy women with respect and empathy emphasizing the human-centric approach of BISP.

In an address to BISP employees at Jamia Masjid Dream Garden Multan, Dr. Amjad Saqib reiterated the significance of the program, highlighting its budget of Rs 471 billion allocated by the government of Pakistan.

He described financial assistance to 9.3 million poor families as an expression of love, sacrifice, and brotherhood.

Dr. Amjad Saqib ex-

pressed the aim to make BISP a sustainable program for public service, asserting that assistance to poor families is not charity but their right.

Furthermore, Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized on lifting needy households out of poverty, connecting children from such families with technical skills, and highlighting the importance of small businesses in poverty alleviation.

He proposed the establishment of an endowment fund to improve the economic conditions of needy households, considering it a social responsibility to create an exemplary institution in the form of the Benazir Income Support Program.

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Dr. Amjad Saqib ex-

## Polio immunization drive continues

ISLAMABAD (APP): The third nationwide polio immunization campaign of the current year continued to vaccinate over 44.3 million children under five years of age in 159 districts.

In a message, Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan urged parents to ensure the vaccination of their children during the ongoing polio immunization drive.

He said that all the children deserved a healthy life and future. "We cannot allow a vaccine-preventable disease to continue to harm our children like this."

He said that protecting children's well-being was a collective responsibility. "Every country that has eliminated polio so far has done so with the support of communities, parents, religious leaders, and social organizations."

Dr Nadeem said, "We need the same in Pakistan, for communities to join the government in its fight against polio."

Coordinator of the National Emergency Operations Centre for Polio Eradication, Dr Shauzad Baig said: "Polio cases are fewer than they have ever been, yet the virus has shown up in sewage samples in several major cities this year, indicating that some population pockets that have missed out on the vaccine." He said, "The programme is continuously reviewing and reassessing its strategies and campaigns. We will ensure that we find these missed populations and vaccinate them."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary of Health Iftekhar Ali Shallwani addressing on the occasion of World Aids Day.

## Election Commission refutes Awan's allegation on KP, NA seats reduction

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) dismissed Dr. Babar Awan Advocate's assertion of a decrease in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's National Assembly seats, deeming it an ineffective effort to sow confusion among the public.

A spokesperson for ECP underscored that, in his capacity as a legal professional, Babar Awan should adhere to constitutional and legal constraints.

The authority to determine seats in the National and Provincial As-

semblies lies within the purview of the Parliament, and the Election Commission has defined constituencies based on the constitutionally designated seats.

The 25th constitutional amendment in 2018 resulted in the merger of the former FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, leading to the elimination of 12 National Assembly seats from FATA. Simultaneously, 6 seats were added to the National Assembly seats of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, bringing the total from 39 to 45 seats.

## World Aids Day observed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Like other parts of the globe, the World AIDS Day was also commemorated in Pakistan on Friday with determination and hope for a HIV Aids free country.

In this regard, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, in collaboration with the Common Management Unit (CMU) for AIDS, TB, and Malaria, the UN family, the Association of People Living with HIV (APLHIV) and other community partners, marked World AIDS Day 2023 with a resolute commitment to the global theme, "Let Communities Lead."

Caretaker Federal Minister for Health, Dr Nadeem Jan said that the government of Pakistan was firmly committed to eradicating the AIDS epidemic by 2030, aligning with the global HIV milestones. He said that it was crucial to address healthcare and societal imbalances to ensure that no one was marginalized or left behind. On the occasion, Iftekhar Ali Shallwani, Federal Secretary, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination said that the world can end AIDS, with communities leading the way. Communities living with, at risk of, or affected by HIV have a greater role to play and need to join the frontline forces to halt the upward trend of the HIV epidemic, he said and added, we all need to join hands and connect for providing person-centered public health services.

## Bukhari directs PPP ticket aspirants to submit application till Dec 4

ISLAMABAD (INP): Secretary General Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Syed Nayyer Hussain Bukhari Friday directed the candidates seeking PPP tickets to contest National and Provincial Assemblies to submit applications for party tickets till December 4.

"The candidates who have submitted applications for party tickets earlier are advised to send their applications without bank drafts," he said.

Nayyer Bukhari said that PPPP issued these instructions to the candidates who want to contest upcoming general elections on

PPPP tickets to write their constituency no in accordance with the new constituencies announced by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

The General Secretary said that the new applicants are directed to attach a bank draft of Rs 40,000 for the National Assembly and Rs 30,000 for the Provincial Assembly seats. Nayyer Bukhari said that the applications would be in the name of President PPPP and sent the same to the address of Bilawal House Karachi or House No. 1, Street 85 Embassy Road Islamabad.

## IHC issues written order about Nawaz's acquittal in Avenfield

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday issued a short written order regarding the acquittal of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif in the Avenfield property reference.

The IHC bench comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb, in its order, stated that the NAB prosecutor gave the reference of the verdict in the appeals of co-accused Maryam Nawaz and Cap-

tain @ Muhammad Safdar. In the said order, the high court had given an observation that the prosecution had no document to prove its case against Nawaz Sharif.

It further said that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had not challenged the verdict regarding the acquittal of Maryam Nawaz and her husband. The court, subsequently, accepting the appeal of Nawaz Sharif, acquitted him from the reference.

## Islootes breath moderate air after light drizzle subsides months ambient pollution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The air quality of the federal capital was recorded as moderate on Friday as the air pollutants ratio in the atmosphere was below the permissible limits of the national environmental quality standards of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency after yesterday's drizzle in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad helped subside the air pollutants.

The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) daily air quality report indicated a reduced ratio of air pollutants, recorded below

permissible limits, and the air quality was moderate. The Agency is responsible for ensuring the protection of the environment under the Pakistan Environmental Protection Act 1997.

The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5), which was a hazardous atmospheric contaminant, remained 14.4 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which was lower than the national environmental quality standards (NEQS) of 35 mic-grammes per cubic meter and denoted the air quality unhealthy for sensitive people.



ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) are digging for plantation on a green alongside Islamabad Highway.

## ICCPO orders AIG Establishment to hold orderly room; to address the concerns of officials

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan has directed the AIG Establishment to hold an orderly room on a permanent basis to ensure timely and prioritized resolution of institutional and personal matters concerning police personnel.

The establishment of an orderly room aims to prioritize and address issues faced by police officers and officials on a timely basis, emphasizing their welfare and issue resolution.

Following these directives, the AIG Establishment holds an orderly room at Central Police Office Islamabad. Officers and officials of Islamabad Capital Police participated in the orderly room.

During the orderly room, police personnel brought forth both personal and official concerns before the AIG Establishment.

Immediate directives were issued for the resolution of pressing matters, while directives were given to senior officers to address remaining issues promptly.

On the occasion, the AIG Establishment highlighted various measures taken for the welfare of police personnel, including initiatives aimed at improving residence facilities, enhancing healthcare provisions, and raising educational standards.

He assured all personnel of an open-door policy at his office, encouraging them to bring forward any concerns for immediate resolution.

ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan said that, the primary objective of the orderly room is not only to address the welfare, personal, and official issues of police personnel but also to elevate their morale by prioritizing resolutions based on their well-being.



ISLAMABAD: Heavy machinery being used to build Chak Beli Link Road in the outskirts of the city.

## Police to ensure installation of surveillance cameras in I-9 and I-10 Markaz

Independent Report  
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police are set to enhance security measures by installing surveillance cameras in I-9 and I-10 Markaz which aims to strengthen collaborative efforts in safeguarding commercial spaces and proactively preventing potential threats to public safety. The focus is on ensuring collective action and promptly initiating the next phase of camera installations to eliminate any opportunities for nefarious elements. Police sources said a collective effort is essential to swiftly address any challenges to public safety.

Similar protective measures will be extended to all commercial centres in collaboration with Islamabad's business community, fostering a sense of security among traders and residents.

This initiative aims to strengthen collaborative efforts in safeguarding commercial spaces and proactively preventing potential threats to public safety. The focus is on ensuring collective action and promptly initiating the next phase of camera installations to eliminate any opportunities for nefarious elements. Police sources said a collective effort is essential to swiftly address any challenges to public safety.

Previously, Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), alongside the Islamabad business community, inaugurated new surveillance cameras at I-8