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SC suspends LHC order on election officers paving way for Feb 8 polls

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court has nullified the Lahore High Court's order which suspended a notification issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) regarding the appointments of district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs) from within the bureaucracy, paving the way for timely general elections.

The apex court also ordered the ECP to issue the election schedule today.

The ECP challenged the LHC's order in the Supreme Court Friday evening. LHC's decision could potentially cause a delay in the general elections scheduled for Feb 8 next year.

A three-member bench, led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, conducted hearing of ECP's appeal, with other members including Justice Masood and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah.

The bench took up the appeal right away.

During the proceedings, CJP Isa remarked that the Supreme Court won't allow anyone to derail democracy in the country.

At one point, CJP Isa questioned if elections could be stalled across the country just on the basis of a plea filed by PTI lawyer Umair Khan Niazi.

Directing Swati, an ECP lawyer, to read out the Nov 3 order of the apex court, which stressed for conducting the general elections on Feb 8, the CJP questioned, "Should we proceed with a contempt notice? Barrister Umair Khan Niazi's [petition] constitutes a breach of the Supreme Court's directive."

The ECP, in its appeal, requested the Supreme Court to declare the Lahore High Court's order null and void.

A day prior, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) made the decision to approach the apex court in response to the Lahore High Court's suspension of its notification regarding the appointments of district returning officers (DROs) and returning officers (ROs) from the bureaucracy for the impending general elections.

Justice Ali Baqir Najafi of the Lahore High Court had suspended the ECP's Dec 11 notification of administering the Feb 8 general elections through bureaucracy in response to a petition filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

This prompted the ECP to halt the ongoing training of DROs and ROs.

On Thursday, during a consultative meeting, the ECP's legal team recommended approaching the

Supreme Court.

Acting upon this advice, Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja held a crucial meeting today (Friday) with Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, with SC's Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Ijazul Ahsan, as well as Attorney General for Pakistan Masood Anwar, in attendance.

During the meeting, the chief election commissioner discussed the situation arising from the high court's order with CJP Isa.

According to sources, CJP Isa's consultation with senior judges is ongoing on the matter.

MUZAFFARABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a special meeting of the Cabinet of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



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Kashmir never was, nor will be part of India No one can dare cast an evil eye on Pakistan; change status of Kashmir: PM

Indian unilateral, illegal acts to further stimulate Kashmir freedom movement: Kakar

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday, reiterating Pakistan's principled position and support on the Kashmir issue, categorically said that no one could dare cast an evil eye on Pakistan and that its desire for peace should not be misconstrued as weakness or hesitation to face any aggression. Pakistan is not a warring nation. But if anyone thinks that we are weak, shying away or hesitating, they should remove this misunderstanding. Muzaffarabad is not Gaza and New Delhi is not Tel Aviv...No one can dare to kill

4,000 children here," he said in an interaction with the students of different colleges and universities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir during his two-day visit.

Expressing his confidence in Pakistan's defence capabilities in the context of the Indian aggression, he said though Narendra Modi and Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel had same attitudes, but they had different implementing capability and response mechanisms. To a question, the prime minister strongly rejected the rumours of any change in Pakistan's policy to follow suit India to merge the AJK in it, he said, "No one can

think of such a stupid act. Nobody can dare." He said that the rumours were spread by the enemies to create misunderstandings and that Pakistan had a principled journey with the Kashmiris for decades, backed by the sacrifices of 90,000 people.

He said Pakistan had fought three wars with India on Kashmir and was ready to face any kind of aggression. "Are we fighting the wars to make Kashmir (part of) KP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa)? This is out of question," he commented and reiterated Pakistan's resolve of not budging an inch from its principled position.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir called on Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State during his ongoing visit to US.

COAS meets key US govt. military officials Pak, US agree to continue exploring potential avenues of bilateral collaboration

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir has called on key US Government and Military officials during his ongoing visit to the US including, Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of Defence, General Lloyd J. Austin, Deputy Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, Deputy National Security Adviser, Jonathan Finer and US Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Charles Q. Brown.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, matters of bilateral interests, global and regional security issues, and ongoing conflicts were discussed during the meetings.

Both sides agreed to continue engagement for exploring potential avenues of bilateral collaboration in pursuit of shared interests.

During the meetings with defence officials, counter terrorism cooperation and defence collaboration were identified as core areas of cooperation.

Both sides reiterated the intent to increase interaction and explore ways to expand the scope of mutually beneficial engagements.

The COAS underscored the importance of understanding each other's perspectives on regional security issues and developments affecting strategic stability in South Asia.

ECP to announce action plan in light of law, Constitution: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Friday the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would announce its action plan in the light of the Constitution and law.

Talking to the media outside the ECP he said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, the only constitutional body responsible for conducting elections in the country was the Election Commission.

"We neither can ques-

tion the Election Commission, nor we can supervise it, in fact, the Election Commission supervises the caretaker government," Murtaza Solangi maintained. He said if anyone had a complaint with the ECP, he could contact the Election Commission.

The ECP under the Constitution enjoyed the power to appoint District Returning Officers, Murtaza Solangi remarked.

The present caretaker regime was appointed under the constitutional process.

President appoints Justice Masood as acting CJP

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has appointed Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, as the acting Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP).

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood would perform responsibilities as the acting chief justice during the period CJP Qazi Faez Isa remained abroad.

"The appointment has been made in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 180 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," the notification said.

Serving humanity gives real happiness, Dr Alvi tells passing-out officers

LAHORE (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi urged bureaucrats on Friday to be responsible, responsive, empathetic, accountable and efficient to keep the public governance and institutional effort well-aligned with the community's welfare. He was speaking at the passing-out ceremony of the participants who completed 46th Specialized Training Programme at the Civil Services Academy. He said that no doubt that institutes like the Civil Services Academy impart training and give skills to the participants which help them enhance their working. He said that unity of purpose could be linked with an organisation to obtain focused goals. Giving an example of Pyramid of Giza [largest Egyptian pyramid,

which served as the tomb of pharaoh Khufu], the president said it was an outcome of skills and focused goals. "Learning skills also keeps you motivated in the right direction," he added.

Arif Alvi said that balance should be maintained between needs and wants, adding that the world was confused about happiness. "Some relate happiness with wealth, but happiness is more about identifying what gives you fresh breath," he explained. He declared that serving humanity provides one with real and long-term happiness. He said looking at the downtrodden people also creates compassion. Efforts should be made to strengthen and practise morality in more appropriate manner, he advised.



LAHORE: President Dr Arif Alvi addressing the passing out ceremony of 46th Specialized Training Program of Pakistan Administrative Service.



RIYADH, SAUDI ARAB: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza exchanging views with Maj. Gen. Mohammed Al-Moghedi, Secretary General of Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC) on the sideline of the 2nd Meeting of IMCTC Chiefs of Staff of member states held in Riyadh.

Three Pak Navy officers promoted to rank of Rear Admiral

ISLAMABAD (APP): Three Commodores of the Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect on Friday.

Rear Admiral Mazhar Mahmood Malik was commissioned in Marine Engineering Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1992. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad and qualified Masters of Science in Mechanical Engineering from National University of Science and Technology (NUST), a Pakistan Navy news release said.

Rear Admiral Shahzad

Hamid was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993. He is a Naval Aircraft Pilot by profession. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore and National Defence University Islamabad.

Rear Admiral Azhar Mahmood was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1993. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, Defence Services Command and Staff College Bangladesh and National Defence University, Islamabad.

Shaukat dismissal case: SC issues notice to Faiz Hameed others

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has issued notice to former DG ISI Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed, Brig (Retd) Irfan Ramay, former chief justice Islamabad High Court (IHC) Anwar Kansi and former Registrar SC Arbab Arif in former judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui dismissal case.

A five members larger bench of SC presided over by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Friday.

At the inception of hearing CJP inquired are the allegations of Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui correct. Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui was dismissed by him on the basis of these allegations. Give reply are your allegations correct. Are those generals whom you want to make respondents wanted to come to power themselves in general election 2018.

The CJP remarked if the allegations of Shaukat

Aziz Siddiqui are correct then those generals were wanting to become facilitators of some one. Who was that person for whom they were facilitating.

Counsel Hamid Khan said his allegations were correct.

The CJP remarked you are making the facilitators beneficiary. Real beneficiary is some one else. You have not mentioned real beneficiary in the petition.

You have made facilitators respondents and why you have not made beneficiary respondent.

CJP remarked is army an independent institution or it is subordinate to some one. Who runs army.

Counsel Hamid Khan said army is subordinate to government. Counsel Salah ud Din Ahmad said Nawaz Sharif was ousted by pressurizing judicial system.

The CJP remarked who benefited from it. Was this done to benefit Sindh Bar or Islamabad bar.

Registrar AC removed from post

ISLAMABAD (Online): Registrar of Accountability Court, Mohammad Imran has been removed from post due to matter of allegations of mismanagement in Judicial Complex Islamabad.

Orders have also been issued by Law Ministry in which Muhammad Imran Haider Sial of grade 17 has been instructed to report back to his department Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation.

Pakistan flays terrorist attack at Rask Police HQ Iran

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Friday strongly condemned the terrorist attack at Rask Police headquarter in southeast of Iran, leading to martyrdom of 11 Iranian officials.

"We extend our heartfelt condolences and stand in full solidarity with government and people of Iran," Ambassador of Pakistan to Iran Muhammad Mudassar Tipu said on X, formerly Twitter.

APHC acknowledges Pak support for Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has said that Pakistan's continued political, diplomatic and moral support has been a source of great encouragement for the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their just struggle to secure their right to self-determination.

The APHC spokesman, in a statement issued in Srinagar, hailed the Pakistan Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, for representing the aspirations of the Kashmiri people in his address to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, yesterday, Kashmir Media Service reported on Friday.

3 cops martyred, 5 terrorists killed in Tank Police Lines attack

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): At least three police personnel were martyred and three others injured as unidentified terrorists attacked the Police Lines Tank on Friday.

According to police, a group of terrorists armed with sophisticated weapons stormed the police lines, which was retaliated by the police.

A heavy exchange of fire continued for several hours.

Rescue 1122 Tank said its teams shifted the martyred cops, including Gohar Zaman (ASI), Ehsan (constable) and Abdul Rashid (constable) and the injured constables Ajmal Mukhtiyar and Shakhi Noor to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) after provision of first medical aid on the spot.

Interior Minister inaugurates ANF Forensic Lab

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Sarfraz Bugti, inaugurated the ANF Forensic Lab at the Anti-Narcotics Force Academy (ANFA) on Friday in the agency's Headquarters.

Secretary Ministry of Narcotics Control, Capt@ Munir Azam, and DG ANF, Major General Muhammad Aneeq Ur Rehman Malik, HI (M), warmly welcomed the chief guest, alongside the Police Liaison Officer and Police Consul from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China.

During the visit, Commandant ANFA provided insights into comprehensive counter-narcotics training programs.

Expressing gratitude, the minister thanked the Chinese delegates for their invaluable assistance in establishing the forensic lab.

He emphasized the lab's crucial role in expeditious prosecutions, easing the burden on other forensic facilities, and improving drug detection efficiency through advanced equipment.

The minister stressed the importance of maintaining the highest standards of credibility in forensic processes.

Recognizing ANF's international acclaim, Minister Bugti praised its pivotal role in combating drug trafficking at national, regional, and global levels.

He assured the force of complete support in addressing any inadequacies to more effectively combat the menace of drug trafficking. The establishment of this lab will facilitate the issuance of various tests and reports regarding anti-narcotics, said the minister adding that this will help bring the criminals to the conclusion, and along with this, valuable time will be saved and data will be collected.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti visiting the Anti-Narcotics Force Forensic Lab at ANF Academy.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Weak cases

Hope dies every day in Pakistan. In 2015, Kasur's child sex scandal — a child pornography ring in Hussain Khanwala district had sexually exploited 285 minors — rocked the nation. On Wednesday — eight years after mass repulsion, protests and an HRCP fact-finding report, which stated that police inaction pointed towards collusion with criminals and found the role of political parties "very disturbing" — the Lahore High Court acquitted three convicts serving life sentences in the child abuse case. Their counsel said that out of six prime suspects, three had been released earlier and the remaining have been exonerated now. He claimed that they were not "conclusively identified" in the forensic tests of the video, the Anti-Terrorism Act sections were not applicable and medical reports did not corroborate the evidence. So, the moral of this story is an old one: the victims were betrayed by police and prosecution.

What should have happened after the horror unfolded was an immediate review of the law-enforcement plan to prevent feeble investigation and forensic inquiry by police. Moreover, prosecutors should have the legal authority to ensure that probes are executed according to the requirements of a case. And, as the agency taking the police's case to the courts, it should become mandatory for prosecutors to keep a record of their work for solid cases to be presented before lower legal fora. Ravaged by corruption and exploitation, police and prosecution, when representing the poor, either end up aiding criminals in hoodwinking the justice system or punish the innocent. To make matters dire, despite repeated incidents of monstrous abuse, the system remains untouched by any reform. The question is: as the progeny of hapless daily wagers, are Kasur's victims easier to overlook? Children, sans expression, authority and support to face abusers, form the most vulnerable section of society. For this reason, provincial and federal authorities must work harder to banish the curse of stolen innocence.

Army Chief's USA visit: Divergence to Convergence

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



Deeply concealed within the labyrinth of the US Embassy's website lies the US Integrated Country Strategy (ICS) for Pakistan, a document unearthed by a speaker at a round table conference hosted by the Pakistan Institute of Strategic Studies. This paper, dissected during the conference, delineates the fundamental priorities and objectives of US involvement with Pakistan spanning 2023-2027. It delineates crucial areas including combatting terrorism and violent extremism, advancing regional stability, integration, and security, fostering inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, alongside strengthening civilian democratic institutions and safeguarding human rights.

The timing of this conference held significant meaning, coinciding with the visit of Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff, General Asim Munir, to the US, where he engaged in meetings with top US leadership. The visit strategically aligned with a reprimand aimed at India, reflecting US discontent regarding the killing of Sikh political activists by alleged rogue agents of India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), first in Canada and later in the US. The visit also resulted in an official rejection of an invitation extended by Indian Prime Minister Modi to President Biden to attend India's Republic Day, an

event that has now been diminished due to Biden's adamant refusal to participate. This development is perceived as a significant setback for India, which, without legitimate grounds, is endeavoring to position itself as a major global power.

The army chief's visit is perceived as a crucial step toward rebuilding and fortifying trust and cooperation between Pakistan and the US. However, the success of this visit hinges on tangible agreements forged and the willingness of both sides to address longstanding issues of mutual concern, which may carry different connotations for Pakistan and the US. The stated objectives of the visit encompass strengthening military ties, bilateral defense cooperation discussions, intelligence sharing on regional security threats, and exploring avenues for potential collaboration.

Pakistan seeks US support in countering threats from groups like Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in Afghanistan, while emphasizing economic cooperation and seeking assistance for its ongoing economic challenges. Urging a more constructive US role in stabilizing Afghanistan, discussions focus on countering regional threats and exploring investment and trade opportunities between both nations.

Discussions are likely to cover contentious issues straining relations between Pakistan and the USA, including the forced repatriation of Afghan refugees, Pakistan's relations with Afghan Interim Government, Kashmir issue, China Pakistan relations with emphasis on CPEC, engaging IMF, World Bank and International

Financial Institutions, Russian Ukraine conflict.

The US has vehemently opposed this, citing concerns about the refugees' safety and well-being. Stressing Afghanistan's instability and potential human rights violations, the US highlights Pakistan's obligations under international law to protect those seeking asylum. It firmly opposes the forced return of refugees, citing potential violations of international commitments.

The US holds deep suspicions regarding Pakistan's alleged support for the Taliban's interim government. Moreover, the US has voiced concerns about Pakistan's perceived lack of transparency and mistrust, casting doubt on its sincerity and the effectiveness of its cooperation.

Pakistan is engaging the Taliban's interim government aiming for a cooperative relationship that prioritizes mutual interests, seeking moderation from the Taliban while averting Afghanistan's transformation into an extremist breeding ground. The stance remains dynamic, navigating complexities while emphasizing stability, human rights, and bilateral concerns in this evolving Afghan landscape.

Despite varying priorities and mutual distrust, the US must rely on Pakistan's declared Afghanistan policy and seek active cooperation. This collaboration aims to prevent militant and weapon movement across the porous Pakistan-Afghanistan border, leveraging Pakistan's historical ties and economic influence to influence the Taliban positively. Additionally, the US seeks insights into Taliban activities and intentions, particularly concerning terrorist

threats, aiming to promote regional cooperation and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a source of instability in South Asia.

The Kashmir issue has long been a delicate and intricate matter for the US focusing on fostering dialogue and diplomacy between India and Pakistan, advocating for peaceful resolutions of outstanding issues especially Kashmir. The stance underscores non-interference in internal affairs, recognizing Kashmir as a bilateral matter between India and Pakistan, refraining from taking a specific legal position or advocating for pre-defined solutions.

Pakistan's Kashmir expectations from the US are a mixed bag. They crave acknowledgement of the issue's international dimension, US-mediated dialogue, advocacy for Kashmiri self-determination, human rights pressure on India, and a balanced portrayal of the conflict. Neutrality, deep engagement with Pakistan, and action beyond just listening to India are also key. In essence, Pakistan wants the US to be a proactive and constructive player in resolving Kashmir peacefully, respecting Pakistani concerns, and seeking a lasting solution.

The US stance regarding Chinese involvement in Pakistan, particularly through initiatives like CPEC and military collaborations, is marked by apprehensions. It sees Chinese increasingly influence in Pakistan as challenges to US interests in the region, including Afghanistan and maritime security; worries about unsustainable debt and opaque financing within CPEC projects; unease about Pakistan's deepening military ties with China and the potential transfer of sensitive tech-

nology with potential military applications; and the perceived threat of upsetting the regional balance of power, possibly leading to instability. The US emphasizes the importance of transparency in CPEC contracts, encourages diversification of foreign partnerships to prevent overreliance on any single nation.

Pakistan's state policy toward Chinese relations and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) centers on fostering a robust strategic partnership with China while maximizing the transformative potential of CPEC for national development. This policy underscores the depth of the Pakistan-China alliance, prioritizing mutual support on core issues while harnessing CPEC's economic promise. Embracing CPEC as a game-changer, Pakistan positions it as pivotal for economic growth, job creation, and regional connectivity, emphasizing responsible management to safeguard national interests. Additionally, Pakistan aims for a balanced foreign policy, cultivating relations beyond China while nurturing cultural ties and remaining adaptable to evolving global dynamics.

The US wields significant influence over International Financial Institutions (IFIs), positioning them as potential tools to nudge Pakistan towards aligning with its strategic objectives. Through its sway over these institutions like the World Bank and IMF, the US prioritizes projects beneficial to its goals—such as regional connectivity and counterterrorism initiatives—compelling Pakistan to cooperate in securing vital funding.

Furthermore, the US holds the power to im-

pact Pakistan's global standing by leveraging assessments of creditworthiness and economic stability from IFIs. A negative evaluation could hinder foreign investment and access to credit markets, pressuring Pakistan to comply with US demands to avert potential economic isolation. Beyond financial clout, the US exercises soft power through leadership roles in IFIs, subtly influencing policy discussions, advocating its values, and diplomatically pressuring nations like Pakistan.

Pakistan's expectations from the US regarding engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) like the IMF and World Bank revolve around seeking assistance devoid of stringent conditionalities or obligations. This encompasses favorable loan terms with lower interest rates and extended repayment periods, enabling economic reforms without hindering sustainable development.

Additionally, Pakistan seeks technical expertise in critical areas, aiming for institutional strengthening and capacity building to manage debt responsibly and implement effective reforms. Moreover, it anticipates the US to advocate within IFIs for its development goals and international trade agenda, while also seeking public recognition of its progress, without attaching any strings or obligations to the support provided. The US holds nuanced expectations from Pakistan regarding its stance on the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Primarily, the US urges Pakistan to publicly condemn Russia's invasion while reducing military ties, supporting humanitarian aid efforts.

Commerce News

Governor SBP asks banks to enhance farmers' access to financial services

Independent Report
KARACHI: The Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Jameel Ahmed urged the banks to ensure easy, timely and hassle-free access of farmers to all financial services including credit, deposits and payments.

The governor SBP, while chairing the annual meeting of the Agricultural Credit Advisory Committee (ACAC), emphasized the need to strengthen and promote growth in the agriculture

sector, which is pivotal for the socioeconomic development of the country, said a statement issued here.

The ACAC meeting was attended by senior officials from federal and provincial governments, Presidents/CEOs of banks, members of provincial chambers of agriculture, representatives of regional farming communities and senior officials of SBP.

The Governor highlighted that despite various challenges

including floods, the agriculture credit disbursements reached an impressive level of Rs1,776 billion during FY23, witnessing year-on-year growth of 25.2% and achieving 97.6% of the overall target of Rs1,819 billion.

He expressed hope for a strong recovery in the agriculture sector that would pave the way for a projected real GDP growth in the range of 2 to 3% in FY24. He urged the banks to intensify their efforts to

not only meet but also surpass the target.

The disbursement target for FY24 was accordingly set at Rs2,250 billion, which was 26.7% higher than the disbursement made last year, he said adding that the stellar growth of 30% during July-Oct 23 gives optimism that we are on track to comfortably achieve the disbursement target.

Acknowledging the challenges, particularly attrition of borrowers,



ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet.



KATHMANDU: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry delegation led by President Md. Jashim Uddin call on Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal.

ADB mission chief stresses collaborative efforts to enhance agri. mechanization

FAISALABAD (APP): She discussed agricultural issues, mechanization, water and food security.

Noriko Sato assured of ADB full support for the noble cause and said that the UAF was having a valuable workforce and scientists to address the issue of agricultural development. She said that the joint efforts of the different institutions would pave a way to address the issue at the national level.

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International].

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Hike in Customs Duty by FBR set to increase mobile phones prices

LAHORE (APP): Leading mobile phone brands in Pakistan are all set to increase the prices of their models after the FBR increased the Customs Duty on import of almost all models of mobile-phones, imported into the country.

Federal Board of Revenue sources told APP on Friday that the Directorate General of Customs Valuation had substantially increased the customs value on the import of 1,160 models of famous brands of mobile phones. The Directorate General of Customs Valuation said that used mobile-phones, imported by travelers,

Governor assures cooperation to textile mills association in resolution of problems

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association here Friday called on KP Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali and informed him about their problems and issues.

The delegation that was led by Muhammad Kamran Shah informed the governor about their reservations relating to the increase in gas prices and urged him to raise the issue with federal authorities.

The delegation said that they would be forced to stop production if their

concerns were not addressed timely and added that our province deserves adequate gas supply according to its production ratio of gas.

The governor assured to take up the matter with the caretaker prime minister and said that price increase is a matter of concern for the province as it may affect the production of industries. He said that necessary steps would be taken for the relief of the textile industry and to remove their concerns.

CDNS realizes Rs 750 billion targets in fresh bond

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 750 billion in fresh bonds in the current fiscal year, from July 1 to December 14.

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.

He said this was Rs 200 billion additional annual targets than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year

2021-22. "The CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the current financial year (2021-22) which will promote savings culture in the country," he said.

In view of the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target had been set to further improve the savings culture, he said.

The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced.

ECC allows signing of mediation agreements b/w K-Electric and govt entities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet here on Friday decided to approve the proposal of Power Division for signing of the draft PPA, ICA, TDA & Mediation Agreements between K-Electric and government entities.

According to press statement issued by the finance ministry, Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar presided over the

ECC meeting, which among others was attended by Minister for Communication, Railways & Maritime Affairs, Shahid Ashraf Tarar; Minister for Privatization, Fawad Hasan Fawad; Minister for Power and Petroleum, Muhammad Ali; Advisor to PM on Finance, Dr. Waqar Masood; federal secretaries and other senior government officials of the relevant ministries.

On taking up the matter of approval of the draft PPA, ICA, TDA & Mediation Agreements to

be signed with K-Electric, the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) briefed the Committee on the observations made by the members of the ECC and provided the requisite additional data on the working of CPPA-G. "After detailed discussion and deliberation, ECC decided to approve the proposal of Power Division for signing of the draft PPA, ICA, TDA & Mediation Agreements between K-Electric & GoP Entities."

Output of LCVs, Vans and jeeps down by 43.91% in five months

ISLAMABAD (APP): The production of Light Commercial Vehicles (LCVs), vans and jeeps in the country has witnessed a 43.91 per cent decrease during the first five months of the financial year 2023-24 against the output of the same period of last fiscal year. As many as 8,084 LCVs, vans and jeeps were manufactured during July-November (2023-24) as compared to the production of 14,413 LCVs.

Weekly inflation falls slightly by 0.06 percent

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation, measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a slight decrease of 0.06 percent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on December 14, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. The SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 311.58 points as compared to 311.78 points during the past week, according to the PBS data.

As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 43.16 percent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs 17,732, decreased by 0.19 percent and went down to 306.02 points from last week's 306.59 points.

Naqvi inaugurates 5-day International Scientific Conference at KEMU

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the 43rd Annual 5-Day International Scientific Conference at King Edward Medical University (KEMU), here on Friday. He visited stalls showcasing innovations by students and teachers, including the Brain Tumour Detector OCT Python and a laparoscopy simulator, developed by the King Edward researchers. He announced dedication of Mayo Hospital's surgical tower to Prof. Dr. Faisal Masood. Additionally, he announced his intention to recommend Dr. Maqbool Ahmed for a civil award, acknowledging his role in constructing the surgical tower with one-and-a-half billion rupees. CM Naqvi inspected a home dialysis machine and locally manufactured surgical instruments for plastic surgery. He took keen interest in a special machine designed for sciatica pain. Overseas graduates of King Edward Medical College presented him with substantial donations for the medical college and hospital. Graduating doctors contributing to the institution received shields in acknowledgment. Vice Chancellor King Edward Medical University, Professor Dr. Mahmood Ayaz, expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister on behalf of students and faculty. The CM emphasized

the noble nature of the medical profession and commended the dedication of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, acknowledging their sacrifices and the risks they face daily. He recounted instances of doctors sacrificing their lives, citing the example of those who succumbed to the Congo virus in Balochistan while treating patients. Naqvi outlined ongoing hospital upgrades, targeting completion by January 31. Notable hospitals like General, Services, Victoria, and Holy Family are undergoing improvements mirroring the model set by Mayo Hospital. The comprehensive upgrade spans an area of 6 lakh square feet across various hospitals.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhawa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with delegation of Islamic Doctors Forum District Organization Khyber Pakhtunkhawa.

Punjab Governor says: Permanent appointments on the statutory posts should be ensured

Independent Report
LAHORE: The Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman has approved summaries of various universities regarding appointments, nominations, and additional charge on various administrative posts as chancellor. On this occasion, the Governor of the Punjab has specially emphasized that permanent appointments on the statutory posts of Registrar, Controller of Examinations, and Treasurer should be ensured during the period of additional charge. According to the details, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has nominated Prof. Dr. Nasir Hayat, Department of Mechanical Engineering UET, as the Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Engineering and Technology for a period of three (3) years or till his retirement, whichever is earlier. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has nominated Professor Dr. Rubina Kamal, Principal Government Graduate College for Women, Margzar Colony, Lahore.

First Lady Samina visits Shalimar Garden

LAHORE (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi visited the historic building Shalimar Garden here on Friday. Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) Director General Kamran Lashari, Amateur Gardeners' Club Chairperson Nousheen Sarfraz received the distinguished guest on her arrival to the UNESCO world heritage site. Samina Alvi was briefed in detail about the recent restoration and preservation activities carried out by the WCLA and presented pictorial documentation of the restoration work.

Governor KP agrees over forming of committee to streamline trade with Afghan

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali has expressed his consent over constitution of a steering committee with the task of streamlining of trade with Afghanistan both import, export and transit. The agreement was reached during a meeting of Governor KP, Haji Ghulam Ali with a delegation of businessmen dealing in trade with Afghanistan. Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi and Vice President PAJCCI, Shuja Muhammad were leading the delegation and other members were Engr. Manzoor Elahi, Intiaz Ahmad Ali (Director PAJCCI), Farooq Ahmad, Ammar Ansari and Mian Waheed Bacha. During the meeting, the delegation members apprised Governor KP about the problems they face daily in trade with Afghanistan including import, export and transit trade. After discussion over the issues creating hurdles in the smooth sailing of trade, it was agreed that a steering committee be constituted under the chairmanship of private sector stakeholders with representation from Frontier Corps.



KARACHI: Students take keen interest in books during the 18th Karachi International Book Fair organized by the Publishers and Book Sellers Association (PPBA) held at Expo Centre in Karachi.

PPP says standing firm on demand for polls on Feb 8

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has made a clear announcement to stand firm on its position for ensuring certainty of elections on February 8. In a statement issued here on Friday, PPP Parliamentarians Secretary-General Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari has said the party is committed to its stance on February 8 elections, and the Election Commission must adhere to the date, set for the electoral process by the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court and the Election Commission should eliminate any ambiguity regarding utilisation of people's right to vote on the given election date. Bukhari also mentioned that the Supreme Court had declared that elections would take place on Feb 8 in any case. He demanded that the perception of facilitation to any party of the civil administration under the supervision of the caretaker government must be removed. He said those elements want to delay elections through the delaying tactics who are not able to face people.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah addresses the seminar of International Iqbal Conference 2023 organized by Iqbal Academy Pakistan at Aiwan Iqbal Complex.

Jamal Shah for following Iqbal's teachings for resolving social issues

LAHORE (APP): Federal Minister for National Heritage & Culture Syed Jamal Shah has said that the nation can move forward in the light of thoughts and teachings of Allama Muhammad Iqbal as creation of Pakistan was the result of his intellectual guidance which was acknowledged by the leaders of the Freedom Movement and especially by Hazrat Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He was addressing the International Iqbal Conference organized by Iqbal Academi Pakistan with a theme "Allama Iqbal and Nesad No" here at Aiwan-e-Iqbal on Friday.

No clue of two abducted friends

ATTOCK (Online): Police failed to get any clue of two friends belongs to Hazro town of Attock who fell in to honey trap and abducted by outlaws in Kachha area of Sadiqabad around one week ago. Hassan Khan and his friend Zahid Khan, both native of Tajak village of Hazro were abducted after falling into a honey trap laid out by a Sadiqabad gang in Kachha area for sale of Suzuki van. Later on, the abductors make a call from one of the abductors to his family members and demanded a ransom money worth Rs 50 million for the safe release of the abducted persons. Although Hazro Police registered a case against the abductors but so far no clue of the abducted persons was traced despite the lapse of one week, causing unrest and fear of killing among the family members. The family of the victim maintained that the robbers were demanding a total of Rs 50 million.

Minister appreciates educational system, quality of Dar-e-Arqam

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Tribal Affairs of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Aamer Abdullah has appreciated the educational system and quality of Dar-e-Arqam Schools System Pakistan and AL-Ghazali Trust. He was speaking during a meeting with the Directors of the nationwide network of Dar-e-Arqam Schools Pakistan and addressed to their national convention at Abbottabad. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dar-e-Arqam Schools Pakistan, Syed Waqas Jafferi, Directors Dr. Ishtiaq Gondal, Aamir Cheema, Dr. Muddasir, Regional Director Mohammad Haroon and Chairman Ghazali Trust Pakistan, Aamir Mahmood Jaffer, the heads of the school also attended the convention.

Four get death sentence, life jail in double murder case

MULTAN (APP): A local court awarded death sentences to four accused on charge of killing two persons after committing a robbery at a house in 2019 in Multan. Additional District & Sessions Judge (AD&SJ), Saira Noreen, pronounced the verdict of the case after the completion of the trial in which four accused named Ghulam Shabir alias Shabu, Mureed Hussain, Ghulam Mustafa alias Musti Nadeem and Nazir Ahmad were awarded death sentence.

International News

Israel-Hamas fighting convulses Gaza as US seeks protection of civilians

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO/GAZA: Israeli and Hamas forces battled throughout Gaza on Friday, witnesses said, suggesting Israel's ground offensive was meeting stiff resistance as the U.S. pushed its ally to alter a war strategy that has inflicted a huge civilian death toll. Residents in the small enclave reported fighting in Shejiaia, Sheikh Radwan, Zeitoun, Tuffah, and Beit Hanoun in north Gaza, east of Maghazi in central Gaza and in the centre and northern fringes of the main southern city of Khan Younis. Hospitals in Deir al-Balah, Khan Younis and Rafah reported a new influx of dead and wounded early on Friday including two children. Four people were killed in an Israeli air strike on a house in Rafah and Israeli tanks were shelling targets just east of the city near the Egyptian border, medics and witnesses said. The Israeli military said in an update on Friday its forces had destroyed a Hamas command and control hub in Gaza City's Shejiaia district, conducted a "targeted raid" on militant infrastructure in Khan Younis, and bombed sites in the Rafah area that helped Hamas to smuggle weapons into Gaza. The heavy fighting, confirmed by many residents and militant sources reached by Reuters, raised questions about whether Israel's two-month-long aerial and ground blitz of Gaza has significantly weakened Hamas, which it has vowed to annihilate. "The Gaza Strip turned into a ball of fire overnight, we could hear explosions and gunshots echoing from all directions," Ahmed, 45, an electrician and father of six, told Reuters from a shelter in a central area of the densely populated enclave. "They can destroy homes and roads and kill civilians from the air or through blind tank shelling, but when they come face to face with the resistance, they lose. We don't have anything to lose after all they had done to our Gaza," he said. Unrelenting Israeli bombardment has laid much of the narrow coastal strip to waste over the past two months, with nearly 19,000 people confirmed dead, according to Palestinian health officials.

Unrelenting Israeli bombardment has laid much of the narrow coastal strip to waste over the past two months, with nearly 19,000 people confirmed dead, according to Palestinian health officials.



European Council President Charles Michel delivers remarks to journalists in the European Council atrium ahead of an EU leaders' dinner at the European headquarters in Brussels.

Communications blackout as starving Gazans being bombed to dust

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: Israel pounded the length of the Gaza Strip on Thursday, killing families in their homes, even as a US envoy told Israel Washington wanted the war to end "as soon as possible". Internet and telephone services were cut across the war-torn Gaza Strip on Thursday, the Palestinian telecommunications company Paltel said, while the UN warned of the possibility of a "breakdown of civil order" in the Gaza Strip as aid organisations have struggled to get supplies to desperate Gazans. Hunger and desperation are driving people to seize humanitarian aid being delivered from the sole point of entry at Rafah, while many are forced to beg for bread, paying 50 times more than usual for a single can of beans and slaughtering a donkey to feed a family. The UN humanitarian office OCHA said on Thursday that limited aid distributions were taking place in the Rafah area, close to the border with Egypt, where almost half of Gaza's population of 2.3 million is now estimated to be living.

Palestinian prime minister says US must seek a 2-state solution. Israel vows to fight

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: The Palestinian prime minister said in an interview Thursday that the Biden administration must now "walk the walk" and take specific steps toward what has been an elusive two-state solution, including by applying pressure on Israel. But in Israel, the defense minister said destroying Hamas will take several more months. The United States has shielded Israel against growing international calls for an immediate cease-fire.

EU agrees to open membership talks with Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: European Union leaders granted Ukraine a major political win on Thursday by agreeing to start membership negotiations at a time when its counter-offensive against Russia's invasion has failed to make major gains and US military aid has become more uncertain. Diplomats and officials in Brussels said the unexpected green light for talks took place as Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who had for weeks said he would block such a deal, agreed to leave the room, knowing the other leaders would go ahead and vote. Orban confirmed that he had abstained from the vote at the EU summit on what he called a "bad decision". It was unclear at this stage what exactly he could be getting in return. Such an unusual way to approve a decision, especially such a major one, is unheard of in Brussels, even for a place where diplomats have long been very creative about how to strike deals. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the decision.



Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg attends the Future protest outside the Parliament in Stockholm, Sweden.

Hungarian PM Orban blocks EU aid for Ukraine after membership talks agreed

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Friday blocked \$55 billion (€50 billion) in EU aid for Ukraine, after leaders side-stepped his opposition to agree to open talks with Kyiv on joining the bloc. A crunch summit in Brussels broke up after a day of wrangling as the Hungarian authoritarian leader refused to greenlight funding to help prop up Ukraine's government over the next four years. Orban called for unblocking all of the still-frozen funds from the European Union for his country, before considering lifting his veto on further aid to Ukraine. "This is a great opportunity for Hungary to make it clear that it should get what it deserves. Not half, then a quarter, but it must get the whole thing," Orban said in an interview with Hungarian state radio. "So we want to be treated fairly, and now there is a good chance that we can assert this," he added. The wrangling injected a bitter note over the summit, a day after the leaders minus Hungary made the historic decision to open talks with Ukraine on one day joining the bloc. The second day of the summit was expected to turn to the Israeli-Hamas war in Gaza, and the search for a common EU position on it.



Current and former members of President Biden's staff call for a ceasefire in Gaza, outside the White House.

Sudan's RSF advances on Wad Madani as eight month-old war spreads

Monitoring Desk
DUBAI: Sudan's army was trying to hold off attacks by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on Friday near Wad Madani, a major city that had been sheltered from fighting and taken in hundreds of thousands of civilians during eight months of war. Clashes in the area, about 170 km (105 miles) southeast of Khartoum, threaten to open a new front in a conflict that has displaced nearly 7 million people, left the capital in ruins and triggered waves of ethnically driven killings in Darfur. A takeover of densely populated Wad Madani, where some government and aid services have relocated, would likely trigger massive displacement and deepen a humanitarian crisis in which the United Nations is warning of famine-like conditions in areas directly affected.

Tel Aviv not to resume Gaza prisoner talks in Qatar

Monitoring Desk
TEL AVIV: Israel has canceled a planned trip to Qatar by the head of its foreign intelligence service to restart talks on a potential second prisoner release deal with Hamas, CNN reported on Thursday. Mossad director David Barnea will not travel to Doha, where previous talks on the release of prisoners held by Hamas in Gaza have taken place, the source said.

The Israeli war cabinet, led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, decided to cancel the trip and negotiations with senior officials will not resume in Qatar. Israel's ambassador to Britain, meanwhile, said that Israel would not accept a two-state solution with the Palestinians after the Gaza crisis ends. Tzipi Hotovely told Sky News that she did not believe in the long-standing position of the UK government.

11 Iran police killed in attack claimed by militant group Jaish al-Adl

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: At least 11 Iranian police officers were killed in an attack overnight by militant group Jaish al-Adl (Army of Justice) on a police station in the south-eastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan, an official told state television on Friday. A number of assailants were also killed in a shootout that ensued with the security forces, the channel reported. "In the terrorist attack on the police headquarters in the town of Rask, 11 policemen were killed, and others were wounded," Alireza Marhamati, deputy governor of the province, told state TV. The attack, which occurred around midnight, was one of the deadliest in years for the region lying close to Iran's border with Afghanistan and Pakistan. It was claimed by Jaish al-Adl, in a brief statement on its Telegram channel. Jaish al-Adl was formed in 2012 and is blacklisted by Iran as a "terrorist" group.

Despite crises, Pakistan will continue to assist & protect Afghan refugees, says Asif Durrani

GENEVA (APP): High-lighting that Pakistan is still hosting over 1.4 million Afghan refugees, a senior Pakistani diplomat has called on the world community to continue providing Islamabad with the necessary support to take care of them. Speaking at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, Asif Durrani said that Pakistan, for over four decades, shouldered the global responsibility of hosting, protecting, and assisting Afghan refugees.

"We reaffirm this pledge to Afghan refugees, who enjoy equal access to basic facilities of life at par with Pakistani citizens," he told the Forum, the world's largest international gathering on refugees and host communities. "This is despite the fact that like many other developing countries, Pakistan continues to grapple with the triple crises of food, fuel and inflation," Ambassador Durrani said. "We sincerely hope that the international community will continue to demonstrate its responsibility by providing sustained and adequate support to Pakistan as a host country," he added. In his opening speech, UN refugee agency (UNHCR) chief

Filippo Grandi told delegates that a record 114 million forcibly displaced, around the world, represent a "crisis of humanity".

The Global Refugee Forum — co-hosted by UNHCR and Switzerland and convened by Colombia, France, Japan, Jordan and Uganda—brings together member states, civil society, financial institutions, private companies and more than 300 refugee advocates. Setting the tone for the discussion, Grandi said that 114 million "represents the number of refugees and displaced people whom persecution, human rights violations, violence, armed conflict, serious public disorder have forced from their homes: 114 million shattered dreams, disrupted lives, interrupted hopes."

In his remarks, Ambassador Durrani pointed out that international burden and responsibility sharing was disproportionate, inequitable, and unpredictable while developing countries continue to host around 80% of refugees population out of their own meager resources. "Regrettably," the Pakistani envoy said, "International support to the displaced and the distressed has become most scarce when it is most needed."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), Fawad Hasan Fawad chaired a review meeting held at Ministry.

BISP holds discussion on promoting partnerships with civil society orgs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has organized a Round Table Conference at its headquarters, bringing together key stakeholders to promote collaboration between BISP, civil society organizations, and other NGOs.

The conference, chaired by Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Chairperson of BISP, aimed to enhance partnerships for the betterment of needy families.

Dr. Amjad Saqib welcomed the participants in his opening remarks, highlighting BISP's commitment

to providing additional financial support to families in need.

Dr. Amjad Saqib said that as the largest social safety program in the country, BISP plays a pivotal role in addressing the socio-economic challenges faced by vulnerable households.

Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasized the importance of a newly launched savings scheme designed to instill a culture of saving among needy households.

Dr. Amjad Saqib outlined a strategy focused on lifting needy families out of

poverty and appealed to civil society and partner organizations to adopt the principles of Mawakhat, nurturing a sense of collective responsibility.

Additional Secretary BISP, Dr. Tahir Noor, provided a detailed briefing on various BISP initiatives, including Benazir Kafalat, Nashonuma, Taleemi Wazaif, and undergraduate scholarships.

Dr. Tahir Noor highlighted significant achievements, stating that 361.5 billion rupees have been distributed under the Benazir Kafalat program.

He further disclosed that more than 55 billion rupees have been disbursed to 8.8 million children through the Taleemi Wazaif program. Additionally, 1.4 million pregnant, lactating mothers, and their children under 2 years of age are benefiting from the Nashonuma program to address the issue of stunting. Providing a glimpse into BISP's infrastructure, Dr. Tahir Noor mentioned the authentic data of 35 million households and the existence of 647 Dynamic Registry Centers across the country.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Federal Minister for Education Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi with students and other officials song during Sindhi Culture and Heritage Day by Haseeb Ahmad Chairman Sindhi Sangat at SZABIST.

AC City cracks down on beggar rackets, 23 netted

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a late-night sting operation, the Assistant Commissioner City, following the Deputy Commissioner's directive, launched a targeted sweep against professional beggars across the city subdivision.

This decisive action netted 23 individuals, their pleas for alms replaced by the clanging of handcuffs, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said on Friday. "Professional beggars exploit our compassion for personal gain," declared the ICT spokesperson. "These arrests send a clear message that Islamabad has

zero tolerance for such organized begging rings."

The apprehended individuals, identified as professional beggars, were whisked away to the police station. Meanwhile, any minor children found in their company were placed in the care of the Edhi Center, ensuring their safety and well-being. This operation is just the latest in a series of ongoing crackdowns led by Assistant Commissioners, demonstrating the city's unwavering commitment to combating the organized begging menace. One by one, these exploitative rings are being dismantled.

CDA removes encroachments from Bari Imam area

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority's (CDA) Anti-encroachment operation is on full swing in Islamabad and removed various encroachments from Bari Imam area.

On the directions of Chairman CDA, the Enforcement Directorate with the support of Islamabad Police along with other departments and district administration conducted a mega anti encroachment operation against the illegal population established on the government land in Mohalla Thatti adjacent to Bari Imam.

IHC issues notice to ECP on petition against delimitation of NA-122 Lahore

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notice to Election Commission (EC) on petition against the delimitation of NA-122 Lahore.

Chief Justice of Islamabad High Court (IHC), Aamer Farooq heard the petition of Citizen Karamat Ali sought a reply from EC on next hearing. Court said in its remarks that let the answer come till next hearing then we will look into the matter.

Nikkah case: Court summons Ex-chairman PTI on next hearing

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has summoned former chairman PTI on next hearing of Non shariah nikkah case against him and his wife Bushra Bibi. Senior civil judge of district and session court Islamabad Qudrat Ullah issued one page written order in connection with hearing of the case Friday. It has been said in the order one day exemption from attendance plea of Bushra Bibi is accepted. Bushra Bibi should file surety bonds worth Rs 50000.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani addressing during the launching ceremony of the Practitioners Handbook Navigating Extradition in Pakistan organized by Ministry of Interior at local hotel.

Kanwar Dilshad says: Election can take place till February 11

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former secretary Election Commission (EC) and advisor to care taker chief minister Punjab Kanwar Dilshad has said election can take place till February 11.

"High court decision will make no difference of more days on election. To me election can be held till February 11, he said this in an interview with private TV channel here Friday.

He went on to say accepting high court decision is constitutional obligation

of EC. Training schedule has been withdrawn by EC following the decision of high court. Now larger bench will decide. EC will postpone election schedule for some days till its decision. Schedule will be issued after larger bench decision. He held high court judges had declined to provide services. Upon it EC hired services from bureaucracy. EC can take officers from executive or judiciary under its act. Therefore it has appointed officers from executive.

Missing children with families Police launches "Manadi" program for swift reunion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Police has rolled out the "Manadi" program, a dedicated initiative aimed at reuniting missing children with their parents or families. The police force utilizes various social media platforms to disseminate information about missing children and those found unclaimed.

Taking a hands-on approach, respective police stations shoulder the responsibility of facilitating the reunification process.

During the tenure of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, among several distinctive initiatives, this particular step stands out as note-

worthy in addressing the grievances of citizens, especially families whose children have been lost. The program goes a step further by sharing contact details of the police officers involved on social media, ensuring open lines of communication for concerned citizens.

The concerted efforts of Islamabad Police are directed towards the safe return of these children to their families, emphasizing a proactive and community-oriented policing approach. The public response to the "Manadi" program has been overwhelmingly positive, with citizens lauding the initiative as a commendable step.

PBM initiates service transformation, bids farewell to traditional processes: MD

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) has removed human intervention and traditional bureaucratic hurdles or traditional red tape from all its service domains, Managing Director Amir Fida Paracha said Friday.

Briefing media on the launching of World Bank's PMDT (Project Management and Tracking Design) in PBM and one-year performance, he said eliminating bureaucratic hurdles in Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal has expedited the processing of requests for various services, including medical aid, education support, cochlear implants, individual financial assistance, and more, through paperless e-filing. Utilizing digital systems enhances administrative efficiency, and a new Directorate for donation management has been established under the Bait-ul-Mal Act.

Digitizing Women Empowerment Centers,

Child Labor Rehabilitation Centers, and Pakistan Sweet Homes, the organization ensures secure payment transactions via a biometric system. The incorporation of gender, whistleblowing, and conflict of interest policies aligns with the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety guidelines.

PBM has adopted the PMDT score system, in line with recommendations from the World Bank and other international organizations, using paperless and digital processes to foster transparency in the institution and streamline service accessibility. Now, applications can be swiftly processed using electronic filing, eliminating the need for traditional paperwork, Amir Fida Paracha said.

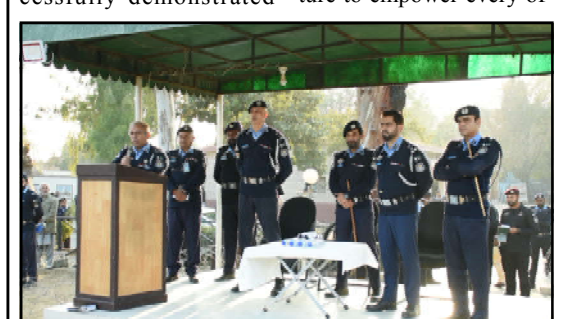
Since its establishment in 1992, PBM has transitioned from manual operations to embracing electronic management information system (EMIS).

Islamabad police conducts special anti riots training course

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police carried out a special anti-riot training course for the policemen in order to prepare them about any situation related to peace and security. Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan attended the concluding ceremony of the course as chief guest while CPO Headquarters, CPO Law and Order and other senior police officers were also present on the occasion, police spokesman told here Friday.

During the course, the police personnel demonstrated their skills to maintain peace, safeguarding public and private properties, confronting criminal elements and ensuring their arrests, while the use of water cannons and other advanced techniques were also demonstrated.

Police officials successfully demonstrated



their ability to disperse any unlawful protests using six different formations. These formations encompassed various tactics and techniques to effectively manage and control such situations.

These formations were designed to equip police officials with ability to disperse any unlawful protests using various tactics, including line formations, roof formations, circle formations, V formations, water cannon formations, and special formations.

ICCP Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan said that the special anti-riot training exercises were carried out to further elevate the preparedness of officers and officials to handle any potential law and order crisis effectively.

The purpose of these training exercises is to modernize the training of police officers, ensuring ease and better facilities for the citizens, he added.

He further emphasized that such training sessions would continue in the future to empower every officer and officials within the Islamabad Capital Police, allowing them to serve the community more effectively.

British MPs call Indian SC's decision on Article 370 against UN resolutions

LONDON (INP): British lawmakers, activists, practitioners and peace activists held discussions on Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir in the UK Parliament.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the discussions were held to mark International Human Rights Day and the Indian Supreme Court's decision to uphold the Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party government's revocation of Article 370. The event reminded the international community of its responsibility to press for a free and fair plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir.

Tehreek-e-Kashmir UK's conference was chaired by Paul Bristow, MP, and hosted by Fahim Kayani, President of the UK-based Diaspora group.

British lawmakers attending included Kate Holten, Jess Phillips, Sarah Owen, Steve Baker, Sara Britcliffe, Lord Qurban Hussain, Muhammad Yasin, Tahir Ali, Tan Dhesi, Debbie Abrahams and Marco Longhi had a detailed discussion on the Kashmir dispute which has turned into a nuclear flashpoint in South Asia with three nuclear powered nations bordering the UN-designated disputed territory.

Paul Bristow condemned India's continued illegal actions in Kashmir and urged those who support human rights of Palestinians to show the same support for the people of occupied Kashmir.

Fahim Kayani commented Paul for his continued support for Kashmir and for tirelessly maintaining the importance and profile of Kashmir within the Conservative party.

"I wish the Supreme Court of India had courage to visit United Nations resolutions on Kashmir," Kayani told the conference. "No assembly has any power to decide on behalf of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. So, neither the Indian parliament nor the President of India has any sovereignty over Kashmir," he added.

Envoy Afrasiab's unusual book "Expressions" unfolds historic accounts of Pak interaction with world

ISLAMABAD (APP): 400 books' written by 'more than 140 Pakistani diplomats', since the establishment of the coun-

try in 1947.



Hashmi authored on an unusual subject was launched here on Friday at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) that revealed historical accounts of Pakistan's interaction with the world since its creation.

Ambassador Afrasiab is a prolific writer, who has several books to his credit. He has served in the Pakistani Missions in Washington DC, New Delhi, Beijing and Vienna. He also worked as High Commissioner to Bangladesh and New Zealand.

His book recently published by the National Book Foundation (NBF) is a compendium of 'over

The enclosures in the book include: writeups on important Pakistani diplomats and speeches related to Pakistan's foreign policy.

Addressing the ceremony, Ambassador Afrasiab Hashmi said the motivation behind taking up the uphill task of collecting knowledge and compiling it into a book was the teaching of the Holy Quran and the Prophet (PBUH) for seeking knowledge not only as a source of illumination but also as a weapon for preservation of civilizations.

"Books are important as Knowledge is important.