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Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf addressing Course Commissioning Parade of 120th Midshipmen and 28th Short Service Commission at Pakistan Naval Academy Karachi

Naval Chief terms settlement of Kashmir dispute vital for South Asian peace

120th Midshipmen, 28th SSC Parade held at Pakistan Naval Academy

KARACHI (APP): The Course Commissioning Parade of 120th Midshipmen and 28th Short Service Commission (SSC) was held here at the Pakistan Naval Academy (PNA) on Saturday.

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The commissioning contingent comprised 88 Midshipmen out of which 60 were from Pakistan, 01 from the Kingdom of Bahrain, and 27 from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with 44 officers of SSC Course including 12 lady officers, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

While emphasising on geo-strategic environment, the Chief of the Naval Staff asserted that

peace and stability in South Asia will remain elusive unless the long-standing issue of Kashmir is resolved in accordance with the aspirations of its people and the UNSC resolutions.

He urged the international community to play its role in the cessation of human rights violations and atrocities in the illegally occupied Indian-held Jammu and Kashmir whose citizens must be allowed to exercise their right to self-determination.

During his address, Naval Chief also emphasised the immediate need to end the sufferings in Gaza as indiscriminate use of force on Palestinian civilians is a gross violation of human rights and

war crimes that must cease forthwith.

He further reiterated that Pakistan would continue its diplomatic, moral, and principled support to Palestinians and urged for a just, comprehensive, and enduring solution to the Palestinian question, in line with relevant UN resolutions.

He added that Pakistan looks forward to a stable and secure Afghanistan; which is key to regional integration, growth, and prosperity.

The Chief Guest felicitated the commissioning term and their parents. He commended the parents for instilling a spirit in their children to serve the nation, which ultimately led them to join this prestigious Service.

NA-263 and NA-264 constituencies: Nomination papers of Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Qasim Suri rejected

Papers of Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni, Naseemur Rehman Khan, Sardar Atif Sanjrani, Rozi Khan Kakar, Asghar Khan Achakzai accepted

Independent Report

QUETTA: The nomination papers of President of Balochistan National Party (BNP) and leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Qasim Suri were rejected by the respective Returning Officers on Saturday.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Qasim Suri had filed their nomination papers for NA-263 and NA-264 respectively.

According to the Returning Officer, Sardar Akhtar Mengal's papers were rejected on the basis of Aqama of United Arab of Emirates (UAE), he is allegedly having.

On the other hand, nomination papers of Qasim Suri were rejected on

being defaulter, absconder and blockage of National Identity Card.

It may be mentioned here that Sardar Akhtar Mengal and Qasim Suri were elected as Members of National Assembly in the general elections of 2018.

Meanwhile, papers of 34 candidates were accepted on the NA-264.

The papers of Nawabzada Lashkari Raisani, Mehmood Khan Achakzai, Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni, Naseemur Rehman Khan, Sardar Atif Sanjrani, Rozi Khan Kakar, Asghar Khan Achakzai, Muhammad Ismail Gujjar and Arbab Liaquat were also accepted. However, Prince Umar Ahmedzai and Mir Khalid Langove were also rejected as they had filed papers from NA-264.

PTI suffers blow as Imran's nomination papers from Lahore, Mianwali rejected

PTI founder has been convicted," returning officer of NA-122 constituency says; however, appeal can be filed

LAHORE (Agencies): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's nomination papers were rejected for a National Assembly constituency from Punjab's capital and his home city, Mianwali, officials of the provincial election commission confirmed Saturday.

The former prime minister had filed his nomination papers from Lahore's NA-122 and Mianwali's NA-89 constituencies ahead of the upcoming polls slated for February 8, 2024, while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif's papers have been accepted for NA-130 in Lahore.

The development comes as a major blow to

the party whose leadership is facing a plethora of cases — especially pertaining to the May 9 riots — with senior leaders, including Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and others, behind bars.

"The PTI founder has been convicted," the returning officer (RO) assigned to scrutinise the nomination papers of the NA-122 constituency said, explaining the basis of the decision, dealing a blow to the PTI ahead of the polls.

The objections, raised by PML-N's Mian Naseer, had referred to Khan's five-year disqualification in the Toshakhana case wherein the electoral body had found him guilty of corrupt practices under Section 167

of the Elections Act, 2017. "PTI founder's proposer and seconder do not belong from NA-122," the objection added.

Online adds: Zeeshan Malik secretary of Maryam Nawaz chief organizer PML-N has said nomination papers of Maryam Nawaz has been accepted from all the constituencies of Lahore and Sargodha.

Maryam Nawaz will contest election from those constituencies the party will decide.

Mayam Nawaz had filed nomination papers from the constituencies including NA-119, NA-120, PP-159, PP-160, PP-165, PP-80 (Sargodha) which have been accepted.



LAHORE: PML (N) Quaid Nawaz Sharif, Mariyam Nawaz, Rana Sanaullah and Khawaja Asif attending meeting of Parliamentary Board

Provincial EC maintains: Altogether 5,067 polling stations to be set up for elections in Balochistan

QUETTA: Altogether 5,067 polling stations will be set up for general elections in Balochistan province.

Out of total 5,067 polling stations, 2,058 have been declared most sensitive.

Similarly 2,180 polling stations have been declared sensitive with 829 declared as normal.

This was informed by the Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan in an official statement issued here on Saturday.

According to the PEC, all the polling stations would be provided the necessary security during the polling process.

The necessary arrangements are being made to ensure free, fair and transparent elections in the province and that in the peaceful environment.

Election 2024 PML-M issues tickets to candidates on PA, NA seats

QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has issued party tickets to the candidates contesting elections on seats of different provincial and national assemblies in Balochistan.

According to the PML-N notification issued the other day, the PML-N have issued tickets to 14 candidates contesting the election of different National Assembly seats.

Similarly, 39 candidates have been issued the party's tickets for the provincial assembly seats.

According to the list, Nawab Salman Khilji has been issued the party ticket for the NA-262. Jamal Shah Kakar and Arz Muhammad Barich have been issued the party's tickets to contest elections on NA-263 and NA-264 respectively.

From NA-254, Mir Abdul Ghafoor Lehri has been issued the party's ticket. Similarly, Jam Kamal Khan would be the PML-N candidate from NA-257 Lasbela-cum-Hub-cum-Awaran.

Jam Kamal has also been issued the party ticket for PB-21 and PB-22.

PML-N to lead country out of challenges, affirms Nawaz

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supreme Nawaz Sharif, while addressing a session of the party's parliamentary board on Saturday, stated that after winning the 2024 elections, together they would lead the country out of challenges and difficulties like a team.

"You have been of great help to me. You have supported me. All your words are etched in my heart," the former premier said to the party members who praised his leadership skills.

Recalling his stints as the country's prime minister, Nawaz Sharif said that PML-N leaders had worked day and night and strengthened his hands in order to offset electricity load-shedding and complete several development projects. "This service is not ordinary. It is unparalleled."

Adjustment with MQM, JUI-F, IPP and GDA will be made without any pre-condition.

According to PML-N sources IPP's demand for adjustment on 100 seats of National and Punjab assemblies has been rejected.

PML-N has also refused to accept JUI-F demand for adjustment on 15 seats of national and Punjab assemblies.



SIBI: IG Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Sheikh inaugurates women police station, in City

Over 18,000 IBOs conducted across country, 566 eliminated & 5,161 terrorists arrested in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): As many as 18,736 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) have been conducted by the security forces across the country in 2023 resulted in the elimination of 566 and the arrest of 5,161 terrorists during various actions taken to maintain peace and security in the country.

According to the data available from this news agency, effective security measures have been taken by the forces against terrorists in the year 2023.

In the year 2023, in view of the situation of unrest in the region, effective anti-terrorism measures were taken for national defense and security.

The data indicated that the traces and evidence of recent terrorist incidents in

About the difficult decisions made by the former PDM-led government, Nawaz Sharif said that at a time when many people were criticising the PML-N for taking over, Shehbaz Sharif tackled difficult situations with patience and saved the country from default.

Online adds: PML-N leadership has decided not to accept pressure of any like-minded political party with regard to seat adjustment matter.

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Caretaker govt nothing to do with rejection or acceptance of nomination papers: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Saturday categorically rejected the notion that the caretaker government had any involvement in either acceptance or rejection of the nomination papers of the aspiring candidates for the general election.

The caretaker government had nothing to do with the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers which was part of the constitutional process, the minister said while speaking in a Television (TV) talk show of the pri-

vate media. "Only the Election Commission has authority to decide on election-related matters," the minister stressed.

He said the caretaker government was committed to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in providing financial and administrative support to the electoral watchdog for the elections.

Solangi said an amount of Rs17.4 billion had been released to the Election Commission of Pakistan in addition to Rs10 billion which was released earlier for holding elections.

Terrorist commander Khurray among five killed in N Waziristan operation: ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): Terrorist Commander Rahzaib alias Khurray, among five terrorists, was killed during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) conducted by the security forces in the general area of Mir Ali in the North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release on Saturday, the forces conducted the IBO on December 29 on the reported presence of terrorists.

During the conduct of the operation, after intense

fire exchange, the five terrorists were eliminated who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against security forces as well as extortion and target killings of innocent civilians.

The forces also recovered weapons and ammunition during the operation.

The locals of the area appreciated the operation. However, a sanitization operation was being carried out to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, as the security forces were determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Two children killed in Bolan roadside bomb blast

QUETTA (INP): Two children — aged 10 and 12 years — were killed in a roadside bomb blast in the Bolan district of Balochistan on Saturday, police officials confirmed.

The roadside bomb went off in the Mach area of Bolan, the officials noted, leaving two children dead including 10-year-old Babar and 12-year-old Ahmed Jan.

The powerful explosion occurred near shops located behind a police sta-

tion on Jail Road in Bolan's Mach area, they added, with no group taking responsibility of the attack so far.

According to police, the explosive material was installed on a handcart. The glass windows of nearby buildings shattered due to the intensity of the blast.

Police shifted the bodies of the deceased children to the civil hospital and summoned the bomb disposal squad (BDS) for collecting more evidence.



QUETTA: Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi checking attendance register of staff during his visit to PHU Beleli

Threat alert issued to Maulana Fazl, Aimal Wali

ISLAMABAD (Online): Threat alert has been issued to JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Aimal Wali Khan.

Both the leaders have been directed to make fool proof security arrangements.

A letter has been issued by interior ministry to Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Aimal Wali Khan whereby they have been informed that threatening information have been received in respect of Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Utmost care be demonstrated due to threat. Necessary security arrangements be made at residences, movement and during public meetings. Utmost care be shown to deal with any untoward incident.

ECP challenges PHC decision of reinstating PTI's election symbol

PESHAWAR (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has challenged the verdict of Peshawar High Court (PHC) to reinstate the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) election symbol.

The PHC on December 26, announced the verdict on PTI's petition challenging the ECP's verdict, which had stripped PTI of using the 'bat' symbol.

The election watchdog has filed an intra-court appeal in the PHC challenging the decision of its single-judge bench.

The ECP in its petition has requested the court to review the PTI's intra-party elections and its decision related to the election symbol.

On December 2, the ECP had nullified Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's intra-party elections, for the

third time since last year, declaring the PTI ineligible for obtaining its traditional electoral symbol of 'bat'.

In its verdict, the ECP said, "So keeping in view the clear mandate of Elections Act 2017 — it is held that PTI has not complied with our directions rendered therein order dated 23rd November, 2023 and failed to hold intra-party election in accordance with PTI prevailing Constitution 2019 and Elections Act 2017, and Election Rules, 2017. Therefore, the certificate dated 4th December, 2023 and Form-65 filed by the alleged chairman, is hereby regretted and rejected accordingly."

PTI's intraparty elections, in which Barrister Gohar Khan was elected as chairman of the party, were held on December 2.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick, chairing first consultative session of Kashmir Advisory Committee.



KARACHI: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf awarding commandant Gold medal to the best SSC Cadet during 120th Midshipmen and 28th Short Service Commission (SSC) was held at Pakistan Naval Academy (PNA), Karachi

EPI needs priority status meeting target of fully immunized children; says commissioner

By Rafiullah Mandokhail

ZHOB: Commissioner Zhub Division Tariq-ur-Rehman Baloch has said that routine immunization is crucial for the prevention of over ten diseases including the crippling polio. For an effective vaccination programme, the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) needs to be strengthened and vaccination coverage should be improved in order to meet the target of fully immunized children. Expanding awareness

Organization, government officials, elected local body members and journalist Rafiullah Mandokhail.

Briefing the participants on the importance of immunization, UNICEF Coordinator Zubair Sherani said that Pakistan is among the low-income countries, where routine immunization coverage stands at a dismal rate. Approximately, 17 percent of the children's deaths - dying from vaccine preventable diseases, can be prevented by increasing their routine vac-

Inoussa Kabore has recently said that Pakistan has reduced zero dose of immunization by 29 percent - from 611,000 to 431,000.

DHO Dr Muzafar Shah, Communication Officer UNICEF Nazir Mardazai, Team Leader Human Development Foundation Naeem Gul Mandokhail and general secretary Para medical staff association Qasim Mandokhail also spoke on the occasion. The speakers asked the media persons to



campaigns, seminars should be organized on a monthly basis to highlight the significance of vaccination.

He expressed these views while addressing an advocacy session organized by EPI in collaboration with UNICEF for community members, stakeholders, notables and religious scholars. The session was attended by the representatives of various non-governmental organizations including the World Health

show some compassion for the health sector and marginalized communities, realizing their social responsibilities. They also urged the parents to get their children vaccinated against fatal diseases.

The diseases putting the lives of children at risk are included childhood tuberculosis, polio, Pneumonia, whooping cough, tetanus, meningitis, hepatitis-B, diarrhea, pneumonia, typhoid and measles.

On the other hand, UNICEF Deputy Representative in Pakistan Dr

Saeem Ayub to replace Imam in Sydney Test

SYDNEY (Online): Pakistan team management made a principled decision to drop left-handed opener Imam-ul-Haq while changing the team in the Sydney Test against Australia.

Saeem Ayub will be given his debut.

The 28-year-old opener Imam-ul-Haq scored 1568 runs at an average of 37.33 in 24 Test matches, including 3 centuries and 9 fifties.

Imam-ul-Haq scored 62 in the first innings of the Perth Test and 10 in the second innings. Against Australia, the left-handed batsman

scored 10 and 12 in the second Test in Melbourne.

Imamul Haq has scored 94 runs with a half-century in the two Tests of the ongoing Benu Qadir Trophy in Australia, but the team management has serious reservations about the playing style of the left-handed opener. Imamul Haq has played 301 balls in the series so far, which are the highest of any Pakistani batter. Abdullah Shafiq, who opened the innings with him at the second position, scored 110 runs off 249 balls.

Imam-ul-Haq scored 12 runs off 38 balls in the second innings of the Melbourne Test, before that, Imam-ul-Haq, the top scorer of Pakistani innings, scored 62 runs off 199 balls in the first innings of the Perth Test. Imam-ul-Haq scored his first run on 18th ball in the second innings of the Melbourne Test.

The team management replace Imam-ul-Haq with aggressive young batsman Saeem Ayub in the third Test. Saeem Ayub will open the innings with Abdullah Shafiq.



KARACHI: View of filthy water that fills with huge heap of garbage creating unhygienic atmosphere, showing the negligence of concern authorities, located on Fishery area of Karachi

Management plans to reduce workload on Shaheen Afridi

SYDNEY (Online): Regarding the workload of Pakistan Test team vice-captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, the team management in Australia has planned that the left-arm fast bowler will not bowl in the nets before the Sydney Test.

According to the team management's plan, Shaheen will only bowl a few overs a day before the Test and captain Shaan Masood will also make him bowl as needed during the Test.

In the 2 Tests against Australia, the left-arm fast

bowler has bowled the highest 99.2 overs for both teams so far. 23-year-old Shaheen Afridi has won the Pakistan Super League title twice for Lahore Qalandars and is the captain of the Pakistan T20 team and has taken 113 wickets at an average of 26.71 in 29 Tests. Shaheen Afridi has taken 8 wickets at an average of 41.62 in the 2 Tests of the Qadir Benu Trophy against Australia so far.

Team management has decided to take care of their main bowler in the Sydney Test.

Hearing of Toshakhana, 190 million financial scandal adjourned

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judge Muhammad Bashir of Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has adjourned hearing of separate references related to Toshakhana and 190 million pounds financial scandals against PTI founder and his wife Bushra Begum till January 04 without proceedings.

Arguments were to be given on bail pleas filed by PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi during the hearing on Saturday while both were to be indicted in Toshakhana reference.

Raja Pervez Ashraf: Speaker of the people

By Irfan Shah

Democracy is meaningless without true participation and inclusion of people. It is parliament which not only represents the will of the common people but it also strives for their welfare, progress and prosperity. It is this institution which reflects the true aspirations and desires of the people through their public representatives. Public representatives have the onus and honour to keep them exerting for the welfare of public keeping in view the futuristic impacts of their daily actions and their policy initiatives.

Some public representatives have deep roots in the hearts of their people and their hearts beat with their people's hearts. Former Prime Minister of Pakistan and Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf's hearts beat with common people and his every action reflect his deep love for his people. This love keeps on pushing him such destinies which are dreams of many but the few have the honour to realize such dreams. The fate is reciprocal to intentions and Raja's fate remains determined to push him on such distinguished places which remain historic in themselves. He has the honor to be Prime Minister of Pakistan when the civilian government completed its full five-year term on 17th March 2013; first ever in the country's political and democratic history. He was elected as 22nd Speaker of National Assembly of Pakistan which witnessed the first-ever successful vote of no-confidence in Pakistan's parliamentary and democratic history. He is also bestowed with the honour to be elected as 2nd

unopposed Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan after Father of National Q u a i d - e - A z a m Muhammad Ali Jinnah who was the first Speaker of National Assembly being elected unopposed.

Under visionary, sagacious and seasoned leadership of Speaker of the people Raja Pervez Ashraf, it is 1st ever Parliament of Pakistan which opened its doors for the downtrodden, marginalized and ignored segments of society: Children, Women, Minorities and transgender held their special convocations while participating in the diamond jubilee celebration of 1st legislative Assembly on 10th August 2023. The children, women, minorities and even transgender were honoured to address/deliver their speeches within august house to express their aspirations and vision for bright future of the century. They 1st time feel themselves the essential and living part of parliament. Their presence and speeches in the house would continue to echo ever after.

This parliament under the futuristic vision of the Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf remains at forefront to be the 1st parliament where 1st ever parliamentary caucus on child rights was enacted to ensure the wellbeing and bright future of country. On 11th August 2023, as per vision of Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan, the minorities and women held their session. It became the first ever parliament which opens its doors for the people of Pakistan and abridged gap between people and their representatives. By opening doors of the parliament for every Pakistani he proved himself as unequivocal speaker

"Enhancing the esteem and respect of this house is my aspiration and first priority is to uphold the sanctity of the Constitution of Pakistan." (Former PM Raja Pervez Ashraf address while taking oath as the 22nd NA Speaker)



of the people. These Diamond Jubilee celebrations were well praised by the public and it was a child's speech in Parliament which was viewed by 6 million people on Twitter and for the first time Parliament's Twitter account remained top trending.

"Wall of democracy", "know your constitution-a digital app", "Yadgara-e-Dastoor", "Bagh-e-Dastoor", "issuance of commemoration coin and postal stamp", the exhibition of historical pictures of the moments of constitution making 'Inclusion of basics of 1973 constitution in national curriculum- the 1st ever consensus based constitution an ever living symbol of political sagaciousness of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto-in the National curriculum, holding debating competition to spread awareness regarding constitution at all educational institutions across the have been the hall mark of the vision of Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf to celebrate the golden jubilee celebration of 1973 constitution of Pakistan. By spearheading the each activity to celebrate

Rahmatul Alameen Authority Bill, National Highway Safety Bill, Pakistan Medical and Dental Council Bill, Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, Export and Import of Pakistan Bill, National Accountability (Second Amendment) Bill, Pakistan Tobacco, Bill, Anti-Dumping Duties Bill, Capital Development Authority Bill, Martyrdom Bill, Petroleum Bill, Foreign Investment and Local Government Elections Bill in Islamabad are included.

Marginalized, common and downtrodden are the people who become first casualty of climate induced catastrophes. Raja Pervez Ashraf being speaker of the people have been the forefront fight case for climate justice. Under his vision of international parliamentary diplomacy to a two-day seminar of the member countries of the IPU Asia Pacific Region on the achievement of SDGs was also held on 13 and 14 September 2022 at the Parliament House, Islamabad. In the seminar, the delegates of the member countries were made aware of the worst flood disaster in Pakistan. IPU Asia-Pacific region countries were asked to present an emergency resolution at the IPU General Assembly in Rwanda.

With the efforts of the Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf, a resolution was presented in the IPU General Assembly meeting held in Rwanda to establish a fund for countries affected by climate change. Raja Pervez Ashraf- the Speaker of the people has been striving for the welfare of the people following the footsteps of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Mohatrama Shaheed Benazir Bhutto who are ever green in the hearts of each Pakistani.

Renowned Kashmiri leader Prof Nazir Ahmed Shawl passes away in London

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent Kashmiri leader, Professor Nazir Ahmed Shawl, passed away in London today after a brief illness. He was 77. According to Kashmir Media Service, Professor Nazir Ahmed Shawl was admitted to a hospital in London due to a serious illness on December 23. He was suffering from a chest infection and kidney problems. He breathed his last today. He was a multilingual person, an educationist, an author and poet, and a human rights defender.

Professor Nazir Ahmed Shawl was born in Baramulla, a town in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, on October 13, 1946. He received his education from Baramulla. He graduated in sciences and post-graduated in botany from Kashmir University, specializing in ecology, and post-graduated in education from the Himachal Pradesh University, India. He undertook various trainings at NCERT (India's National Council of Educational Research and Training) in Delhi and SCERT (State Council for Educational Research and Training) in Jaipur, India, and specialized in curriculum development.

He started his professional work at St. Joseph's Institute, Baramulla, and later joined the government

education department, having contributed to educational theory and practices through different research projects in association with SCERT and UNICEF, including developing experimental curricula, particularly in environmental studies.

Professor Shawl held different positions in his professional career, including being a professor and researcher in botany, field advisor in sciences, coordinator of UNICEF-assisted project PEER, member of the Board of Undergraduate Studies in Botany at the University of Kashmir, and Chief Test Administrator of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS-Bombay).

Professor Shawl migrated to Pakistan in 1991 and started working for the Kashmir cause. He remained a representative of veteran Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Gilani for some time in the APHC-AJK chapter. He worked as Chief Editor of the Kashmir Mirror, Chief Editor of SANA News (now SABAH), and Chief Editor of the news agency Kashmir Press International. Later, he shifted to the UK in 2004 and headed the Kashmir Centre in London. He has been championing the Kashmir cause and highlighting the Kashmiri disaffection at the international level for the last three decades.

Usman Dar's brother 'abducted' from Lahore, claims PTI

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) on Saturday claimed that Umar Dar, the brother of former party leader Usman Dar, was allegedly abducted in Lahore, accusing PML-N's Khawaja Asif of "engineering" the incident to weaken the Dar family's position in the upcoming elections.

In a video shared by the PTI on X (formerly Twitter), Umar's mother said that she had just discovered her son's abduction from Lahore. She appealed to the chief justice of Pakistan to intervene and take notice of the situation.

"I am a mother and a widow. I am deeply distressed by the current situation. I appeal to the CJP to ensure the appearance of my son in court," she said in the video.

She added: "I am facing all these challenges solely to prevent me from participating in elections. I have been denied the opportunity to submit my

papers, and there are police personnel stationed outside my residence. I assert the truth that these actions are aimed at hindering my candidacy in the polls."

In its post on Instagram, the PTI said the "abduction of Umar Dar during scrutiny phase in the election is another episode of the mockery of law going on in Pakistan."

Backing the PTI claims, another party leader Umar Ayub Khan also condemned the abduction, saying "Umar - the son of Rehana Dar, who submitted her nomination papers from Sialkot to contest against Asif - has been abducted by unknown people from Lahore".

"The reign of terror against PTI continues unabated," Ayub said in a post on X. He said everyone should realize that "Imran Khan and PTI will win because we are on the right path."

Empowering Communities: Ammara Khan's journey of success and philanthropy

By M.Ilyas
PESHAWAR- In a remarkable journey that began at the young age of 17, Ammara Khan, a proud Pathan Yousafzai from Swabi, has etched her success story. Starting her career as a Vice President, she swiftly ventured into the entrepreneurial realm. Ammara's first business endeavor, E-TIPS, "The Voice of Education," took shape in April 2013 with her personal savings. Not stopping there, she expanded the institute in 2014 by adding a vocational training component, marking the inception of a multifaceted educational institution.

In 2016, Ammara elevated her commitment to social causes by establishing the E-TIPS Welfare Organization. Under its banner, the organization has conducted numerous women empowerment programs, health initiatives, and educational programs, leaving a lasting impact on the communities it serves. Parallel to her social endeavors, Ammara delved into entrepreneurship, founding CK Trading (Pvt) Ltd, AK Petroleum (Pvt) Ltd, AK Foods, Save Mart, and A2Z Services.

The latter encompasses import/export, engineering services, transport services, heavy machinery ser-

ices, oil and gas professionals, and health and safety trainings. Ammara Khan is actively pursuing joint ventures with various government, semi-government, public sector organizations, private sector entities, and renowned national/international brands. These ventures aim to contribute to residential, commercial, health, and education projects across Pakistan. Demonstrating her commitment to the nation's health sector, Ammara is pioneer-

ing the A2Z Lawyers Hospital, a joint venture with DBA Faisalabad. This initiative seeks to provide subsidized yet state of the art health facilities to the most deprived communities, including lawyers, their munshes, law students, and their families. Ammara Khan's journey is a testament to her unwavering commitment to education, social welfare, and entrepreneurship.

Her ventures not only showcase her business acumen but also exemplify a dedication to uplifting communities across Pakistan. As she forges ahead, new joint ventures promise a future marked by progress and positive change.



Residents of Poonch, Rajouri live in atmosphere of constant fear

JAMMU (INP): In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the residents of Poonch and Rajouri are living in an atmosphere of constant fear as Indian troops continue their violent cordon and search operations in the two districts.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Indian Army, paramilitary and police personnel had launched the massive searches in the districts on December 21 after the killing of five Indian soldiers in an attack in Surankote area of Poonch. The situation worsened after Indian troops arrested several persons from Surankote, subjected them to severe torture and later

killed three of them in custody after taking them to Bafiaz area of the district. The residents of the two districts told the media that the troops have made their life a hell as they barge into their houses, terrorize the inmates and vandalize their belongings. The mobile internet services also remain suspended in Rajouri and Poonch for the last eight days, adding to the sufferings of the locals. Meanwhile, the occupation authorities kept senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, under house arrest, today, on the 12th successive Friday and disallowed him to offer Juma prayers.

The APHC spokesman in a statement in Srinagar condemned the upsurge in Indian state terrorism in occupied Kashmir. He said that the people of the territory were being punished by India for demanding their internationally-recognized right to self-determination. He urged the world community to come forward and hold India accountable for its brutalities on the Kashmiris.

Senior leader of National Conference, Sheikh Mustafa Kamal, in a statement in Srinagar expressed concern over the plight of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir due to the policies of the Modi-led Indian government.



QUETTA: Vendor sells eggs to earn his livelihood for support his family, at a roadside stall as the demand of eggs increases during winter season

Commissioner Islamabad is not provincial govt of federal capital: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued written order on the petitions against detention of Shehryar Afridi and others under 3-MPO.

Justice Babar Sattar of IHC has issued 82-page written order.

It has been said in the written order federal government holds individual powers under the constitution with reference to federal and provincial laws applicable to Islamabad.

Federal government plays role of both the federal and provincial governments for Islamabad. The use of any decision or powers can be made in Islamabad in collaboration with federal cabinet.

Under article 1-2/B of the constitution Islamabad is federal capital and is not part of any province. Presidential order 18 of 1980 was promulgated by former president Zia ul Haq.

According to the order presidential order 18 of 1980, presidential order 2 of 1987, presidential order 2 of 1990 make chief commissioner of 20 grade of-

ficer as one man provincial government.

All the presidential orders and notification which delegate powers of provincial government to chief commissioner for federal capital run contrary to constitution.

The court's order said all the presidential order and notification which delegate powers of provincial government to chief commissioner for Islamabad are declared null and void.

It was further said in the order federal government should frame rules for use of provincial government powers in Islamabad within three months.

As per court's orders chief commissioner Islamabad is not provincial government of federal capital.

This decision of IHC will be applicable in future. It will affect previous steps. Only federal cabinet will be entitled to use powers of provincial government in Islamabad.

All the orders of detention which have been challenged are nullified for want of powers of jurisdiction.

May 10, 1992 notification under which powers of 3-MPO have been delegated by commissioner to magistrate is declared null and void.

It has been said in the order the powers for use of powers of provincial government in federal capital can be delegated only by federal government.

The decision for acceptance or rejection of request for detention is subject to satisfaction of provincial government.

The powers for accepting or rejecting the plea for detention of any person cannot be transferred to any one person. Section 2, 3 of MPO is sheer violation of article 4 and 10 of constitution. Article 4 and 10 of the constitution says no law can be implemented if the process of violating law and order situation does not take place. Arresting some one on the suspicion that he will create law and order situation in future is against the constitution. Issuing orders for arresting any one in the presence of insufficient material falls in the ambit of misuse of powers.



ISLAMABAD: Direct General (FIA) Mohsin Hassan Butt presenting souvenir to Deputy Director (FIA) Majid Awan.

Jamal vows fostering bilateral cultural collaboration with China

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Culture and National Heritage, Syed Jamal Shah, on Saturday welcomed a distinguished delegation from China's TV/Film Industry and vowed to foster bilateral cultural collaboration.

The delegation led by Mr. Zhang Yang, Director CFIC and Chairman of Chang Jiang, included key figures Mr. Hu Qiang, Chairman of Film Producer - Yihai Culture Communications, Co. Ltd, and Liang Ting, Chairman of Li Ting

International, said a press release.

Other members of the delegation included Supervisor Yuan Li, Executive Director Tang Chao Song, Deputy General Manager Liu Liqiang, and Group Coordinator Zhang Linhui.

The purpose of the meeting was to explore avenues of cultural exchanges, focusing on pan-cultural exports, visiting performances, cultural products, circulation of new artworks, art exhibitions, cultural exhibitions, galleries,

music, festivals, and more. Both parties stressed the pivotal role of enhancing cultural connections between Pakistan and China.

During the discussions, Minister Jamal Shah highlighted the robust bond between the two nations and unveiled plans for the second China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) cultural caravan. This initiative aimed to bolster economic ties and strengthen cultural bonds not only between Pakistan and China but also with the Central Asian States.

HEC trains Cohort-VIII of pre-service faculty for placement under IPFP

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) and Higher Education Commission (HEC) have completed training for Cohort VIII of the National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP).

The faculty will serve the public sector universities under the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) programme, according to a press release yesterday. NAHE designed the Pre-Service NFDP as a pioneering initiative to prepare and certify recently graduated PhD holders for their teaching roles in higher education institutions.

This pre-service training imparts critical techniques and skill sets that will enhance their teaching practices in the future. The programme ensures a seamless transition from theoretical knowledge to practical implementation, with special emphasis on effective pedagogical methods.

During her address at the closing ceremony, Managing Director NAHE, Ms. Noor Amna Malik extended congratulations to the newly certified IPFP

Fellows for their successful completion of the training and their enthusiastic participation throughout the programme.

She highlighted that the fellows undergo a meticulous training process specifically structured to underscore the incorporation of innovative methodologies, with micro-teaching being a notable example.

This pedagogical approach encourages candidates to refine their teaching techniques by actively seeking and incorporating constructive feedback from resource persons, peers, and self-evaluation, as she underlined.

Ms Noor Amna Malik emphasised the importance of incorporating societal norms and values and drew attention to the practical implementation of subject knowledge. She encouraged the candidates to extend their role beyond teaching by actively engaging in meaningful research, fostering innovation, and cultivating critical thinking skills. Director General of NAHE, Mr. Muhammad Faisal Butt, also spoke on the occasion and congratulated the participants.



ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are enjoying during the musical event at Iqra University (Chak Shahzad Campus), in Federal Capital.

Zong 4G, PBM join hands to revolutionize Digital education in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Zong 4G, Pakistan's leading telecom operator has initiated the setup of a state-of-the-art Digital Laboratory at the Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal's 'Women Empowerment Centre' in Islamabad.

Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal is a social welfare organization formulated by the Government of Pakistan in 1992 to provide financial assistance to the underprivileged, said a news release.

This partnership is aimed at fostering Zong 4G's Sustainability Program which was introduced as an act of promoting welfare within the society. Zong 4G's proactiveness is an effort to transform digital education in Pakistan and make it accessible for

all. With Digital Inclusion as its prime objective, this collaboration will help around 100 women access unimpeded opportunities for digital education.

While promoting the sponsorship, the official spokesperson for Zong 4G stated, 'We are pleased to initiate another successful partnership that will help promote digital education for women in Pakistan. Zong 4G considers providing access to digital education as its responsibility and wants to help revolutionize digital inclusion in Pakistan.' Zong 4G has been working tirelessly to create avenues for promoting the digital revolution in Pakistan and has been an integral part of such initiatives.

Four members of the same family died in traffic accident

ISLAMABAD (APP): Four members of the same family were killed in an accident on Saturday when a car overturned on the Lahore-Sialkot Motorway due to a tire burst. According to the Police, the tragic accident occurred due to the explosion of a car tire near Kala Shah Kaku on the Lahore Sialkot Motorway.

The rescue officials reached the spot immediately after the incident took place and shifted the injured and dead bodies to the nearby hospital. The deceased include a husband, wife, 15-year-old son, 10-year-old daughter, while an 18-year-old daughter and a 12-year-old son were seriously injured.

54 PTI candidates move to ECP for level playing field

ISLAMABAD (INP): 54 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidates on Saturday moved to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in a bid to level the playing field.

The federal and provincial governments, 17 DROs, the National Database and Registration Authority (Nadra), the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra), and the PTA had been made parties. The PTI candidates had urged the need to "halt the crackdown" against the party leaders and workers.

Along with the application, details about the events that "transpired" in NA-49 had also been sent to the ECP.

Separately, the verdict regarding the nomination papers of Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid from NA-56 had been reserved on Saturday.

The scrutiny was held again against Rashid's nomination papers in NA-56. The verdict had been reserved after the completion of the hearing.

Expressing his thoughts, Rashid said, "There is no reality about the allegations levelled against my nomination papers. The fake nomination papers had been prepared. I feel the need to approach the high court or the Supreme Court."

AIOU to hold convocation in Islamabad, other cities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Regional Director Dr. Muhammad Anees has said the university is organizing a convocation which will be held in different cities of the country including Islamabad.

He said degree holders of all programmes, who have secured 70 percent or more marks between 2004 and 2022, can register by January 5. Registered tutors, who have obtained a degree in any programme from AIOU, can also apply online. He said that the registration fee was Rs3,000 which they could deposit through ABL, MCB, UBL, FWBL and EasyPaisa, Jazz Cash and U Paisa.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in covering the plants on green belt along the Express Way to protect from frost, in Federal Capital.

Court extends Fawad's physical remand in graft case

ISLAMABAD (INP): The accountability court on Saturday extended Fawad Chaudhary's physical remand in an embezzlement case by six days.

Accountability court judge Muhammad Bashir held the hearing in the case in which Fawad Chaudhary is accused of embezzlement in Jhelum construction projects.

NAB prosecutor Sohail Arif and petitioner's counsel Faisal Chaudhry were present in court.

The NAB prosecutor said, "14 days of physical remand was requested, but 10 days of physical remand was allowed. We requested the

record of banking transactions which was dubious."

The NAB prosecutor said the contractor also had been summoned on Jan 2. He said Fawad Chaudhry's further remand was required.

Fawad Chaudhry said: "We have been seeing unfair treatment for a long time. Normally court determines the jurisdiction. See my warrant; I have been charged with four cases."

"I was accused of exerting influence on the contractors as a minister," he said. But the fact was that the project belonged to the PSDP, which was approved.

Islamabad police mobilize extensive measures for new year's eve traffic management

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police (Traffic Wing) have made an elaborate plan to ensure smooth traffic flow during celebrations of New Year night and to ensure public safety as well as curb traffic violations. Under the guidance of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP), Dr Akbar Nasir Khan, Islamabad Capital Police is set to enforce strict measures against various traffic offences. These include wheeling, participation in car racing, and any activities that disrupt the flow of traffic. Special attention will be given to motorcyclists with heavy silencers,

known for creating noise disturbances on the roads.

On the night of New Year's Eve, a significant deployment of law enforcement personnel is planned. This includes SP Traffic, 4 DSPs, 22 inspectors, and 475 officers, including the specialized squads. These units will be stationed strategically across key roads, intersections, and areas prone to traffic violations.

Chief Traffic Officer Islamabad, Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, has issued an appeal to the citizens. He urged parents not to allow their children to engage in wheeling activities, particularly on motorbikes, emphasizing the importance of

ensuring the safety of lives and property during the celebratory night.

Special squads from the Islamabad Capital Police will conduct enhanced patrolling on vital roads and intersections. Checkpoints will be established to enforce traffic laws rigorously, creating an additional layer of security and deterrence against potential violations.

Chief Traffic Officer Muhammad Sarfraz Virk called for cooperation from all road users, encouraging them to adhere to lane discipline. He emphasized the significance of collective efforts in minimizing the risk of accidents during the New Year's Eve celebrations.

Farooq Abdullah for impartial probe into killing, torturing of civilians by Indian army in Poonch

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Conference President Farooq Abdullah has reiterated the demand for an impartial probe into the killing and torturing of civilians by Indian troops at an army camp in the Surankote area of Poonch district in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the Indian Army had picked up several civilians after the killing of five troops in an attack in the area on December 21. The army killed three of them in custody and injured others by subjecting them to severe torture. A video that went viral on social media showed the Indian troops brutally beating the civilians and pouring chili powder on their wounds.

Farooq Abdullah visited the government hospital in Rajouri and met the injured civilians. Consoling the victims' families, he strongly condemned the incident and said that there was no place for such incidents in any society. He also reiterated the demand for an impartial and time-bound judicial probe into the incident.

Attendees engage in deliberations on developing situation in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD (APP): Kashmir Advisory Committee formed under the leadership of Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Mushaah Hussain Mullick, held its first consultative meeting.

The establishment of the Kashmir Advisory Committee is a key component of the 100-day plan initiated by the SAPM, said a press release here on Saturday.

The consultative session was attended by dignitaries from diverse fields including Ms. Sabien Hussain Mullick (Focal Person of the SAPM), Syed Yousuf Naseem (APHC), Mr. Farooq Rehmani (APHC), Mehmood Ahmed Sagar (APHC), Sheikh Muteen (APHC), Ghulam Muhammad Safi (APHC), Rafiq Dar JKLF, Syed Faiz Naqashbandi (APHC),

Yousaf Naseem (APHC) Mr. Abid Abbasi (President RIJ), Prof Shahid Afridi (NDU), Dr. Raheem Awan (DG LAJA), Prof. Zafar Iqbal Advisor SAPM, Dr. Waleed Rasool, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad (Chairman HEC), Manzoor Masih (Human Rights Commission), Fajar Rabia Pasha Advisor SAPM, Javed Jadoon (Director Radio101), Mr. Shafique, (Executive Director PCHR), Raja Rizwan Abbasi (Senior Advocate SCP), Maqsood Jafri AJK intellectual, Musab Manzoor (Pogram Coordinator Legal Forum for Kashmir), Dr. Syed Mujahid Gilani (President of Kashmir Youth Alliance), Mr. Ishfaq Ahmad Bhatti (Chairman Al-Ansar Haffare), Yasir Rehman (Senior Anchorperson PTV News), Syed Waqas Banoori Advisor SAPM and Barrister Sundas

Malik. The committee engaged in a comprehensive discussion concerning both immediate and long-term strategies for addressing the unlawful actions undertaken by India in the region of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Members of the committee provided valuable insights and recommendations about the situation in IIOJK, particularly in light of the recent Indian Supreme Court decision affirming the annulment of Kashmir's special status by the Indian Government.

During the consultative session, Mushaah Hussain Mullick highlighted the influence of BJP and RSS ideologies on the Indian Judiciary. She raised questions regarding the timing of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Act brought

by Amit Shah and Modi.

She observed that the amendment act introduction mere weeks before the Indian Supreme Court's verdict implied a foreknowledge within the Modi-led government regarding the outcome of the impending ISC decision.

Mushaah emphasized that the concluding year presented the world with two formidable challenges: the situations in Palestine and IIOJK.

She underscored the imperative for collaborative efforts among the people of both regions underlining the shared struggle for their self-determination.

She noted that the people of Palestine and IIOJK are enduring the barbarism imposed by occupation forces in their quest for the fundamental right of self-determination. Urging the global community to

pay attention to the escalating atrocities in these regions, she called for collective action to address the pressing human rights concerns in Palestine and IIOJK.

Mushaah underscored the unity across all segments of society in championing the just cause of Kashmir. She acknowledged the Kashmiri diaspora as a valuable asset in the ongoing struggle for the freedom of Kashmir. She highlighted the pivotal role of the Kashmiri diaspora in amplifying awareness globally about the human rights violations in IIOJK perpetrated by India.

Mushaah pointed out that the elimination of peaceful Kashmiri leaders by India on baseless pretexts could drive the youth of Kashmir toward adopting alternative means in their pursuit of freedom.



ISLAMABAD: A nursery worker busy cleaning mini plants at a local nursery in the Federal Capital.

The tale of Gaza

This year can easily be called the most traumatic in recent memory as far as the collective failure of humanity goes. What we have witnessed in Gaza in the nearly 90 days since October 7 has been a near-complete breakdown of justice, equality, and just even mere decency around the world. All fig leaves off, the world stands in front of a mirror – and what it should see is an ugly face: where some are deemed not even worthy of the respect and dignity of being mourned in death. The death toll in Gaza – and even the West Bank – continues to rise, the latest being at least 35 people killed in the Nuseirat and Maghazi refugee camps following Israeli bombings in central Gaza. These attacks have added to the already staggering numbers of Gazans killed by Israel: more than 21,000 on last count – including more than 8200 children. Genocide seems too gentle a word to describe what Israel is doing to the people of Palestine.

No one has been spared: children, women, men, the elderly, journalists, doctors, nurses, newborn babies. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) says its investigations show that at least 68 journalists and media workers are among the more than 21,000 killed by Israel. The CPJ has called this the deadliest period for journalists in the world since CPJ began gathering data in 1992. According to Gazan authorities, the number of journalists killed could be over 100. Additionally, aid groups are struggling to provide much-needed assistance to the people of Gaza, as the United Nations warns of an increasingly difficult situation in delivering aid to the region. This has led to a desperate humanitarian crisis, with UN agencies warning that 40 per cent of Gaza's population is facing an imminent risk of famine.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza is dire, with reports of hospitals and clinics being out of service, leaving people with nowhere to turn for medical assistance. Doctors Without Borders has warned that an epidemic is inevitable under these conditions, further exacerbating the suffering of the population. Meanwhile, Palestinians in Gaza continue to endure the devastating impact of Israeli air strikes, still digging up the bodies of their loved ones from under the rubble. The scale of destruction in Gaza is immense: entire neighbourhoods laid to waste and the majority of the population displaced multiple times, its 2.3 million people having had to first flee their homes, and then their refugee camps and shelters because Israel just cannot seem to control its bloodlust. The UN has called attention to the "impossible situation" facing the people of Gaza and those trying to help them, emphasizing the urgent need for a resolution to the conflict and immediate humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of the population.

The world has not just witnessed this unfolding tragedy in Gaza, it has contributed to it – some countries openly, others by ignoring the genocidal actions taken by a state that has for too long continued to unleash violence with impunity. This carte blanche given to Israel is now finally seeing some dents – not among the world's political elite but among the world's population as younger people take to social media in horror at the reality of a politics they had been so terribly misinformed about. This may be a reality slowly sinking in also in a country like the US whose administration has continued throughout this 'war' to not only support the oppressor but also gaslight the oppressed. At the end of it all, though, stand the people of Gaza still holding on to dreams of freedom, resistance, and hope – articulated so beautifully by Palestinian poet, professor Refaat Alareer who was killed on December 7: "If I must die, let it bring hope, let it be a tale." Palestinian men, women, and children everywhere in the world are a testament to the fact that the tale of Gaza will continue to live on.

By Qamar Bashir

Pakistan's political landscape stands at the brink of a transformative era, distinct from previous phases dominated by aristocrats, agriculturists, business magnates, and the military elite. In a calculated move, the establishment has consciously shut the doors on PTI's seasoned and controllable politicians. However, this strategic maneuver has inadvertently swung wide open the gates for a formidable new wave of rivals: the legal minds—the lawyers.

The jailed party leader, still wielding immense public support, makes a bold move by entrusting party tickets to a cadre of lawyers, capitalizing on their legal expertise, credibility, and widespread recognition. This decision reverberates positively across the country, where the populace views the influx of lawyers into politics as a beacon of hope and integrity in a politically turbulent landscape.

Yet, despite the public's favorable reception of the lawyers joining the PTI, the path to electoral victory remains fraught with challenges. The formidable opposition posed by the all-powerful military elite, with their entrenched control over various spheres of influence, casts a shadow over the PTI's prospects.

The outcome depends on PTI's resilience, the lawyers' ability to rally public support, and the level of interference from the powerful military elite. Despite the odds against PTI, the entry of lawyers into politics signals transforming

Pakistan's political landscape, posing an unexpected challenge to the established order. This unintended consequence reshapes power dynamics, presenting a significant challenge to the entrenched influence of established factions.

In this tumultuous scenario, the PTI finds itself in an unprecedented predicament, with the powerful military elite resorting to coercive tactics that have led to the incarceration and forced departure of key party leaders. Stripped of its core politicians, including a deeply popular Chairman with an astounding 90% approval rating, the PTI faces an uphill battle.

The military's influence looms large, potentially impeding the PTI's campaign through various means—manipulating the media narrative, intimidating voters, or even exerting control over electoral processes. Their capacity to undermine the PTI's efforts cannot be underestimated, given their extensive reach and resources.

Nonetheless, the lawyers' inclusion injects a new vigor into the PTI's campaign, presenting a compelling narrative to the electorate, promising a departure from traditional politics tainted by coercion and manipulation. The lawyers' ability to articulate the PTI's message, coupled with their strong public appeal, serves as a potent force in mobilizing support and countering the military's influence.

In this scenario, the jailed party leader's decision to nominate lawyers in place of the imprisoned and coerced party members can

lead to a seismic shift in the political landscape. The country, eager for change and weary of autocratic control, might see these lawyers as symbols of hope and integrity in a corrupted political environment. Their professional backgrounds could serve as a powerful rallying point, attracting widespread support from various sectors disillusioned with traditional politics. The lawyers, well-versed in the law and skilled in articulating complex issues, could effectively communicate the party's message, outlining a vision for restoring democratic principles, rule of law, and civil liberties.

The decision by military elites to coerce the departure of conventional politicians from the party could yield unintended consequences, ultimately working against their bid to safeguard vested interests. By forcing out established politicians, the military might inadvertently strengthen the opposition outside the ruling party. This newly bolstered opposition, critical of military interference, could gain momentum and public sympathy. Additionally, the vacuum left by departing politicians could pave the way for the emergence of new leaders within the party. These emerging leaders might challenge the military's influence more vehemently, leveraging their legal knowledge to resist coercion and challenge attempts at undue control within the government.

A government formed by a party coerced into fielding lawyers as candidates by military elites would inherently possess

a strategic advantage in confronting the military's influence. Lawyers, through their legal training and experience, possess a nuanced understanding of legal frameworks, constitutional principles, and strategic thinking. This expertise equips them with the ability to foresee potential legal maneuvers by the military and devise counter strategies within legal boundaries. For instance, in navigating attempts to manipulate legislative processes or coerce the judiciary, lawyers-turned-politicians can leverage their legal acumen to expose such actions and rally support for upholding the rule of law. This strategic advantage, grounded in legal expertise, allows for more informed and calculated responses to the military's attempts at interference.

Even if PTI loses election and forms a lawyer-led opposition in the newly formed government post the February 8, 2024, general elections could significantly challenge military control in Pakistan. With their emphasis on legal expertise and commitment to accountability, lawyers might advocate for increased civilian oversight, reforms limiting military influence, and heightened transparency in defense affairs. This shift could strain civil-military relations, potentially leading to tensions and debates over the military's role in governance, defense policies, and international alliances, ultimately reshaping the power dynamics between the government and the military.

From the perspective of the all-powerful military

elites seeking to preserve control over domestic and international affairs, permitting conventional politicians to participate in elections, rather than facilitating the ascension of lawyers to form the government, aligns strategically with their interests. Allowing conventional politicians to contest elections maintains an appearance of democratic legitimacy, reducing the likelihood of significant public or international outcry.

Moreover, these politicians are more open to controlled reforms that align with the military's interests, ensuring changes don't pose a threat to established power structures. This enables the military to control the pace and direction of reforms, safeguarding their entrenched interests.

Additionally, a government led by conventional politicians offers maneuverability to military elites in international relations, foreign investments, and maintaining a positive international image which aligns with the military's geopolitical and economic objectives, safeguarding their interests on the global stage. It can create an appearance of democratic legitimacy, allowing the military to maintain control without inciting significant resistance or outcry from the public or international community.

Ultimately, allowing conventional politicians to contest elections and potentially form the government aligns more closely with the military's interests in maintaining control, stability, and a familiar

political landscape. It offers a strategic pathway to uphold influence over domestic affairs while presenting a more palatable image both domestically and internationally compared to the potential repercussions of coercing a lawyer-dominated government into power.

The entrance of lawyers into Pakistan's political mainstream poses an unprecedented challenge to the highly entrenched vested interests of the military elite. This seismic shift, marked by the ascent of legal minds in politics, threatens to disrupt the established power dynamics that have long been under the influence of traditional power brokers. The inadvertent consequence of sidelining conventional politicians in favor of lawyers has unleashed a force capable of reshaping governance, advocating for accountability, and challenging autocratic control. This transformation, driven by legal expertise and a commitment to justice, presents a formidable obstacle to the military's historically entrenched hold on political affairs. As lawyers increasingly assert their influence and advocate for democratic principles, transparency, and the rule of law, they pose a direct challenge to the military's dominance, potentially heralding a new era where legal intellect and public advocacy supersede the traditional stronghold of old-guard power structures. -- The author is former Press Secretary to the President; former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC

'Al Aqsa Storm' reshapes the Middle East

By Senator Mushahid Hussain

The October 7, 2023 Operation 'Al Aqsa Storm' launched by the Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied Gaza has broader strategic implications for Israel and the US, whose hubris, supreme over-confidence and carefully laid-down plans for maintaining an iniquitous status quo now lie buried under the rubble in Gaza.

To counter the Iran-led 'Axis of Resistance', the US cobbled an 'Axis of Repression' to maintain the regional status quo, freezing disputes like Palestine and Kashmir to combat the 'real enemy', China. Washington was endeavouring to connect an Israel-centred Middle East with an India-focused 'Indo-Pacific', to supplement and support the American-led New Cold War against China. Essentially, India is replicating Israeli policies of repression in Occupied Kashmir, with American complicity, so US regional strategy would rest on 'twin pillars', Israel in the Middle East and India in South Asia.

Just a fortnight before the launch of the 'Al Aqsa

Storm', three separate but related developments corroborated this policy. One, on 22 September, Netanyahu proudly unveiled the map of the 'New Middle East' at the United Nations General Assembly, where the Palestinians were conspicuously absent. Two, on 20 September, following the G-20 Summit in New Delhi, the India-Israel Middle East European Union Corridor (IMEC) was launched with much fanfare, touted as the West's copycat response to China's highly successful Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). Three, in May 2023, President Biden's National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan personally took his Indian counterpart, Ajit Doval, to meet Saudi Arabia's Prime Minister and Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman to "advance their shared vision of a more secure and prosperous Middle East region interconnected with India and the world". And on October 2, Jake Sullivan wrote in the influential Foreign Affairs magazine that "the Middle East has never been so calm before as it is today." Five days later, 'Al Aqsa Storm' shattered that calm! In fact, the Biden

Administration is the first US Administration in 50 years that even dispensed with the fig-leaf of initiating a 'peace process' for the Middle East, being content with the Israeli-propped status quo of a coercive occupation.

Six strategic consequences of a reshaped Middle East have emerged from 'Al Aqsa Storm'.

First, Israel and the United States were trying to 'stage Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark', in other words, build a 'New Middle East' minus Palestine: promote Israeli ties with Arab and Muslim countries bypassing the Palestinians, as if the Palestine issue is no longer relevant. That policy is now in tatters: no durable peace or stability is possible in the Middle East without an independent Palestinian State. Second, a myth had been created about invincibility of the Israeli army and intelligence, that the Israeli Army and Mossad are the 'best, brightest and strongest' in the Middle East, and Israel is an impregnable fortress whose security can never be breached as it is supposedly foolproof. Some 1,400 determined Palestinian fighters

blew up that myth through 'Al Aqsa Storm' on October 7.

Third, Israel presented itself as a safe haven, an 'island of peace and tranquility in a sea of a turbulent, volatile and weak Muslim World', the safest, the most secure place in the Middle East. Now they say they have suffered the biggest casualties since the Holocaust and almost a third of their latest, '5th Generation' Merkava tanks have been destroyed! Fourth, the 'Axis of Resistance' led by Iran has shown itself more resilient than the 'Axis of Repression', as the Iran-led troika of Hamas, Hezbollah and Houthis of Yemen, have tightened the tactical noose around shipping lanes, diplomacy and military strategy in the Middle East, and Tehran is now central to Middle East stability, with ingress in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. Instead of the encirclement and containment of Iran, it is Israel that is now feeling encircled, thus the US desperate despatch of two aircraft carriers plus clobbering of an anti-Houthi coalition.

Fifth, 'Al Aqsa Storm' was apparently celebrated in Moscow as the 'best

birthday gift' to President Putin as the Ukraine War is now relegated to the backburner and now the US is suddenly facing a three-front situation: Ukraine, New Cold War in Asia-Pacific against China and the storm in the Middle East, an untenable strategic scenario for Washington policymakers. Another casualty of 'Al Aqsa Storm' is the probable defeat of Biden in the 2024 Presidential election, opening up the prospect of Trump's return.

Sixth, 'Al Aqsa Storm' is giving birth to a clear, new global South-North divide. The Global South, spearheaded by China, with a supportive Russia, is presenting a strategic option, an alternative worldview, to the US-led Global North, whether it's Gaza or Ukraine or BRI or the hegemony of the dollar. The global centre of gravity is shifting inexorably to the South, and the 'Al Aqsa Storm' has accentuated this divide, as evidenced in the voting at the United Nations. Gaza is also the first televised genocide in history. Despite Israel's brutal capacity to kill, the Palestinians are unwavering in their determination and willingness to resist and die for the cause of freedom. The Palestinians are winning by not losing. And Israel has also lost the 'battle of narratives'.

It's still time for the US and Israel to read the writing on the wall: stop the genocide, end the occupation and take steps to establish an independent Palestinian State. Jewish history is itself a living testimony on breaking the Nazi myth of the 'Final Solution'. Washington should learn from its own mistakes and failures in recent history: after ousting the Afghan Taliban in 2001, it took 20 years and wasted \$2.2 trillion in Afghanistan before it negotiated with the same Afghan Taliban whom they once labelled 'terrorists', to facilitate their return to power. Representing Palestinian aspirations, Gaza's symbol of defiance, Hamas, also labelled 'terrorist' by the West, is, at least, a democratically elected organisation which won a free election in Gaza in 2006, and accepting the legitimate right of Palestinians to determine their future in freedom is a small price for the US to pay for lasting peace, security and stability in the heart of the Muslim World.—Courtesy The Nation

By Dr Ayesha Razzaque

In the mid-80s, a generation ago, the average American household spent about one-third of its income on housing expenses (rent or mortgage payments), about 20 per cent on food, 15 per cent on transportation, 5.0 per cent on apparel, 5.0 per cent on entertainment, 15 per cent on retirement and savings and the last 10 per cent on various other things (education, healthcare, etc).

A lot has changed since then and by the 2020s, the allocation of household spending has changed significantly primarily owing to two factors – the meteoric rise in the cost of healthcare and the equally rapid rise in college tuition fees. In 1985, after adjusting for inflation, the average college student loan debt was approximately \$13,000. For the average student of the class of 2021, that figure now stands at more than \$31,000 and individuals with student loans as high as \$100,000-200,000 are not uncommon.

How, you may wonder, are changes in household spending in the US relevant to us here in Pakistan? Because a lot of times, like pop

culture and fashions, those same trends cross the Atlantic to Europe and sooner or later reach us (although I cannot offer you a clear causal link). Tuition rates in the UK are a similar trend now. The rising cost of education abroad coupled with the devaluation of the rupee at home have brought things to a point I never thought I would witness. Families I have known for decades and that I have to describe as super-wealthy by our standards, whom I would never expect to do anything less than educate their children at the best universities abroad that would have them, are bargain-hunting and forced to eliminate universities based on cost.

Until the early 1990s, for urban middle/upper-middle class households in Pakistan, sending a child or two to university, (almost) any university, was a very manageable expense. It could be budgeted from the monthly salary without requiring years of prior savings and planning. The 1990s saw the establishment of several new universities in Pakistan – for example, NUST, GIKI, FAST (now NUCES), LUMS (undergraduate programmes), etc. They popularized the

semester system and the grade point average in the country, previously foreign novelties, for which some described them rightfully as 'the new generation' of universities. Most offered significantly revamped curricula in step with what similar programmes were teaching in good universities around the globe and employed more engaging assessments than the annual exams that were the norm until then. Those innovations also began translating into greater placement and workplace success and better preparedness for graduate programmes at Western universities for their graduates. As word-of-mouth spread, further fueling demand from prospective students. But they also came with price tags that were one to two orders of magnitude higher than the norm at that time.

Since the 2000s, the plain BA/BSc/MA/MSc degrees have lost much of their sheen and most universities – public and private – that have been established since then are trying to emulate those new universities of the 1990s. Whatever a graduate's chances of success in the job market may be, one effect it had was to raise accep-

tance for a higher price for an undergraduate education. According to the International Labour Organization's last Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of Pakistan, in 2019, the average monthly income of a Pakistani household was Rs41,545 (Rs498,540 per annum) – a little higher for urban (Rs543,396 per annum) and significantly lower (Rs361,320 per annum) for rural households. To put these numbers in perspective, one year's tuition fees in the aforementioned universities range between Rs300,000 per annum at the low end and Rs1,600,000 per annum – ranging from the lion's share of to several times the average annual household income. With education loans almost inaccessible to those with the greatest need, that means tuition fees must be shouldered by students' households. A good education for a child has ballooned into a significant life expense that most households can no longer cover out of the running household budget but must be planned and saved for years before a child enters high school even.

I venture there are two types of HEIs today. The

success post-graduation.

Today, many universities are charging tuition fees comparable to those of the NUSTs, GIKIs, LUMS, and FASTs, but all their students are getting in return is splashy marketing, Instagrammable campus backdrops, lax social lives but little substance in terms of education. Many for-profit private universities are guilty of that. This means that for prospective students operating without good information, it is easy to fall for the flashy marketing hype and find themselves in an overpriced programme.

That is why the regulator – the Higher Education Commission – ought to dispense with collecting statistics of secondary importance that have little bearing on people's decisions about what university to attend. Instead, it ought to make it its top priority to: one, require all universities (both public and private) to collect and report relevant data (employment rates after 12 months, graduation rates, dropout rates, average salaries after one/five years, cost of education, etc.) for every department or program; and two, publish these statistics annually.—Courtesy The News

CM directed IGP to control street crime, kidnapping for ransom

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar directed the Inspector General of Police to take measures to control kidnapping for ransom in the Katcha area and street crime in Karachi during a meeting.

The meeting was held at CM House on Saturday and was attended by Inspector General of Police Riffat Mukhtar and Additional IG Karachi Khadim Rind.

He also made it clear that the concerned police

stations would be held responsible if any such incident occurred in their jurisdiction. The Chief Minister expressed concern over the rising street crime in the city. He stated that the citizens are losing confidence as they don't feel safe on the roads and in open areas. He also warned the police station that they would be held accountable if any street crime occurred within their jurisdiction.

Baqar said he has repeatedly directed the police to ensure police

patrolling but those instructions have not been compiled in letter and spirit. At this, the IG police said that the orders of police patrolling had been complied with.

He said that the police stations and their mobiles have been properly equipped with wireless stations and upgradation of police stations was being made. The chief minister said that kidnapping for ransom has again started taking place in Katcha area of the Larkana and Sukkur divisions. "I would not

tolerate the rise of such a heinous crime in the Katcha area," he said and directed the IGP to ensure the safe and secure recovery of the kidnapped persons and continue to crack down against the bandits. The Chief Minister and the Inspector General of Police discussed the tagging of repeat criminals to monitor their movements. It was proposed that a bracelet with a chip would be worn to the criminals involved in their second or third offense.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi addressing the unveiling plaque ceremony of Multi-story Apartments Tower for lower grade employees at Chubarji Staff Colony.



ABBOTABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah inaugurates Hazara Campus of Khyber Medical University.

Board of Directors EFS-UAF approves 17 projects worth Rs.26m

FAISALABAD (APP): Chairman Four Brothers Engineer Jawed Salim Qureshi, Executive Director (EFS) Pakistan Agricultural Research Council Muhammad Arshad Farooq, Executive Director Endowment Fund Dr. Ejaz Ahmad Bhatti, Treasurer Umar Saeed Qadri, Registrar Tariq Mehud Gill, Additional Director EFS Naem Mahmood, Deputy Director EFS Amir Saeed and others were also present on the occasion.

The meeting also approved the annual budget of the Endowment Fund worth Rs.241 million. The meeting lauded UAF wheat campaign, soybeans and other initiatives and expressed hope that the UAF will further flourish.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Health Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz inaugurates plex unit at Civil Hospital Norology Department.

Health minister assures timely overhaul hospitals

LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram said the ongoing revamping project in government hospitals across the province was being monitored on a daily basis.

He was visiting the Children's Hospital Lahore here on Saturday. He said that under the direction of Punjab Chief Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, the ongoing construction project in the hospital was being reviewed. "There is not even one percent delay in the ongoing construction project in the hospital. The revamping work is going on successfully in more than one hundred government

hospitals of Punjab," he added.

Dr. Javed Akram said that Children's Hospital administration, XEN and all contractors had been directed to complete the ongoing construction work in the hospital at all costs on time. Patients at the hospital told the provincial minister that they were satisfied with the treatment facilities in the hospital.

The minister inquired about medical facilities provided to the patients and expressed his satisfaction. On this occasion, Children's Hospital MD Professor Dr. Tipu Sultan gave a briefing to the minister.

Pneumonia can be deadly if not treated early: Zulfiqar

HYDERABAD (APP): During the winter season a large number of children are being affected by pneumonia, with cold, cough, fever, sore throat and difficulty in breathing.

Pneumonia is inflammation of the lungs, usually caused by bacterial or viral infections. It may affect deeper lung tissues than bronchitis, which is airway tube inflammation, and can have symptoms such as fever, breathing problems and chest pain, showing up as a white shade in lung chest X-rays.

Talking to APP here on Friday, Paediatrician Dr. Zulfiqar Shaikh informed that Pneumonia is an infection of the lungs and

it causes cough and fever and can make breathing difficult. Severe pneumonia can be deadly.

He said most infected children and adults will develop flu-like symptoms that will clear up on their own after a few days, but some may develop into more serious inflammation of the lungs requiring treatment and, in some cases, hospitalization may be needed. About the treatment for pneumonia in kids he said that it depends on factors like the child's overall health condition, age, cause of the infection, and severity of the illness. For bacterial infection, an antibiotic is given to the patients.

PPP voice of poor labourer, farmers: Gilani

MULTAN (APP): Central leader Pakistan People's Party Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said that the PPP was the voice of the poor, labourers, and farmers.

In a statement issued here, Gilani remarked that PPP always worked for the betterment of the downtrodden segments of society.

He added that PPP leadership started the election campaign from Garhi Shaho. About the Election Campaign in Punjab, Gilani observed that it would begin soon.

He stated that the poor reposed confidence in the policies of the Pakistan People Party.

The PPP would not disappoint the people if voted to power, he categorically remarked.

DIG Police for preventing aerial firing on new year night

NAWABSHAH (APP): DIG Police Shaheed Benazirabad, Pervez Ahmed Chandio has issued orders to all SSPs, DSPs, and Station House Officers to prevent aerial firing, motorcycle racing, and fireworks on the occasion of New Year celebrations.

Heavy contingents of police would continue patrolling in the range to cope with any possible acts of terrorism.

Police emergency squad, Fire Brigade, and ambulance are also summoned. The Range Police has adopted measures and will remain alert to stop and control motorcycling races, vehicles running without silencers, and incidents occurring due to aerial firing.

DIG has banned the exhibition and carrying of weapons while strict legal action would be initiated on violators.

DHO Dir inaugurates hospital for drug addicts in Chakdara

PESHAWAR (APP): District Health Officer Irshad Ali on Saturday inaugurated a newly established hospital "Sahara" in Chakdara Tehsil of the District Dir Lower.

The hospital was established for the rehabilitation of drug-addicted patients.

DHO Irshad Ali said on the occasion, that to save one human life is to save the entire humanity. Dr. Iqtar, former DHO Dr. Muhammad Rehman Shaheed and central leader of ANP Hussain Shah Yousafzai were also present on the occasion.

The youth who are suffering from drugs, marijuana, heroin, alcohol, opium, and various psychological diseases will benefit from the new Sahara Drug and Psychiatry Hospital.

Naqvi lays foundation-stone of multi-storey apartments

Independent Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi laid the foundation stone of multi-storey apartments here on Saturday for low-ranked government employees. He was given a briefing about construction of the apartments tower.

Addressing the ceremony, he announced that four multi-storey apartments towers would be built for the government employees and new drainage system would be laid for the Chubarji Staff Colony and security would also be improved.

Mohsin Naqvi said that four office towers would be built in the CBD [Central Business District], where the

government offices would be shifted, in addition to the Civil Secretariat. He said that offices established in the rented buildings would be shifted to the CBD towers, which would save crores of rupees.

Work on the CBD tower would be launched after finalisation of its design. The CM said that residences from grade 11 to grade 14 of the government employees would be built in the 5-storey tower. A tube-well chamber and a generator room would also be established in the tower. Fire-fighting system and alarms would also be specially installed. An underground water tank would also be built and lift would also be installed. Parking of 30 vehicles, 40

motorcycles would also be provided in every tower.

Mohsin Naqvi said that six apartments would be built on every floor of the tower. He said it was a duty of the government to provide residences to all deserving government employees. The plight of Punjab Civil Secretariat was highly pathetic earlier, but now it had been transformed all together. The Secretariat has been beautified and its credit goes to Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman. Mohsin Naqvi said that the old building of P&D was a mega project on which work was ongoing.

A plan had been made to build four apartment towers consisting of six floors for the government



KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab addressing a press conference.

Over 6600 Policemen to be deployed on eve of new year night

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have finalised security arrangements on the eve of New Year's night, informed a police spokesman here on Saturday.

More than 6,600 officers and jawans of Rawalpindi Police will be deployed whereas 263 traffic police officers will also be on duty to maintain the flow of traffic.

Rawalpindi police have also made special plans for tourists in Murree. Over 350 officers will perform duties for the convenience and protection of tourists in Murree. As many as 57 special pickets will be

established across the city to prevent vandalism and aerial firing.

On the other hand, the City Traffic Police (CTP) has set up a special squad to check one-wheeling. Strict action will be taken against underage drivers also.

The main reason for traffic accidents is the carelessness and negligence of the parents because most of the young drivers leave the house without informing their parents with cars or motorcycles and indulge in speeding, reckless driving and wheeling which leads to fatal road accidents, he added.



KARACHI: Senior Journalist Farooq Moin casting his votes on occasion of Karachi Press Club Election 2024, held at press club building.

Record tourist arrives in KK in 2023: Galyat takes the lead

ABBOTABAD (APP): The Department of Tourism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has released its annual report on tourist arrivals for the year 2023, revealing impressive figures and highlighting the province's growing appeal for both domestic and international tourists.

The comprehensive data was collected under the oversight of the World Bank's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Integrated Tourism (KITE) Centres Project 1422.

From January 1st to December 26th, 2023, a remarkable total of 16,988,946 tourists explored the various districts of the province. Notably, the number of foreign tourists visiting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reached 4,554, underscoring the

province's increasing global recognition as a travel destination.

The Tourism Department's report disclosed that Galyat emerged as the top attraction in 2023, with over 6.34 million tourists visiting for sightseeing and recreational activities throughout the year. Naran Kaghan Valley and Malam Jabba also drew substantial crowds, hosting 5.08 million and 3.54 million tourists, respectively.

In addition, Upper and Lower Dir experienced a combined influx of 1,380,740 tourists seeking to explore the scenic beauty of the region. Lower Chitral recorded a significant number of 591,330 tourists, while Upper Chitral welcomed 38,771 visitors during the year.

PO involved in murder case netted

MULTAN (APP): Police claimed to have arrested a proclaimed offender who was wanted by police in a murder case here on Saturday.

According to the spokesman of the police, the PO staff team led by in-charge Bashir Ahmad raided and arrested a proclaimed offender named Mushtaq s/o Ahmad Din who was wanted by Seetal Marri police in a murder case.

The accused was handed over to Seetal Marri police for further legal action.

FDA seals plot for illegal construction

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) sealed a plot over an illegal construction in Millat Town, here on Saturday.

A spokesman for the FDA said that an enforcement team, headed by Intiaz Ali Goraya, checked various colonies and found illegal construction on a plot, No. 223-E, in Millat Town.

Therefore, the FDA team sealed the plot premises and warned the owner to get approval before construction on the plot; otherwise, he would be sent behind bars. Meanwhile, the FDA team also removed encroachment from a public park in the private housing colony, Jahan-e-Undus, he added.

We have been given field not level: Javed

LAHORE (Online): PML-N vice president Javed Latif has said we have been given field only today but level has not been provided.

"We say justice be administered to every one. But election campaign of any one be not run. Today one man is some time called innocent and some time it is said good to see you. If some one says May 9 incident is not crime then constitution should be changed. Those fomenting provocation and lies on social media be exposed, he said this while talking to media men in party central secretariat Model Town Saturday.

He held person who did all for the country was not provided level playing field. It is our demand the election campaign of any one be not run. We say justice be provided to all.

He went on to say opponents want to make election controversial. They want institutions and nation come face to face. He should strength of followers of terrorists be called the criterion of popularity.

CM KP inaugurates KMU Hazara campus

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Arshad Hussain Shah inaugurated the Khyber Medical University campus for the Hazara Region at Abbottabad.

The CM formally inaugurated the campus during his visit to Abbottabad the other day.

While briefing the chief minister about the programs to be offered on the campus, it was told that the campus was established to cater for the needs of the entire Hazara Region. It will fulfil the needs of post-graduation in the medical field, adding that the campus is offering a diversity of undergraduate programs including Allied Health Sciences, Nursing and Pharmacy.

It was further told that medical graduates can get the opportunity of admission in Public Health, Research,

Epidemiology and basic medical sciences postgraduate degree programs.

The chief minister termed the establishment of the KMU Hazara Campus as an important step to promote medical education in the region and said that with the establishment of the campus, the medical graduates of the region would get a facility of specialized training in various medical specialties at their doorsteps.

While lauding the role of KMU in producing trained human resources in various medical fields, Arshad Hussain Shah expressed the hope that the University will continue its activities more effectively. Besides Vice Chancellor KMU, Dr. Zia ul Haq and Commissioner Hazara, Zaheer Ul Islam, high-ups of district administration and KMU management were also present on the occasion.

Sharifullah says: Polling staff's training vital to ensure fair, transparent elections

KARACHI (APP): The Provincial Election Commissioner of Sindh Sharifullah on Saturday said that the training of polling staff was significant to ensure free, fair, and transparent general elections.

While advising the polling officers and officials, he said that they must pay attention to their training for the upcoming general elections. According to ECP-Sindh spokesman, the PEC Sharifullah said that the

election commission was fully committed to ensuring fair, free, and transparent elections.

The Spokesman said that the training sessions for the polling staff continued since December 25 across the province, and would continue till January 11.

Whereas the Presiding Officers and Senior Assistant Presiding Officers' training sessions would start on January 13 and conclude February 01, he added.



GILGIT: Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad Advocate in a meeting with people of Ghizir at Assembly Secretariat.

Aurat Foundation organises 3-day 'National Training of Trainers'

LAHORE (APP): The Aurat Foundation (AF) organised a three-day 'National Training of Trainers' (NTOT) for 2023, titled 'Beyond the ballots: Enhancing women political participation to strengthen democratic culture', here at a local hotel.

Women activists from different political parties participated in the event where they were imparted training about leadership, women political participation, mapping of political situation, communicating as a leader, networking, alliance-building and culture of democracy.

The upcoming general election in the country

present a crucial juncture for enhancing women's political participation, which has always been a focus area for the foundation.

According to AF, women's political participation had always been an uphill battle in Pakistan. General election in 2018 witnessed an increased focus on women's political participation with higher female voter turnout in various parts of the country. The Elections Act of 2017 mandated that returns from any constituency where women's turnout was less than or equal to 10 per cent would be nullified.



LAHORE: Shopkeepers sits around the fire at local market to counter coldness during winters night in Provincial Capital.

Pakistan should embrace AI as opportunity to advance IT exports, economy: Speakers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speakers at an international conference on artificial intelligence on Saturday said the country should embrace the revolution of artificial intelligence (AI) as an opportunity to advance its information technology (IT) exports and economy by exploring billions of dollars worth of global market.

The speakers hailing from diverse backgrounds were addressing the two-day 1st International Conference on Artificial

Intelligence & Society (December 30th and 31st) commenced here at the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) being organised by Global Center for Legal Thoughts (GCLT) in collaboration with Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration, PAL, IQRA, SIP, Al-Karam International Institute, Bahria University, and National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST).

The conference convened minds and ideas,

engaging into a multifaceted relationship between artificial intelligence and society. The moot served as a platform for in-depth discussions on cutting-edge advancements, ethical considerations, and the broader societal implications of AI.

Former Deputy Attorney General of Pakistan, Justice Dr Syed Mohammad Anwar said the AI revolution had two sides of its rise as one was benign and the other hostile. Taking the second

part first, he said, "Our ideologies are under the onslaught of social engineering being carried out under the garb of AI-based social networking sites. Our thinking is being changed deliberately which is reflected in many decisions of the key public, private, social, and civil entities."

He underlined that the AI was the technology of the real world and it was not a bad thing, adding collection of information was the primary aspect of artificial intelligence.



LAHORE: A view of huge numbers of people during shopping at Landa Bazaar after increase in Chilli weather in the winter season.



ISLAMABAD: Vendors are busy in their work at the sugar cane trading section of Fruit and Vegetables Market, in Federal Capital.

CM Sindh, Federal minister discuss establishment of more industrial park

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar and Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries & Board of Investment Goher Ejaz discussed the need for the establishment of more Industrial Parks in Karachi during a meeting at CM House on Friday.

The CM said that industrialization was the only solution to develop the economy and create employment opportunities and of course, it opened new vistas of prosperity and uplift.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Dr Fakhre Alam, Federal Commerce Secretary Sualah Farooqi, Secretary Federal BOI Sohail Rajput and others.

The federal minister told the CM that 1500 acres of land at Steel Mill was allocated for an Industrial Park and its development was assigned to Chinese authorities

under CPEC.

He added that the federal government has prepared a plan to hand it over to Chinese authorities to establish their industrial units.

The chief minister said that the provincial government has started the development of the Dhabaji Industrial Zone and the development of another Industrial Park at Steel Mills would be a great move.

Baqar said that the country needed such industrial units which produce goods only for export. "We need export to earn foreign exchange, otherwise the country would lag in the ongoing industrial developments," he said.

The CM was told that the Industrial Park at Steel Mill would create more than one million direct and indirect job opportunities apart from giving a boost to the export of finished goods.

Industrialists demand uninterrupted gas supply to production units

PESHAWAR (APP): Local industrialists have urged Sui-Northern Gas Pipeline Company Limited (SNGPL) to ensure uninterrupted and full-pressure gas supply to industries in Hayatabad Industrial Estate Peshawar.

The issue was raised by a delegation of businessmen led by the president of Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP) Ayub Zakori during a meeting with newly-posted General Manager, SNGPL, Waqas Shinwari, said a press release here on Friday. The delegation consisted of executive members IAP Zarak Khan, Haris Mufti, Faisal Afzal, Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, and members IAP Shahid Yusufzai, Hassan Zahideen, Muhammad Afzal, Raja Aamir, Taimur Ahmed, Hamraz Khan were the delegates.

The GM SNGPL was also flanked by senior

management of SNGPL.

The delegation congratulated the GM SNGPL Waqas Shinwari and wished him best luck for his assignment.

GM SNGPL thanked the delegation members and assured to make a stern effort in the availability of gas, as a reliable source of energy. Ayub Zakori, IAP president while talking to GM SNGPL stressed on constitutional entitlement of priority provision of indigenous gas to KPK under article 158.

He maintained that curtailment and low pressure of gas adversely affect industries of the city which are already at a disadvantage on multiple fronts while competing in the market with other industries of the country. Earlier, a detailed discussion between the delegation and SNGPL GM was held regarding the prevailing situation regarding the supply of gas.

Dera police seize NCP goods worth Rs 2.7 m

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police have seized non-custom paid (NCP) items worth around Rs 2.7 million during an ongoing crackdown against the smuggling of NCP goods in the limits of Daraban and Shaheed Nawab Khan police stations.

Following the directions of DPO Dera, the operations against the smuggling of NCP goods were continued across the district, said a police spokesman.

He said Daraban police recovered 100 sacks of Iranian Plastic bags from a vehicle bearing registration number (DIK-4868) during checking en route to Zhob. The estimated cost of these recovered plastic bags is around Rs 1.5 million.

Meanwhile, Shaheed Nawab Khan police station recovered 48 NCP tyres loaded in a car with the registration number (AFX-789) during checking. The estimated worth of these recovered NCP tyres is said to be around Rs 1.2 million.

Later, all the recovered NCP goods were handed over to the customs authorities for further legal action.

Gold rates decline by Rs.900

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.900 and was sold at Rs.220,000 on Saturday compared to its sale at Rs.220,900 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.771 to Rs.188,615 from Rs.189,386 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went down to Rs.172,897 from Rs.173,604, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,680 and Rs2,297.66 respectively. The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$8 to \$2,082 from \$2,090, the Association reported.

Team dispatches to conduct survey for Sarai Kanda-Lajmeri road

PESHAWAR (APP): For the promotion of trade with Afghanistan special survey team for the construction of Sarai Kanda-Lajmeri road was dispatched on Friday.

On the special interest of the provincial government on the directives of the Inspector General Frontier Corps (IGFC) South Haroon Hameed and Deputy Commissioner (DC) South Waziristan Lower, Nasir Khan a team comprising sub-engineers of the Communication & Works (C&W) Department, Surveyors, security personnel, local elites and elders has been sent to the area. The road is strategically important for trade with Afghanistan, and its construction is expected to facilitate trade and improve traffic flow, benefiting local traders and the general public.

The road has been a long-standing demand of traders and business communities in the region, as its construction would ease trade with Afghanistan and prevent any

disruptions or road closures.

Due to its proximity and resistance to seasonal conditions, the road is considered secure, and local tribes are committed to ensuring its safety.

The local traders anticipate an increase in national revenue and economic development in the area with the construction of this road.

The Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) of Communication and Works mentioned that Sarai Kanda Road would prove to be a cost-effective and efficient route for all types of traffic, playing a crucial role in promoting trade activities with Afghanistan.

The complete survey report of the mentioned road has been submitted for further action, and it is expected that construction work on the road will commence soon.

Furthermore, connecting this road with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is seen as beneficial for increasing local and national trade volumes.

SBP launches SUNWAI portal, app for customer complaints

KARACHI (APP): The

central bank, launched 'Sunwai' a customer complaint service portal and app to facilitate banking customers in lodging their complaints against banks and financial institutions. 'Sunwai' would serve as a one-window operation for banking customers to register their complaints against Banks, Microfinance Banks (MFBs), and Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) operating in Pakistan. SBP has launched the service in continuation of its ongoing efforts to strengthen the banking sector's efficiency and fairness in complaint handling and to address the issues faced by banking customers in complaints lodgment, according to a

statement issued here.

Now, customers can lodge their complaints related to any banking product or service, including Roshan Digital Accounts (RDA) through Sunwai for their timely resolution, said a SBP spokesperson adding that 'Sunwai' is accessible through web browser as well as through mobile application, both at Android and iOS. He informed that registered users can lodge complaints at their convenience in either English or Urdu languages while each complaint will be assigned a unique tracking number which would be communicated to users via SMS and email. Banks have been advised to ensure prompt and fair resolution of complaints.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in making the wooden crates for keeping fruits outside Fruit and Vegetables Market in Federal Capital.

Woolies demand increases after mercury dips

LAHORE (APP): Demand for warm clothes has risen sharply after the temperature decreased significantly in recent days.

The rates of warm clothes have increased in the flea markets as well as major stores. Brands have also increased prices of their new sweaters, which start from Rs3,500.

Jackets and coats for children are available for Rs4,000 to Rs8,000 apiece, while mufflers are available between Rs250 and Rs350. A pair of socks is available for up to Rs280.

Overcoats for children are available for Rs4,000 to Rs7,000 while overcoats for elders are available for Rs6,000 and

Rs14,000. Shawls are selling in the range of Rs4,000 and Rs8,000.

A buyer, Muhammad Bilal, told APP at the flea market on Saturday that secondhand sweaters were available between Rs450 and Rs700 while coats were selling for up to Rs600. Shawls in the flea markets are available between Rs400 and Rs600 while sweaters for elders were being sold between Rs450 and Rs900, a female buyer, Razia Bibi said, who had come to the flea market for purchase clothes for her children.

Shopkeepers in the flea market, Adeel and Rana Shahid, said that the import duty on secondhand clothes had been enhanced.

Stc has achieved substantial progress in advancing toward next phase of 5G technology

ISLAMABAD (APP): Stc the leading Saudi Arabia digital services provider is making a substantial investment to propel its 5G capabilities into the next era of advanced technology.

According to a news release this strategic initiative is designed to solidify the company's position as the leading regional 5G operator.

The investment is carefully directed towards expanding the 5G network, reinforcing the company's leadership, and enhancing its standing in the competitive 5G market.

The Stc has reaffirmed its commitment by expanding its 5G network and advancing to the next phase of 5G technology.

The company has successfully implemented and commercially introduced the latest 5G advanced solutions, covering 4 multiple layers of the NR (New Radio) network.

This progress highlights stc's significant efforts in constructing a robust infrastructure to support 5G services.

Through extensive deployment of 5G advanced network, stc empowers users to maximize the benefits of multi-band NR carrier aggregation (CA) technology within their 5G networks.

This forward-looking strategy facilitates the amalgamation of multiple frequency bands, including

new layers in the C band, as well as the mid and low-band spectrum.

This advancement is poised to enhance network speed and responsiveness, resulting in improved overall network performance and consistent high-speed connectivity for users.

In tandem with its ongoing 5G deployment, stc is actively positioning itself as a trailblazer in the commercial utilization of 5.5G technology.

This forward-looking approach exemplifies the company's preparedness to embrace forthcoming advancements beyond 5G, expected to deliver even greater enhancements in speed, capacity, and connectivity.



KARACHI: A view of Federation of Pakistan election 2024-2025.

NIM delegation to visit FCCI on Jan 12

FAISALABAD (APP): Participants of the 34th Senior Management Course at National Institute of Management (NIM) Peshawar will visit Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) on January 12, 2024.

A spokesman of the chamber said here on Friday that the delegation will be comprised of 18 senior officers currently attending this course for their promotion from grade 19 to 20. The office bearers of the FCCI will apprise them about the current economic situation and the role, achievements and challenges being faced by this elected trade body, he added.

USC to remain open on Sunday across the country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Utility Store Corporation (USC) on Saturday that all USC outlets across the country will remain open on Sunday (tomorrow) for the convenience of the public.

According to the USC spokesperson, consumers will have the opportunity to shop at utility stores even on tomorrow's holiday, marking the last Sunday of the year. The spokesperson mentioned that the stores will be closed on Sunday, January 7, 2024.

Advisory for growers about potato cultivation

FAISALABAD (APP): The agriculture experts advised growers to start cultivation of Baharia potato crops with the advent of January and complete it by mid of February to get a bumper yield. According to a spokesman for the Agriculture (Extension).

Install trackers in Livestock vehicles in one week: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Punjab Minister for Livestock Ibrahim Hassan Murad has directed the department to complete the process of tracker installation in Livestock field vehicles within a week. He presided over a meeting in his camp office, here on Saturday. He said that the steering committee would review the

performance of Pakistan Animal Identification and Traceability System (PAITS) on weekly basis.

He said warned that the department would conduct crackdown on low-quality silage units.

The minister said that the department would have to organise the awareness programme regarding PAITS across Punjab.

Increase in soybean cultivation can resolve poultry feed issue: Iqar

FAISALABAD (APP): The increase in soybean cultivation can resolve the issue of poultry feed in addition to flourish this industry to reduce the import bill.

This was stated by the Vice Chancellor (VC) University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Prof Dr Iqar Ahmad Khan during his address as chief guest at the International Symposium on Poultry Challenges organized by the Department of Pathology University of Agriculture Faisalabad and World Veterinary Poultry Association.

Dr Iqar said that it is essential to follow the recommendations of experts to control various poultry diseases, including Newcastle disease, avian influenza and others. He said that 1.5 billion dollars are spent annually on soybean imports. The UAF has introduced a new variety of soybean with high yield and short duration, which has been cultivated on the agricultural area of a hundred farmers this year while next year it should be brought to 1,000 farmers, he added.

He said that this year, poultry farmers faced problems of feed, and the price of poultry went up.

Dean Faculty of Veterinary Sciences UAF Prof Dr Farzana Rizvi said that all possible measures are being taken to ensure the health of animals. She said that the livestock and poultry sector in the country contributes in the development. She called for developing it on modern lines that will not only increase the production, but also improve the economic condition.



LAHORE: Women visiting stall during Punjab art and Culture Expo 2023 at Gaddafi Stadium.



HYDERABAD: People from different walk of life buying furniture and other equipment during furniture exhibition at local hall.

Israel pushes deeper into Gaza camps, 12 weeks into war

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO/GAZA: Israeli tanks pushed deeper into districts in central and southern Gaza overnight under heavy air and artillery fire, residents said, pressing a deadly offensive that has razed much of the enclave and that Israel has said may last months more.

Fighting late on Friday and early Saturday was focused in al-Bureij, Nuseirat, Maghazi and Khan Younis, backed by intensive air strikes that filled hospitals with injured Palestinians.

The bombardment has killed 100 Palestinians and injured 150 in the central Gaza Strip over the past 24 hours, a senior health official in central Gaza said.

At Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, the biggest and most important medical facility in the south of the tiny, crowded territory, Red Crescent images posted online showed ambulances operating amid smashed streets, carrying injured children.

Almost all of Gaza's 2.3 million residents have been forced from their homes by Israel's withering 12-week assault, triggered by the Hamas attack on Oct. 7 that killed 1,200 people and brought 240 hostages into the group's grasp.

The offensive has killed at least 21,500 Palestinians,

according to health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza, and the conflict risks spreading across the region, drawing in Iran-aligned groups in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen.

Bombardment has smashed houses, apartment blocks and businesses and put hospitals out of action. On Saturday the Palestinian Culture Ministry said Israeli strikes had struck a medieval bathhouse. The old Great Mosque was hit earlier in the war.

Ziad, a medic in Maghazi in central Gaza, was planning to flee with his family of three children. The only road still open for them was the coastal route running past Deir al-Balah, already crammed with displaced.

But he said they would press on straight to Rafah, on the border with Egypt, fearing a new Israeli assault on Deir al-Balah, he said. "We want a ceasefire now. Not tomorrow even. Enough, more than enough, already," he said. Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Friday troops were reaching Hamas command centres and arms depots and pictures the military released showed soldiers moving across churned-up earth among ruins of destroyed buildings.

The Israeli military said it had destroyed a tunnel complex in the basement of one of the houses of the Hamas leader for Gaza, Yahya Sinwar, in Gaza City.



Palestinians inspect the damage following Israeli strikes on the Zawayda area of the central Gaza Strip



A general view shows a shopping mall heavily damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Dnipro, Ukraine

Chinese Parliament dismisses 9 military officials including 4 generals

BEIJING (Online): In China, 9 senior military officials were dismissed from the parliament.

According to foreign media, the 9 military officials who have been dismissed from China's parliament include 4 generals attached to the Strategic Missile Unit. These dismissals have come into effect after the appointment of a new defense minister.

China's official news

Israeli army looting millions dollars, valuable goods from Gaza disclosure

GAZA (Online): Israel's occupying army has killed Palestinians in Gaza and has also heated up the loot market. This has been admitted by the Israeli soldiers themselves.

According to a foreign news agency, the human rights organization Human Rights Observatory revealed in its report that Israeli soldiers in Gaza made arbitrary and forced arrests to steal people's personal belongings and deliberately destroyed Palestinian property.

According to the report, Israeli forces systematically looted and looted Palestinians' gold, cash, in-

cluding dollars, mobile phones and laptops.

The report added that preliminary estimates based on documentary evidence indicated the theft of personal belongings of Palestinian civilians and widespread looting of valuable property by the Israeli army. The proceeds from this looting can exceed tens of millions of dollars.

Israeli soldiers deliberately published video clips on social media platforms showing the destruction of civilian homes in the Gaza Strip and racist or anti-Jewish slogans painted on walls.

Palestinian genocide; South Africa approaches ICJ against Israel

JOHANNESBURG (Online): South Africa has approached the International Court of Justice (ICJ) against Israel, which is responsible for the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza.

According to a foreign news agency, in a statement on South Africa's presidential social media account, it is said that South Africa has filed an application at the International Court of Justice against Israeli atrocities in Gaza.

In the petition, calling Israel's aggression in Gaza genocide, he said that Israel's aim is to destroy the Palestinian nation and race. Many human rights organizations have already said that Israeli policies towards Palestinians are tantamount to racism.

It should be noted that since October 7, more than 21,500 people have been killed in Gaza due to the Israeli bombardment.

Ukraine death toll after massive Russian air attack rises to 39

Monitoring Desk
Dnipro, Ukraine: The death toll from Russia's largest air attack on Ukraine rose to 39 on Saturday as rescuers continued to clear debris and rubble from the bombardment, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said.

Russia launched 158 missiles and drones on cities and towns across Ukraine on Friday in what Ukrainian officials described as the worst aerial bombardment since the start of the war in February 2022.

"Works to clear up the consequences of yesterday's Russian attack

are still underway. Almost 120 cities and villages, hundreds of civilian objects have suffered," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram messaging app.

Zelenskyy said 39 people were killed and 159 injured in the strikes that involved different types of ballistic and cruise missiles and Iranian-made drones. Ukrainian air defence said it shot down 87 Russian missiles and over 30 drones.

In the capital Kyiv, at least 16 people were killed, the largest civilian death toll in the city during nearly 22 months of the war, said Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

D-8 countries focus on increasing tourism revenues in 2023

ISTANBUL (AA/APP): The Developing Eight (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation focused on increasing income from tourism of member countries in 2023.

The organization was established in the wake of the Istanbul Declaration at the summit of member states and heads of government held June 15, 1997, in the Turkish metropolis under the leadership of late Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

The Istanbul-based organization aims to increase the prosperity and peace of its eight member states—Turkey, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

Member states have a total population of 1.2 billion and a 14% share in global trade.

The organization continued to work under

Bangladeshi chairmanship to improve cooperation among member states to address issues in areas such as tourism and funding shortages in 2023.

Tourism cited as key area to realize economic cooperation

Secretary General Ambassador Isaiaka Abdulqadir Imam told Anadolu that the year was very active with many sectoral meetings, especially with the D-8 Commission meeting.

"We hosted two meetings, one in Istanbul and another one in Bangladesh," said Imam, noting that D8 signed a series of decisions in meetings in February and October. Pointing out the importance of the Tourism ministerial meeting in Pakistan in August, Imam said: "Tourism is one of our key areas," as it ensures economic cooperation between member states.

Poland says Russian missile passed through its airspace

Warsaw (AFP/APP): A Russian missile passed through Polish airspace Friday, entering from and then back into Ukraine, the Polish army said, as Russia pummeled Ukraine with one of the biggest air attacks of the war.

"Everything indicates that a Russian missile entered Polish airspace... It also left our airspace," said General Wieslaw Kukula, chief of the general staff of the Polish armed forces.

"We have national and allied radar confirmation," he told reporters.

The missile was in Polish airspace for three minutes, said Maciej Klisz, operational commander of the Polish army.

"We sent our forces, fighter jets, to intercept it and shoot it down if necessary but the duration and

the flight path... made this impossible and allowed the missile to leave Polish territory," Klisz said.

Klisz said Poland's air defence system had been put on alert because of a wave of Russian drone and missile strikes on Ukraine.

The army said it had also carried out a ground search in the place where the signal from the missile was lost.

Polish civilian and military authorities have held emergency meetings and Polish President Andrzej Duda has spoken to NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg following the incident, who reacted on social media.

"NATO stands in solidarity with our valued ally, (it) is monitoring the situation and we will remain in contact as the facts are established," Stoltenberg said.

Shanghai metro pilots express parcel delivery service

SHANGHAI (Xinhua/APP): Metro services in Shanghai on Friday launched a pilot project to transport express parcels during off-peak hours to reduce road congestion and carbon emissions of the courier sector.

The three-month trial run will involve certain sections of Line 1 and Line 2. Each train running on the two routes will designate some parts of its rear carriage to carry parcels in certain afternoon periods.

The items to be delivered include newspapers, magazines, and intra-city packages, which will go through strict security checks, according to the subway operator Shanghai Metro.

The service was

launched by the Shanghai Metro together with SF Express and China Post, two leading courier service providers in China.

Xu Chen, an operations director of SF Express, said express delivery by subway would raise their efficiency by more than 20 percent compared with road transport. Chinese cities, including Beijing, Wuxi, and Shenzhen, had previously piloted the subway parcel delivery service.

He Yingze, director of the Division of Market Supervision and Inspection of the Shanghai Municipal Postal Administration, expected more subway lines and courier enterprises to participate in this service in the future.

638 Afghan women die per 100,000 births: WHO

UNITED NATIONS (INP): Afghan women are still living a miserable life under the interim Taliban regime in their country.

According to UN spokesman Stéphane Dujarric, one woman dies during childbirth every two hours in Afghanistan.

The country has one of the world's highest mother-and-child mortality rates, with 638 women dying per 100,000 births, as per a World Health Organisation (WHO) report. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) warns of 51,000 additional maternal deaths, 4.8 million unintended pregnancies, and the loss of family planning clinics by 2025, the report says further.

The global health organisation says women in Afghanistan lack basic health facilities, raising fears of increased maternal and child mortality. The growing risks of underage marriages and forced marriages of women to terrorists have

increased alarmingly, according to the UNFPA.

Furthermore, international news outlet Aljazeera reports that incidents of violence against male doctors examining women have steadily increased, while hospitals and clinics are being ordered to allow only female staff to cater to female patients.

According to the WHO, there is a severe shortage of healthcare professionals in Afghanistan. There are only 4.6 doctors, nurses, and midwives for every 10,000 Afghans, nearly five times less than the standard level.

The return of the Taliban in August 2021 exacerbated the health crisis, reported the Voice of America. The medical field for women has been severely affected, due to which they face huge restrictions on basic life rights and education.

For every 100,000 children born in remote areas, 5,000 maternal deaths have

increased to an alarming level, the WHO reported. Women have to use mountainous paths to reach hospitals, some even dying on the way, as per the Voice of America.

Because access to public hospitals is impossible, women are forced to get their own medication to give birth, the news outlet reported further. A child delivery costs about 2,000 in Afghan currency (\$29), which is beyond the means of many families, the VOA said.

Due to high delivery charges, 40% of Afghan women give birth at home and 80% in remote areas, according to Voice of America. Before the Taliban takeover in 2021, there were 23 state-sponsored centres for women survivors of violence in Afghanistan, which have been closed under the current administration. The Taliban government considers women's health unnecessary and calls it a Western

China launches 3 satellites for space-based internet program

ISTANBUL (AA/APP): China launched three experimental satellites into space Saturday from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the northwestern Gobi Desert, according to Chinese state-run Xinhua News.

The satellites, carried by a Long March 2C carrier rocket, blasted off at 8:13 a.m. local time.

The China Academy of Space Technology in Beijing developed and constructed the satellites as part of the space-based Internet Technology Demonstrator series.

This mission marks the fourth deployment of satellites in the series.



The initial launch occurred in July with two subsequent launches in November and December.

China has conducted 67 launches in 2023, with 47 carried out by the Long March rocket family, its main launch vehicle fleet.

KSRelief inaugurates empowerment in education activity in five Yemeni Governorates

LAHJ, Yemen (SPA/APP): King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief) launched in the Yemeni governorate of Lahj an empowerment

in education activity to train and empower families of orphan caregivers in five Yemeni governorates, as part of a project to re-enroll girls who drop out of school in Yemen.

The project aims to train and empower families of orphan caregivers by providing them with various skills through the establishment of 14 educational and training courses in a number of fields, including sewing, embroidery, incense and perfume industry, food industries, as well as courses in technology and photography, to rely on themselves and empower them economically and socially, which contributes to the return of their daughters to the educational process.

280 trainees benefited from the project in the governorates of Lahj, Abyan, Marib, Hadramaut and Socatra.

Morocco law reform offers hope for women's rights

RABAT (AFP/APP): Two decades after a landmark but limited revision of Morocco's family law

marked a breakthrough for women, activists hope new reforms will defy Islamist objections and provide greater equality.

The reform of the legal code was ordered directly by King Mohammed VI, who is expected to have the final say in any disputes over the new law.

A committee tasked with drafting the changes was formed in September and includes the justice minister as well as judicial and religious figures.

By the end of November, the committee had already received proposals from more than 1,000 civil organisations, as well as political parties and official institutions.

Women's rights advocates in the North African country have given a hopeful welcome to the plans.

Latifa Bouchoua, a member of the Federation of Women's Rights Leagues (FLDF), said she wanted "a deeper reform (than the last) adapted to the aspirations of new generations who believe in rights and freedoms".

Activists are demanding equality in inheritance, child custody, and a total ban on child marriage—

none of which they say are guaranteed under the current family code.

The most recent reform took place in 2004 and was heralded as a breakthrough at the time. However, campaigners say the changes still failed to provide women with their full rights.

That code gave women joint responsibility for their families, which had previously been granted only to men, and imposed restrictions on unilateral divorce by men, polygamy and under-age marriage.

However, the reforms fell short of preventing "injustice, discrimination, and legal violence, whether in the text or in its application," said Samira Muheya, president of the FLDF.

In the summer of 2022, King Mohammed said in a speech Morocco needed to "address the deficiencies and negative aspects noted from experience" of the family code. Under current legislation, women are entitled only to half of what men inherit, in line with strict interpretations of the Koran. Polygamy remains legal, although it requires men to have the written consent of their first wife.

Only 0.3 percent of marriages across Morocco in 2022 were polygamous, according to officials.



In a statement, Southeastern added that "flooding between Ebbsfleet International and London St Pancras International means that all lines are blocked.

"Disruption is expected until the end of the day."

It said flooding had affected both railway tunnels near Ebbsfleet, meaning both tunnels are closed.

"This means no trains can run between London St Pancras International and Ebbsfleet International," Southeastern added.

The disruption comes after French unions ended a wildcat strike that had stranded holidaymakers and held up freight just days before Christmas.

The surprise walkout by workers that blocked the tunnel sparked hours of chaos at rail hubs in Paris and London.

Eurostar train services resumed on December 22 after an agreement was reached. Eurotunnel unions said negotiations had yielded "results that satisfy us".

Eurostar is owned 55.75 per cent by French state-owned SNCF Voyageurs.

It almost went bankrupt during the COVID-19 pandemic but was saved with a 290-million-euro (\$320.6 million) bailout from shareholders including the French government.



KARACHI: Passengers of the Pakistan Express wait for train at Cantt station platform, Train traffic is affected due to fog in the country.

Federal Minister stresses responsible legal role to revive Pakistan Steel Mills

KARACHI (INP): Federal Minister for Commerce, Industry, and Production, Dr. Gohar Ijaz, emphasized the pivotal role of responsible legal actions in the restoration of Pakistan Steel Mills.

The session in Karachi, centered around the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TADAP) and Pakistan Steel Mills, provided insights into the factors contributing to the decline and closure of the steel mills.

During the discussion, the Federal Minister underscored the significance of

audits spanning from 1982 to 2023. By closely examining the Performance Indicators (KPI) of Pakistan Steel Mills, the Government and the State-Owned Enterprises Investment Committee (SIFC) can play a crucial role in the revival process through their responsible legal interventions.

In a related development, the caretaker government made the strategic decision to remove Pakistan Steel Mills from the Conjugation List, signaling a shift in approach towards addressing the challenges

audits spanning from 1982 to 2023. By closely examining the Performance Indicators (KPI) of Pakistan Steel Mills, the Government and the State-Owned Enterprises Investment Committee (SIFC) can play a crucial role in the revival process through their responsible legal interventions.

Additionally, officials from TADAP, led by Chief Executive Zubair Motiwala, extended an invitation to the Federal Minister to attend the upcoming "Fourth Pak-Africa Trade Development Conference (PATDC)" and Single Country Exhibition (SEC) scheduled to take place in Cairo, Egypt next month. The fourth edition of PATDC and SEC is expected to attract participation from major economies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, including Jordan,

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, and Mauritania. Over 100 Pakistani business owners and entrepreneurs are slated to form a delegation to Cairo, actively engaging in the exhibition and fostering trade ties with diverse international partners.

As the efforts to rejuvenate Pakistan Steel Mills gain momentum, the emphasis on responsible legal actions and strategic international collaborations becomes increasingly vital for the revival and sustainability of the steel industry in the country.

People to choose between miscreant and maker of Pakistan on Feb 8: Shehbaz

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif stated on Saturday that on Feb 8 the people will decide who the miscreant is and who the architect of Pakistan is.

Addressing a power show in Farooqabad, the PML-N leader termed the upcoming elections as significant, and urged the electorate to change the fate of the country through their decision on Feb 8 by voting for the PML-N.

The former prime minister asserted that even if Pakistan was poor financially, Almighty God had blessed this country with countless resources.

"It does not matter if Pakistan has no deposits of petrol and gas. The country will get rich because of its youth."

Shehbaz advised that while casting vote, the electorate must think over the past of the political leader.

Showing the feats of the PML-N supremo, Shehbaz stated that his leader Nawaz Sharif had offset energy shortfall in 2013 when power outages lasted up to 20 hours. Nawaz Sharif had given away laptops to youngsters, wiped out terrorism from the country and awarded scholarships worth millions of rupees to students, he added.

Shehbaz affirmed that under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, many development projects had been completed in Punjab. He recalled that children working at brick-kilns who had endured violence were sent to schools by Nawaz Sharif. He added that Nawaz Sharif had modernised public hospitals in Lahore, set up the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI).

Shehbaz urged the electorate to put the stamp on the "tiger", the electoral symbol of the PML-N, on the ballot paper. He promised to distribute more laptops among youth if they voted for Nawaz Sharif.

Sheikh Rashid to move court against rejection of nomination papers

RAWALPINDI (INP): Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Saturday announced he will move the Supreme Court against the rejection of his nomination papers.

In a video message released here, the former interior minister stated that the returning officer called him to the commissioner's office on half an hour's notice, scrutinised his nomination papers and made allegations that he did not pay for staying at the Murree rest-house.

According to Rashid, he has never stayed at the rest-house. But he said that he was even ready to pay for it.

The former minister said that another allegation was made that he had not declared a certain piece of land. "Whatever land I have is in my name, and the Supreme Court has ruled in my favour regarding the documents of the land," he added. Rashid said that an allegation of hiding taxes was also made. But he clarified that he had not hidden any taxes until today.

The AML chief said he would file an appeal against these baseless allegations, and would approach a high court or the Supreme Court.

He argued that he had been a minister several times and why he would indulge in corruption of Rs94,000.

Level playing field must be ensured for all parties: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Central Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said all the political parties should be provided with equal opportunities to run their electoral campaigns for the upcoming general elections-2024.

While addressing a press conference here at Kundi Model Farms, he said the legal action must be taken against those involved in the May 9 incident however the illegal actions and arrests of political leaders and workers of any party should be avoided.

He recalled that when illegal actions were being taken against PPP leaders then Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi had neither raised his voice against that nor condemned those actions. The PPP condemned illegal actions against any political leader or worker and wanted reforms, he added.

He was of the view that PPP and PTI have the same opponent in Dera Ismail Khan for upcoming general elections, adding,

that the workers of both the parties must be united to defeat the collective opponent. "The election must be held transparent and peacefully on its scheduled time," Kundi said. He said the weather and law and order situation should not be used as excuses to delay elections. About the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), he said 200,000 people of Dera Ismail Khan were benefiting from this poverty reduction program. More deserving people would also be added to the program if PPP came into power again, he promised. Replying to a question about the PPP ticket for the PK-113 constituency, Kundi said all the tickets would be confirmed within a few days, adding, that PPP has a strong candidate for each constituency of Dera Ismail Khan and they all would contest elections on the party's symbol.

On this occasion, some local leaders of PTI include three former Nazims —Malik Iqbal Bum, Sheikh Akmal and Malik Anwar Mekan—and two former councillors named Irfan Baloch and Waheed.

Azam Swati's nomination papers from NA-15 rejected

MANSEHRA (INP): Nomination papers of former federal minister and PTI's leader Azam Khan Swati filed for NA-15 Mansehra were rejected on Saturday. According to details, objections were raised that Azam Swati was wanted in different cases.

It was objected that Azam Swati had submitted affidavit but did not appear himself. After completion of arguments of lawyers from both sides, the returning officer rejected nomination papers of the PTI leader.

Scrutiny of nomination papers of all candidates for NA-262, 263 & 264 completes

QUETTA: The process of scrutiny of nomination papers of the candidates contesting elections on the seats of national and provincial assemblies has been completed on Saturday.

According to the sources of Provincial Election Commissioner's office, the scrutiny of nomination papers of the candidates for NA-262, NA-263 and NA-264 has been completed.

It may be mentioned here that a total of 54 candidates had filed their nomi-

nation papers on NA-262, Quetta-I. Similarly, the scrutiny of papers of 55 candidates for NA-263, Quetta-II was completed.

A total of 65 candidates had filed nominations for NA-263, Quetta-II. Moreover, the scrutiny of nomination papers of 40 out of total 47 candidates has been completed.

The scrutiny of papers of the candidates was done by the returning officers of concerned constituencies of National Assembly from Quetta.



QUETTA: Director Schools Education Wahid Shakir Baloch in a group photo with Executive Director Irfan Ahmed, Mehfooz Ali Khan and other during concluding ceremony of Education Cannot Wait project organized by SCSPEB

FBR tax collection in six months crosses target set by IMF

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Board of Revenue has crossed the IMF's tax target in first six months of the current fiscal year, sources said on Saturday.

"The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had set Rs 4,425 trillion revenue collection target for six months while Rs 4.44 trillion tax has been collected in the period," sources said. The target was 35% above in comparison to last six months of the previous year.

According to sources, the FBR collected 2.13 trillion with 730 billion increase in income tax, while 1.5 trillion were collected in sales tax and 265 billion rupees in federal excise duty.

Three die in Lahore house fire incident

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least three persons died on Saturday in a house fire incident in the Chohang area of Lahore. According to details, a man along with his wife and daughter were living on the first floor of a house when the fire suddenly erupted. The tenants on the ground floor of the house reported the incident to the rescue, a private news channel reported. After receiving information, the rescue personnel reached the spot and carried out the operation, and took out the deceased bodies.

Baloch Academy Gwadar wins Pak Army Jinnah Cricket Tournament

QUETTA: Baloch Cricket Academy Gwadar won the Pak Army Jinnah Cricket Tournament played in Gwadar.

Baloch Academy defeated Shama Cricket Club in the thrilling final. At the outset, 24 teams took part in the tournament organised by the Pak Army. The teams were also included Pak Army,

Navy, police besides others. Meanwhile, an exhibition match was also played between the women cricket teams.

In the end, prizes were distributed among the teams and players on the outstanding performance.

A large number of people especially youth enjoyed the thrilling match.

Nomination Papers of PTI candidates rejected in NA-71 Sialkot

SIALKOT (INP): The nomination papers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Umar Dar and Rehana Imtiaz, mother of former advisor to the Prime Minister Usman Dar, were rejected from National Assembly Constituency NA-71 Sialkot.

Media reports also indicate that the nomination papers of Umar Dar's wife, Aruba Dar, faced a similar fate. These rejections come as League-N leaders submitted nomination papers against Khawaja Asif.

Expressing strong condemnation, PTI Secretary General Umar Ayub asserted that the rejection of their candidates' nomination papers was anticipated. Ayub alleged that the returning officers (ROs) succumbed to pressure and speculated that the 'software' of these ROs had

been intentionally 'updated' to work against PTI. He claimed that parties like JUIF, PPP, and MQM, unable to compete fairly, were resorting to such tactics.

Ayub urged opposing parties to muster the courage to face PTI in free and fair elections, emphasizing the need for a government elected by the people to navigate the country out of crises. He warned that persistent pre-poll rigging could undermine the transparency of the electoral process, escalating political instability and eroding national harmony.

During a core committee meeting of PTI, supervised by ROs and administrative officers nationwide, particularly in Punjab, strong condemnation was voiced against what was deemed the worst attempts of pre-election rigging.



QUETTA: Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozegazi checking patients during his visit to PHU Beeli

Court rejects plea for granting further physical remand of Manzoor

ISLAMABAD (Online): Judicial Magistrate Yasir Chaudhry has rejected police plea for granting further physical remand of Manzoor Pashteen head leader of Pashtoon Tahafaz Movement (PTM) and ordered to send him to jail.

The case against Manzoor Pashteen came up for hearing in district and sessions court Islamabad Saturday.

Manzoor Pashteen was presented in the court of judicial magistrate Yasir Chaudhry on completion of two days physical remand. Police while presenting Manzoor Pashteen in connection with the case registered in police station requested the court to grant more physical remand.

The court while rejecting police plea for further physical remand sent Manzoor Pashteen to jail. The counsel for Manzoor Pashteen filed bail plea. The court issued notice to the respondents on bail plea for January 02.

Solangi grieved over demise of Kashmiri Hurriyat leader

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of senior Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Professor Nazir Ahmad Shawl on Saturday.

In his condolence message, the minister said he was deeply grieved to hear the sad news of the death of Professor Nazir Ahmad Shawl. "Professor Nazir Ahmad Shawl was a brave, fearless, and sincere leader," Murtaza Solangi said, adding that with the demise of Nazir Ahmad Shawl, Kashmir had lost a great leader. Appreciating the contribution of Nazir Shawl, Solangi said he was a strong voice for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir who played an important role in highlighting the Kashmir issue at the global level.

Murtaza Solangi said Shawl's political and diplomatic services will always be remembered for the struggle for the inalienable right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace.

Manifesto of JUI (N) to impose Islamic law in country: Qadir Luni

QUETTA: The manifesto of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Nazriyati) is to impose Islamic law in the country, serve the humanity without any discrimination, favour the oppressed and rebellion from oppressor.

These views were expressed by Ameer, JUI-N, Balochistan, candidate NA-263, Moulana Abdul Qadir Luni, candidate PB-41-Quetta.

Moulana Rehmatullah Haqani, central Secretary Information, Syed Haji Abdul Sattar Shah Chisti, Hameedullah Durrani, Muhammad Salman Soomro, Aminullah Durrani and others while addressing a corner meeting at Khan Bagh, Shaldara area

of Quetta on Saturday. They said JUI-N had become the center of hopes of the nation, adding that outdated system of the country was the biggest obstacle in the way of progress and prosperity of the country and nation.

They said that religious and nationalist parties were responsible for the backwardness of Balochistan.

They said that the fate of Pakistan and people of the country could not be altered unless revolutionary changes were brought about in the system, adding that fair, impartial and transparent election in the country could bring a change in the country.

PML-N board interviews candidates from Lahore division

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Parliamentary Board on Saturday held interviews of candidates from Lahore division.

PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President Shehbaz Sharif presided over the meeting of the parliamentary board. In a meeting held on December 27, interviews of candidates for two national and four provincial

constituencies of Lahore division were held. In today's meeting, candidates for 12 national and 26 provincial constituencies of Lahore division were interviewed. In next meetings of the board matters pertaining to awarding of tickets would be finalized. PML-N leaders including Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz, Senator Ishaq Dar, Rana Sanaulah and others.

43 died in firing incidents in 2023

KARACHI (INP): Karachi has experienced a staggering increase in fire incidents, resulting in a loss of billions of rupees and the tragic deaths of 43 innocent citizens in Karachi during 2023. According to the annual report compiled by the Fire Brigade Department, a total of more than 2150 fire incidents have occurred in the city throughout the year.

The report reveals a month-by-month breakdown, indicating that 356 fire incidents were reported in January, followed by 170 in February and 186 in March. April saw 170 incidents, May 178, June 124, and July 128. August recorded 100 incidents, September 103, and a significant rise in October with 181 fire incidents. November and December reported 239 and 250 incidents, respectively.

Among the 29 fire stations of the Fire Brigade Department, Sadar Fire Sta-

tion received the highest number of fire complaints with 186, followed by Central Fire Station with 154 and Nazimabad Fire Station with 152. Notably, Buffalo Colony and Emergency Rescue Hawkes Bay Fire Stations remained inactive, receiving no fire complaints.

However, the Superhighway and New Truck Base Fire Stations reported the lowest number of fire complaints, each recording only 2 incidents. Despite the comparatively low number of reported incidents, these incidents resulted in substantial financial losses and the tragic loss of precious lives.

The report highlights the human toll of these incidents, noting that a total of 42 lives were lost due to burns and suffocation. On April 13, a devastating incident occurred in a garment factory in New Karachi, where 4 firefighters lost their lives while trying to control the fire.



QUETTA: All Pakistan Oil Tanker Owners Association Chairman, Mir Shams Shahwani along with others addresses to media persons during press conference.