

Independent

dailyindisb@gmail.com Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah www.dailyindependent.com.pk Gwadar

Ph: 2841470/2841473 Vol: XVI No. 214, Jamadi-us-Sani 25, 1445 AH Monday January 08, 2024, Pages 04, Price Rs.15

Luncheon hosted for caretaker Ministers & Advisors: Caretaker Govt playing effective role to restore peace, resolve public issues as per mandate, Domki

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the interim government is playing effective role for restoration of peace and resolving the issues faced by the masses, as per its mandate. He said that the development projects pending for longtime are being executed. The inauguration of the communication project of the Quetta Development Package has been made while other ongoing projects would also be inaugurated under Quetta Package soon. The Chief Minister

mentioned that the caretaker provincial government launched the Health Card programme in the province under which more than 2.2 million families got the quality facilities in 1200 hospitals of the country. Moreover, the Sibi-Harnai railway section and Bolan Mail were restored while on the other hand, the computerized local and domicile certificates, heirs certificates and arms licenses were issued. These details were shared by the caretaker Chief Minister while speaking on occasion of the luncheon hosted for the caretaker provincial ministers and Advisors here on Sunday. Mir Ali Mardan Domki said it has been our priority to complete collective nature projects for restoring law and order and resolving the issues of masses. The Chief Minister vowed that we would continue to bring improvement in the governance and serve the masses with sincerity whatever possible in the available time. He praised the caretaker ministers and advisors for utilizing their capabilities to complete the mission of public welfare. The Chief Minister said that we would leave the interim government after

setting correct direction while demonstrating best performance till the last day. The caretaker Provincial Ministers on the occasion appreciated implementation on the collective nature projects, restoration of peace by the interim provincial government under leadership of Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki. They termed performance of the interim government as an exemplary. They vowed to play their due role and use potential for the public welfare continuing the initiatives for resolving their problems in the limited time and available resources.

agreed to his name and he was appointed as the caretaker prime minister. He said he was supported by many people including his teachers to reach the level of attainment in his life. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan would elect their representatives on February 8 and his government would carry out a peaceful transfer of power to them.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki in a group photo with Caretaker Provincial Ministers and Advisors to luncheon hosted by Chief Minister.



KABUL: Ameer Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI) Maulana Fazal ur Rehman along with delegation meeting with Vice Prime Minister Afghanistan Maulvi Abdul Kabeer.

Achakzai welcomes former promising cricketer: Former Intl. cricketer Ahmed Shahzad promises to establish cricket Academy in Quetta

Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information praises Ahmed Shahzad for raising voice for inclusion of Quetta players in PSL

Independent Report
QUETTA: The former international cricketer and member of national squad, Ahmed Shahzad has announced to establish his cricket academy in Quetta for nurturing young cricket talent for the national and international level matches. He said that he wants to bring his (Ahmed Shahzad) cricket academy in Quetta for he would be needing the land and infrastructure. The former international cricketer vowed to contribute to the development of cricket at the grassroots level, providing opportunities for talented

youngsters to receive proper coaching and mentorship, potentially paving the way for future representation in national and international cricket. Ahmed Shahzad was addressing a press conference along with the caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai here at the Sikandar Jamali Auditorium in Civil Secretariat on Sunday. He said that he got lot of love and affection from Quetta, and he would remain connected with it for rest of his life. He said that the manner he was welcomed and

treated is really memorable for him. He went on to say that the love he got from people of Quetta, he did not get anywhere, so he wants to do much for the people of Balochistan. Ahmed Shahzad also mentioned that there is a great potential of cricket among youngsters of the province, what had been lacking the desired opportunities for them to prove it. He said that it would be his utmost endeavour to enable the young cricketers from the province to play in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) as well as the national and international level cricket.



QUETTA: Provincial General Secretary Mulin League (N) Jamal Shah Kakar along with other leaders lead the rally to launch of the Balochistan Election campaign.

Balochistan set to initiate 7-day anti-polio campaign to vaccinate around 2.6 million children

Independent Report
QUETTA: Ali is set to initiate seven-day anti-polio campaign in Balochistan from today (Monday). The Coordinator Emergency Operation Center (EOC) for Eradication of Polio in Balochistan, Syed Zahid Shah told that all the necessary arrangements have been finalized for the polio immunization campaign in the province. According to the EOC Coordinator, approximately 2.596 million children below five years of age would be administered anti-polio vaccine in all districts of the province. In all 11,399 teams have been formed to achieve the target of immunization in the province. These are included 9,116 mobile teams, 958 fixed site teams and 630 transit points teams. The EOC Coordinator

mentioned that all the anti-polio teams participating in the elections would be provided wholehearted security during the campaign. He informed that no fresh polio case been reported since January 2021. However, it is a matter of concern that the polio virus has been detected in the environmental samples of five districts including Quetta, Hub, Pishin, Chaman and Dera Bugti. Syed Zahid Shah said that all available resources are being mobilized to eradicate the polio virus from the province. He mentioned that Balochistan has been polio free province for last two years. In this regard, the sincere efforts made by the polio workers and other concerned have been remarkable, adding he commended.

Spokesman says: ECP secretary to resume duties after recovery

Independent Report
QUETTA: The preliminary lists of the polling stations of respective election constituencies have been published by all Returning Officers in Balochistan on Sunday. This was announced by the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan in an official statement issued here on Sunday. The PEC said that any voter or candidate can submit the objection on the preliminary lists of polling stations to the District Returning Officers by January 11, 2024. The DROs would give judgments on the objections or suggestions by January 17, 2024. According to the PEC, the final lists of polling stations would be displayed before 15 days of the general elections.

Five killed in firing incident on passenger bus in Parachinar

Independent Report
QUETTA: The preliminary lists of the polling stations of respective election constituencies have been published by all Returning Officers in Balochistan on Sunday. This was announced by the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan in an official statement issued here on Sunday. The PEC said that any voter or candidate can submit the objection on the preliminary lists of polling stations to the District Returning Officers by January 11, 2024. The DROs would give judgments on the objections or suggestions by January 17, 2024. According to the PEC, the final lists of polling stations would be displayed before 15 days of the general elections.

Perpetrators of May 9 incidents facing judicial process: PM Kakar

Says ECP would ensure that nobody should get the impression that any person was made a target for his political affiliation

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Sunday said the incidents of May 9 were still being investigated and action should be taken against those involved in them. He said the Election Commission would ensure that nobody should get the impression that any person was made a target for his political affiliation. To a question, he said the leader of the house and leader of the opposition in the National Assembly

agreed to his name and he was appointed as the caretaker prime minister. He said he was supported by many people including his teachers to reach the level of attainment in his life. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan would elect their representatives on February 8 and his government would carry out a peaceful transfer of power to them.

agreed to his name and he was appointed as the caretaker prime minister. He said he was supported by many people including his teachers to reach the level of attainment in his life. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan would elect their representatives on February 8 and his government would carry out a peaceful transfer of power to them.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai along with National Cricketer Ahmed Shahzad addressing a Press Conference. Provincial Information Secretary Imran Khan is also present.

Don't pay attention to rumours, ECP fully functional: Solangi

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Sunday urged the people not to pay attention to rumours. In a post on his social media platform X, the minister while sharing a press release of the Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP), said that the Secretary Election Commission was facing some health issues for sometime. "We pray to Allah for his complete and speedy recovery", the Federal Minister of Information said. The minister said that ECP was fully functional and there was no crisis of any kind.

Social media giants, services face disruptions as internet disrupted across Pak

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD (INP): Internet services were disrupted across Pakistan as users reported difficulties accessing popular social media platforms, including X, Facebook and YouTube on Sunday, Internet Monitor Downdetector said. According to Downdetector, the social media platforms, especially the website versions have been down shortly after 5pm local time. Users in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad began experiencing difficulties accessing social media sites shortly after 4pm. Additionally, users also complained about sluggish internet services. A sharp rise in connection outages on YouTube, X and Facebook was seen in downdetector's graphs. The reason behind the widespread disruption is yet not clear as the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has not issued any statement. Netizens expressed frustration over difficulties connecting to platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube.

Fazal in Afghanistan to discuss regional security issues

Independent Report
KABUL (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday reached Kabul, Afghanistan to hold talks on regional and security issues amid a spike in cross-border attacks. According to party spokesperson, the JUI-F chief - who is on maiden visit to Afghanistan in nearly 10 years - was welcomed by interim Afghan Foreign Minister Ameer Khan Fazl last visited Afghanistan in 2013 and met then-president Hamid Karzai. In a post on X (formerly Twitter), the JUI-F said Fazlur Rehman departed for Afghanistan with a high-level delegation of party leaders, including Maulana Abdul Wasil,

Maulana Salahuddin, Maulana Jamaluddin, Maulana Salimuddin Shamzai, Aslam Ghauri and others. During the visit, Fazlur Rehman will hold meetings with the Afghan Taliban leaders and discuss the regional and security situation, the statement noted. It is pertinent to mention here that the representative of the Taliban government and Afghan envoy in Islamabad had officially invited Maulana Fazlur Rehman a few days ago to visit Afghanistan on behalf of his government. Relations between the Taliban government and Pakistan have seen a rapid deterioration after an increase in terrorist attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Bilawal says we will take back Lahore of Bhuttos from Patwaris

Independent Report
LAHORE (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said he will take back Lahore of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to old politicians and Patwaris with the support of poor people of the city. Bilawal addressed a gathering of party workers in the National Assembly constituency NA-127.

Bilawal said Lahore don't need Patwaris and he just wants the support of the poor classes of the city to quench their hunger. Bilawal also enthusiastically added, "Ab Hum Un



Bilawal said the city of Lahore is not the Lahore of any businessman or a cricket player, it is the Lahore of Shaheed Bhutto and it is everyone's misunderstanding to scare the PPP [leadership and workers] by martyring its Jialas (workers) and Bibi Benazir K Ghar Main Ghus K Marain Geey" (Now we will punish them after entering their house). He said he wanted to tell the old politicians that the victory in the elections was for Shaheed Benazir Bhutto and the people of Lahore only.

Bilawal said Lahore don't need Patwaris and he just wants the support of the poor classes of the city to quench their hunger. Bilawal also enthusiastically added, "Ab Hum Un

Preliminary lists of polling stations published by ROs in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The preliminary lists of the polling stations of respective election constituencies have been published by all Returning Officers in Balochistan on Sunday. This was announced by the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan in an official statement issued here on Sunday. The PEC said that any voter or candidate can submit the objection on the preliminary lists of polling stations to the District Returning Officers by January 11, 2024. The DROs would give judgments on the objections or suggestions by January 17, 2024. According to the PEC, the final lists of polling stations would be displayed before 15 days of the general elections.

Independent Report
QUETTA: The preliminary lists of the polling stations of respective election constituencies have been published by all Returning Officers in Balochistan on Sunday. This was announced by the Provincial Election Commissioner of Balochistan, Ejaz Anwar Chohan in an official statement issued here on Sunday. The PEC said that any voter or candidate can submit the objection on the preliminary lists of polling stations to the District Returning Officers by January 11, 2024. The DROs would give judgments on the objections or suggestions by January 17, 2024. According to the PEC, the final lists of polling stations would be displayed before 15 days of the general elections.



QUETTA: Senior Politician, Nawabzada Haji Lashkari Raisani cutting ribbon during the inauguration ceremony of Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) Election Office, in Quetta.

Political parties urged to make efforts to address issues related to minorities' rights

Independent Report
QUETTA (APP): Center for Social Justice (CSJ) and Minority Forum Pakistan organized a public assembly titled "Effective Representation of Minorities in Elections" organized in Quetta as part of the mobilization and advocacy campaign launched in connection with the elections 2024. The event was joined by representatives of the political parties including Rauf Lala from Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party, Agha Gul from National Party, Anita Irfan from Pakistan Muslim League-N and representative from Jamiat Ulema Islam-F who presented the position of their political parties regarding minorities rights and agreed to take practical steps to address the outstanding issues faced by minorities. Executive Director of CSJ Peter Jacob stated that public representatives asso-

ciated with political parties required public opinion and support to introduce legislation regarding any matter concerning human rights, so that the public could keep an eye on the progress of political representatives and convince them to take steps to address the human rights challenges, said a news release issued here the other day. Suneel Malik presented the findings of the manifest assessment report "Promises to Keep and Miles to Go" regarding the assessment of the Delivery of the Pledges about Minorities' Rights in Elections Manifestos, and added that political parties have failed to take effective actions to fulfill the pledges they make before elections. He further added that the political parties must not forget their commitments to the electorate, instead, they must focus on actions to implement the pledges.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Commendable work

Thankfully, at least some of the checks and balances safeguarding the electoral process appear to be working as intended. There have been encouraging updates from all over the country about appellate tribunals reviewing and, in most cases, overturning the rejection of nomination papers by various returning officers.

Though the process is still ongoing, the tribunals have already cleared the path for scores of candidates who had previously been disbarred from participating in elections on various grounds. The rejection of papers, described in some contexts as "wholesale" and "based on flimsy reasoning" by observers, had disproportionately affected those who have been critical of the state, especially the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. By the time the initial scrutiny was completed, most of the PTI's strongest candidates had been knocked out. This was followed by complaints that ROs in some constituencies had also withheld copies of their decisions, allegedly to prevent them from being appealed on time.

It now appears that many of those affected may have been right about being wronged. At least one judge hearing the appeals, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, is reported to have made remarks to the effect that the ROs in Islamabad and Rawalpindi had, in the majority of cases, rejected papers over petty issues which could have been resolved within five to 10 minutes in their offices. The question does arise as to why such hasty decisions were taken in the first place, but the affected candidates may take heart knowing that the appellate tribunals seem to be working independently and without fear or favour. As a result of the tribunals' decisions, many from PTI's top-tier leadership — what remains of it — are now back in the running. They include well-known names like Hammad Azhar, Atif Khan, Firdous Shamim Naqvi and Zulfi Bukhari, as well as other, less-prominent ones. Though appeals filed by some other big names have been turned down, the party remains committed to participating in the elections, and it seems it will find a way to make do.

The work of the appellate tribunals is commendable as it has restored a sense of fairness after the ugliness that marred the formal start of the electoral process.

From snatching of papers to abductions of candidates, instances of state interference had been widely documented, casting a dark shadow on the legitimacy of the upcoming polls.

With the tribunals acting sensibly, a significant portion of the controversies surrounding the pending election will now die down, allowing parties and candidates to focus on their campaigns and strategise for their wins. With both local and international analysts repeatedly underscoring that a free and fair election is the only way out of the crises Pakistan is mired in, any effort to ensure that the exercise remains free of controversy should be encouraged and celebrated.

Not a new normal



Muna Khan

I tested positive for Covid on the first day of the new year in New York. It is not an ideal start to the year, or holiday, but the period of isolation so far has brought many reflections.

The most obvious is that the pandemic is not over.

Last Sunday, the technical leader to the World Health Organisation's Covid-19 response, Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, reaffirmed on X that Covid remains a global health threat.

"[This new phase] is marked by reduced impact compared to the peak of Covid 19 a few years ago, but it's still a global health threat and it's still a pandemic causing far too many (re)infections, hospitalisations, deaths and long covid when tools exist to prevent them."

Yet this has not received the media attention it deserves.

At the time of my writing, the United States is facing the second biggest surge of the pandemic according to data from the Centres for Disease Control.

The surge is expected to peak next week with an estimated two million infections per day and estimates that one in three people will get Covid. People must take precautions, especially masking, but masks alone have become a divisive issue here. Many people cite "science" that claims masks are ineffective in preventing the spread.

This is why the media's role in public messaging is critical right now, yet its focus is on other issues.

Professor Eric Topol's op-ed in The Los Angeles Times on Thursday should sound alarm bells for policymakers, certainly in the US, who "are still playing make-believe" about the current wave atop of high cases of the flu and respiratory virus.

The current JN.1 variant "has continued its evolution with mutations adapted for infecting or re-infecting us," writes Topol. But, he offers some good news: the latest booster in the US "provided protection from hospitalisation in the range of about 60 per cent against JN.1 and other recently circulating variants." Even those who had not gotten this booster were protected from hospitalisations or visits to the ER.

The bad news is that only 19pc of Americans have received the latest booster, so far. This is the tragic face of health inequities.

The United States isn't alone in its "state of denialism and general refusal to take simple steps to reduce the risk of infection," writes Topol. Countries all over the world are not acting on Covid mitigation strategies. There's a need to resume testing, data collection and public guidelines (like masking) backed by trusted science sources.

We know masks, air filtration and proper ventilation work against variants. When combined with vaccinations and testing, "we have layers of defense that work effectively together, no matter how the virus evolves. The key is to do it all, not rely on only one," writes molecular biologist Dr Lucky Tran.

In fact, he recently posted an image of a rapid test that checks for SARS-CoV-2, RSV, Adenovirus, M.pneumoniae, and influenza. It isn't approved in most countries but "imagine if governments

provided this for free to the people!"

But governments like Joe Biden's are more interested in securing a second term and giving their ally Israel a free pass to co-mit more atrocities. "This passivity re-infuses the illusion that the pandemic is be-h-i-nd us when it's actually raging," writes Topol.

Since isolating, Topol's piece is one of the few I've come across on a mainstream media outlet about the dangers this wave poses. Friends in Karachi say they're hearing about a rise in cases there, too. My chacha called a public hospital in Karachi to ask about boosters but was told there are none and no plans afoot to get them either.

At least protect the most vulnerable — the elderly, the poor, the immunocompromised. Relaunch the NCOE and resume data collection so it can be used to understand the virus and prepare strategies to combat it.

The journalist Ed Yong, who covered the pandemic in 2020, wrote about watching publications he once respected "become complicit in normalising a level of death once billed as incalculable."

In a piece for The New York Times last month he wrote: "In this status quo, people are expected to ignore the threat of infection, pay through the nose if they get sick and face stigma and ridicule if they become disabled. Journalism can and should repudiate that bargain." Yong reminds us that Covid isn't just a health problem, it is a social one. Journalists must ensure this story is told and let people feel everyone's health matters. Until those that matter take note and take action. -- Courtesy Dawn

Complex conflict



Aizzaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Three months into the war in Gaza, thousands of Palestinians, including a large number of children, have been martyred by the Israeli Defence Forces. What is the end goal of Israel for which it has unleashed unprecedented death and destruction? Israel's stated objective is that it wants to destroy Hamas. This is not credible because Israel is meting out genocide-like collective punishment to all Palestinians, and not just Hamas. Is Israel's goal, then, to create a 'greater Israel' by forcibly pushing the Palestinians into neighbouring Arab countries or elsewhere? If that be the objective, Israel has certainly overestimated what its brutal force can achieve, and underestimated the resilience of Palestinians, who seem determined not to leave the land on which their ancestors had lived for millennia.

The Palestine-Israel conflict is a complex issue. One land, two claimants: Jews and Palestinians. Both cite history to consolidate their claim to the land. The roots of this conflict lie in the decision of the British in 1917, called Balfour Declaration, to settle the Jews of Europe in Palestine. Once a sufficient number of Jews had reached Palestine and displaced the local Arab population, the British took the matter to the UN in 1947, where it was agreed to have two separate states, Palestine and Israel. However, Israel has never allowed the two-state solution to work. Instead, it has imposed an apartheid-like occupation on the helpless Palestinians.

The issue also has an ideological dimension. The state of Israel was created for the Jews of the world. The name itself comes from Hazrat Yaquob (Jacob), the son of Hazrat Ishaq, and grandson of Hazrat Ibra-him. Hazrat Yaquob was also called Israel, and his descendants as Bani Israel. His successors included Hazrat Daud (David) and his son Hazrat Suleiman, both of whom built large kingdoms in this territory. Prophet Moses rescued the Bani Israel and brought them to this land from Egypt. All these Prophets are equally sacred for Muslims. Add to that the Masjid al-Aqsa, which was the Qibla-i-Awwal. Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to Heaven (Mairaj) from this mosque.

Israel has no right to deny Muslim Palestinians the right to live in the lands which they hold in such holy esteem.

Israel continues to justify its atrocities in the name of "self-defence". The Hamas action of October 7, 2023 did not take place in a vacuum as the UN secretary general had rightly remarked. The Palestinians are under brutal occupation. The Hamas action was an act of resistance against the occupying force, which is permissible under international law.

Israel's indiscriminate firing on Palestinian houses, schools, and hospitals has elicited massive protests not only in Arab or Muslim countries, but all across, including in the United States. Yet, Israel is not ready to listen to these voices. One reason for such a ferocious Israeli response could be that there is domestic criticism for not anticipating the Hamas attack. Further, Netanyahu wants to look strong as his domestic popularity is declining. The firm support of the US may have also emboldened the Israeli leadership. Another reason could be that Arabs and Muslims could not

display enough unity to take tangible actions against Israel, such as boycotting Israeli products or even cutting off diplomatic ties.

Nevertheless, pressure is now mounting on Israel. The US cannot continue to ignore the loud calls of the international community for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Some European countries, like the UK, stand with Israel, but their people are agitating against the relentless bombardment of civilians in Gaza. Israel is also suffering a heavy financial cost of the war. Many businesses have closed down in Israel. A major setback for Israel is that the Arab-Israeli normalisation process has halted.

The US influence in the Middle East has also received a setback. The Arab world, including the Gulf countries, are now looking ever more inclined to explore other options for their security needs.

The US has also been widely criticised for casting its veto, thus paralyzing the United Nations from playing a role in stopping the war in Gaza, an objective supported by 153 countries of the world. It is high time for the Biden administration to revisit its unqualified support to Israel. Given the unwavering resolve of the Palestinians, Netanyahu's dream of creating a greater Israel is not likely to succeed, but he and his right-wingers are surely destined to go into history books as the most ruthless and heartless regime. Pakistan has consistently supported the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Pakistan has also not formally recognised the state of Israel. There have been some voices in the country for doing so. However, after the recent war in Gaza, there is even less likelihood that Pakistan would recognise Israel. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

VP PBF says: Regional Trade Agreements vital to reinvigorate growth

LAHORE (INP): Vice President, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad has said that devising regional trade agreements among South Asian countries was need of the hour to improve the economic well beings of billions of people; though Pakistan's regional trade was below the desired level which needs to be seen in whole prospective before SIFC.

He said, "In international relations it is a common axiom that a state can change its friends but it cannot replace its neighbours due to geographical compulsions. If neighbours cannot be

replaced, ideally a state should enjoy at least cordial relations with its surrounding states if not the best relations".

Talking to the members of FPCCI here on Sunday, Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said that Pakistan must start putting sustainable and inclusive economic growth, above all we must create a cycle of profligacy and austerity.

As the average annual economic growth between 2010 and 2023 has been lackluster, around 4 percent, and has been accompanied by a rise in Pakistan's total debt as a share of its GDP, from 55 percent to 76 percent.



GILGIT: A vendor selling a traditional steel fire stove to the customer at his work place.

Shahid Rasheed says: Pakistani businessmen milking masses against developed countries

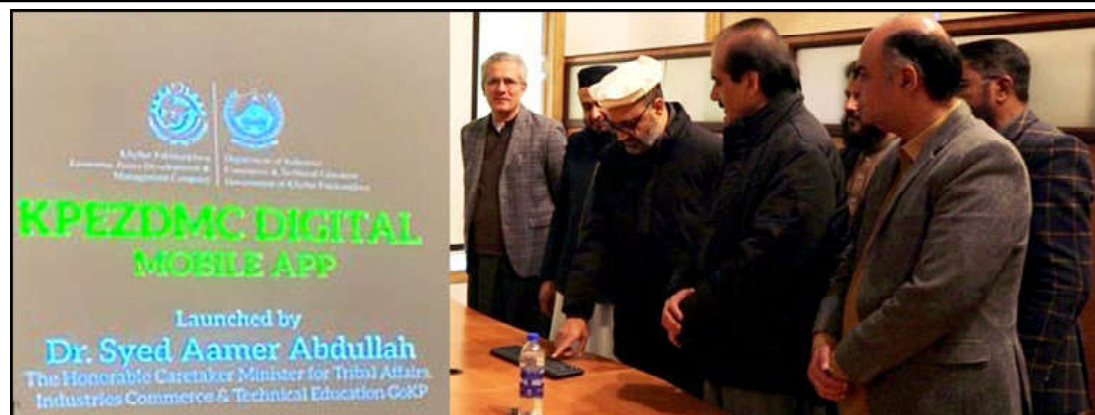
ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed

Butt has said that exploitation of rights of citizens was not allowed in developed countries but business in Pakistan was unthinkable without exploitation.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that key sectors and industries were operated without any regulatory oversight in Pakistan, allowing businessmen to rob the

masses and promote poverty in the country.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that in developed countries, no business was allowed to exploit the people and if it was done, it was made an example but the majority of businesses in Pakistan were milking the masses. Irresponsible and greedy people, whose only aim was to make money, exploit people in the name of business, as most of the big businesses were in their hands, he added.



KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamer Abdullah formally launching Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) digital mobile app.

Freelancers to now receive their payments through PayPal: Minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif on Sunday announced that freelancers would now receive their payments through PayPal.

In a video message, he said that it had been a longstanding demand of freelancers to have access to PayPal for easier payment receipt in Pakistan.

The minister clarified, "While PayPal itself is not coming to Pakistan, an agreement has been reached where remittances would be channeled through

PayPal via a third party." "Under the newly devised program, freelancers will not need to open a PayPal account. Instead, individuals outside the country will make payments from their PayPal accounts, and the funds will be promptly deposited into the freelancers' accounts," the minister explained.

He said that under the nation's first space policy approved by the federal cabinet, international companies would be allowed to provide communication services through low-orbit communication

satellites. Saif said that satellite communication technology was advancing rapidly and many private companies in the world wanted to provide communication services through low-orbit satellites.

"Satellites used to be geostationary, far away from the land. They are useful for broadcasting TV signals but communicating is difficult because there is latency," he said.

Saif said that communication services and internet services could be offered through low-

orbit satellites, which were relatively closer.

He said that there had been a lot of development in this regard in the private sector.

"So now it has become possible for communication services in Pakistan to be provided through satellites and the private sector has this technology," he said.

He said the National Space Policy would enable private sector companies to "offer affordable internet services in Pakistan while enabling increased investment in our national space program".

Silwat says: Business Facilitation Centre to be functional soon

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed said on Sunday the Business Facilitation Centre would be made functional soon to facilitate the business community of Faisalabad.

Addressing an online meeting with caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries SM Tanveer, she said a state-of-the-art business facilitation centre was established at Commissioner's Complex to resolve business related issues speedily.

KP-EZDMC launches mobile app to facilitate investors

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) has launched a digital mobile app to make the services of the company easily accessible to investors and industrialists.

The launching of the digital mobile app is being considered a milestone towards the facilitation of investors and industrialists as the required services, facilities and information of the company would now be available on it. With this initiative, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become

the first province in the country, to introduce such a unique kind of comprehensive and useful app for industrialization in the public sector. The app was formally launched by the KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Dr Aamer Abdullah at the headquarters of KP-EZDMC, the other day, said an official press release issued here on Sunday. Besides, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KP-EZDMC, Javed Iqbal Khattak, and other senior management of the company were also present on the occasion.

It is worth to mention here that the Provincial Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Dr Aamer Abdullah had assigned this task of online availability of the services to the company, which has been achieved by the IT section of the company within a short period of two weeks. Addressing the launching ceremony of the app, the provincial minister appreciated the performance of the management and whole team of the company and termed it a visible step towards the facilitation of industrialists and investors of the industrial sector in the province.

SNGPL cuts off another 347 connections for gas theft

LAHORE (APP): In a relentless effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) conducted a series of targeted raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Islamabad.

During the crackdown, around 347 unauthorised connections were disconnected, and fine of Rs 3.47 million were imposed. SNGPL's spokesperson told media here on Sunday, in Lahore, the regional team disconnected 13 connections on illegal use of gas while another 23 on use of compressor. In Rawalpindi and

Islamabad the team disconnected 98 connections on illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.30 million have been booked against gas theft cases. In Multan 25 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 25 on use of compressor. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.050 million against gas theft cases.

In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 93 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 3.05 million against gas theft cases.



KARACHI: A vendor is displayed fancy plants pots attraction for customers at his roadside setup Kumhar Wara area in Provincial Capital.

PIEDMC directed to submit report on 5000 acres Rwp Economic Zone

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has directed the Punjab Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) authorities to complete the survey of the 5000 acres Economic Zone site on the Rawalpindi Ring Road and submit a report next week.

According to a Commissioner's office spokesperson, a delegation of PIEDMC during a meeting with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta gave a detailed

presentation on the proposed site at Rawalpindi Ring Road Economic Zones and the facilities to be provided to the businessmen.

The task of site survey for establishing an economic zone on 5000 acres land along the Rawalpindi Ring Road had been given to PIEDMC Lahore, the Commissioner informed. The officers concerned were also instructed to arrange a visit of the PIEDMC delegation immediately to the site and provide them with all the necessary information and support.

Governor KP underlines important role of graduates in healthcare development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Sunday recognized the important role of graduates in the ongoing development of healthcare and emphasized the importance of their contribution to the wider healthcare landscape.

He said this while addressing the first annual convocation 2024 of Khyber Medical University (KMU)-IMS and Kohat Institute of Dental Sciences (KIDS).

He said that the role of medical and dental graduates play in shaping the wider healthcare landscape is commendable.

Chief Guest Governor Haji Ghulam Ali congratulated the graduates of Medical and Dental

Colleges and Gold Medalists. He appreciated their unwavering dedication to medical knowledge and their outstanding efforts.

Highlighting the importance of the convocation, the Governor thanked VC KMU Prof. Dr. Ziaul Haq, Principals and all the attendees for making the event a memorable gathering for teachers, proud graduates, parents and distinguished guests.

During the ceremony, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali announced that 286 students were awarded MBBS and BDS degrees.

He termed awarding gold medals to 200 students as a great honor for colleges, KMU, and their parents.

The Governor

praised the important role of KIMS, KIDS, and KMU in shaping the future healthcare workforce.

He said that these graduates will use their tireless efforts and ability to raise the quality of healthcare not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but in the whole of Pakistan.

Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, in his welcome speech, described the participation of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other distinguished guests in this convocation ceremony as wonderful.

He also deeply acknowledged the continuous support from the parents and congratulated the all medical and dental graduates.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of 30-members tribal elites of merged District Mhmand meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

Feroze Shah pays homage to Kargil Hero Captain Karnel Sher Shaheed

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: In a solemn and respectful visit, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, the Caretaker Minister of Information and Public Relations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, undertook a detailed visit to the shrine of the revered Kargil war hero, Captain Karnel Sher Khan Shaheed Nishan-e-Haider.

During the visit, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel laid wreaths, recited Fatiha, and documented his reflections in a commemorative book. Expressing gratitude for

the opportunity, he conveyed, "It is my good fortune to recite Fatiha at the martyr's grave. Such brave individuals bring immense joy to the lives of nations."

The caretaker minister also extended condolences to the family of Captain Karnel Sher Khan, emphasizing the profound significance of the sacrifices made by the martyrs.

He remarked, "Captain Colonel Sher Khan Shaheed is the pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the only son who courageously earned Nishan Haider.

CM orders early completion of Children Hospital upgrade

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Children Hospital and reviewed progress on the upgradation work of the medical facility.

On the direction of the CM, upgradation work in the emergency, main corridor and other wards of the hospital has been expedited. The chief minister inspected the main corridor, reception counter and checked the quality of work and directed to ensure quality along with undertaking preventive measures in the electricity and air conditioning wiring work. He directed to

complete the wiring work in three days and early completion of tiles installation work in the main corridor.

Mohsin Naqvi lauded the performance of the Secretary Communication & Works, Secretary Health and their team on undertaking swift work in the main corridor. He met with the labourers working late night and commended them for working with diligence. He issued directions for early completion of the ongoing upgradation work.

Mohsin Naqvi said that task for the provision of better facilities in more than 100 hospitals of Punjab would be

completed by 31st January. "The whole team is striving day and night to accomplish this task. The fruit of hard work with a noble intention would definitely be passed on to the people," he maintained. The Secretary C&W and Secretary Health gave a briefing about the work being done under the upgradation project. He said that installation of tiles and finishing work had been started.

Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir, Secretary C&W, Secretary Health, Commissioner Lahore, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were also present.

Secretary of Relief pays visit to Rescue 1122 office in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Relief, Rehabilitation, and Settlement Department KPK Anayatullah Waseem paid a visit to the Rescue 1122 district office in Abbottabad on Sunday. District Emergency Officer Arif Khatak gave a detailed overview of the emergency services offered and the collaborative efforts with various departments to ensure effective service delivery.

In discussions with the Rescue 1122 personnel, Secretary Relief Anayatullah Waseem highlighted that Rescue 1122 stands as a formidable force equipped with modern technology and a dedicated team.

The organization is committed to providing equal and efficient emergency services to the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Rescue personnel, possessing extensive practical knowledge, strive to deliver

timely and optimal assistance during emergencies.

Anayatullah Waseem emphasized the active involvement of Rescue 1122 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the leadership of Director General Rescue 1122, Dr. Khateer Ahmad.

The organization operates tirelessly, ensuring the provision of services around the clock in a manner that reflects a well-organized daily routine.

Moreover, Rescue 1122 collaborates with security forces, district administration, and other institutions to implement a comprehensive policy aimed at delivering services to the public.

The administration of Rescue 1122 is also taking diverse measures to enhance the welfare and well-being of its personnel, ensuring a promising and secure future for them.

29 cases referred to drug court

FAISALABAD (APP): The District Quality Control Board (DQCB) has referred cases of 29 clinics to drug courts for further proceedings.

During its meeting held with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh in the chair, the Board heard 56 cases and issued warnings to owners of 18 medical clinics whereas cases of nine clinics were adjourned to the next meeting as record of these cases was not completed yet.

5 children hospitalized for suffocation

FAISALABAD (APP): Five children of a family were hospitalized due to suffocation in the Samundri police limits.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a family had lighted a fire in their house to beat the cold but the fire caused suffocation.

Breaking shackles of poverty through welfare projects

PESHAWAR (APP): In a foggy morning, Zakir Khan, an impoverished fruit seller, starts his rickshaw journey from his mud house in the outskirts of the provincial metropolitan to Peshawar's fruit market hoping to purchase apples, guavas, bananas, and other fruits on reasonable rate to support his eight-member family.

Assisted by his son Asadullah Khan, the 65-year-old vendor, donned in traditional attire - woolen Chadar and Chitrali cap, starts his day with Fajr prayer and after having breakfast, rushes to Chamkani fruit market in Peshawar expecting to get fresh fruits through open auction on reasonable prices and anticipates a profitable sale in the local

market.

After purchasing fruits, he unloads his fruits-packed rickshaw at his hand cart in Pabbi fruits market at Nowshera after covering 15-kilometer distance from Peshawar and working till night. "I have been associated with the painstaking fruit seller business since my childhood and recently my two sons Arifullah Khan and Asadullah Khan have started assisting me to sell all stock before night," he said.

"It is an extremely challenging business and sometimes he suffers financial losses in case fruits are not sold on time," he said, adding that due to exorbitant prices of the fruits many customers just ask about prices of different fruits and return

empty handed.

"Last year, citrus of Khanpur tehsil of Haripur and Manki Sharif of Nowshera districts was available at Rs180 per dozen that has now jumped to Rs 250 per dozen in local market with start of new year while apples per kg were sold at Rs200 per last year against Rs250 this year making difficult to continue this hard earned business due to discouraging response of consumers and poverty," he said.

"I have come to purchase fruits for birthday party of my granddaughter, but the prices were sky-high this morning and will come again at night hoping for reduction of prices of apple, guava and banana to celebrate the event with

great pomp and show," said Riazul Haq, a retired teacher while talking to APP at Pabbi fruit market.

Complaining about soaring prices of fruits and vegetables with the start of the new year in the local market, he said that district administration failed to regularly check fruits prices at market and take strict action against price hikers and hoarders.

"Poverty is the mother of all social ills including illiteracy, corruption, street crimes, drugs addiction and unemployment besides creating socio-economic imbalances in the society," said Professor Dr Muhammad Naem, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar.

He said that

thousands of youth were being graduated by the public and private sectors universities every year and could not find suitable jobs due to our outdated education system and lack of coordination between government departments, educational institutions and industries in terms of jobs creations, as result, increase in poverty ratio in recent years.

Professor Naem while quoting a World Bank report said that the poverty ratio has raised from 34.21 per cent in 2022 to 39.41 per cent in 2023, pushing 12.5 million people below poverty line. He said that Pakistan labour market was yet to recover fully from the 2022 devastated floods, COVID-19 pandemic and shabby economic situation.

International News

On Orthodox Christmas Putin vows to back soldiers who 'defend' Russia

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin vowed on the eve of Orthodox Christmas to back soldiers who "with arms in hands" defend Russia's interests, ordering his government greater support of those who fight and calling on his people to be merciful and just.

"Many of our men, our courageous, heroic guys, Russian warriors, even now, on this holiday, defend the interests of our country with arms in hand," Putin said at a late Saturday meeting with

families of Russian soldiers who have died in Ukraine.

Russia lunched its full-scale invasion on Ukraine in February 2022, in what Kyiv and its Western allies said was an unprovoked imperialist land grab.

Nearly two years later, the war, which has killed thousands and displaced millions, has shifted to increased air strikes at each other's territories as both sides have struggled to make significant gains along the frontline.

State television footage showed the Russian leader attending with a small group of families of soldiers killed an intimate mid-night service, known as the Divine Liturgy, later on Saturday at a chapel at his residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow.

There was no call from Putin this year for a ceasefire in Ukraine to coincide with the holiday, which many Orthodox Christians celebrate on Jan. 6-7 - as was the case a year ago.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends the Orthodox Christmas liturgy at a cathedral on the territory of the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow, Russia.



An elderly woman puts ballot paper inside a ballot box after casting her vote in the morning during the 12th general election in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Global food prices eased 10pc in 2023, says Food and Agriculture Organisation

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Global food prices experienced a notable decline in 2023, further easing concerns over food inflation worldwide.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported on Friday that its Food Price Index (FFPI) concluded the year over 10 per cent below its December 2022 level.

The index fell to 118.5, the lowest since February 2021, down 1.5pc from November and 10.1pc from December 2022. The overall in-

dex for 2023 was 13.7pc lower than the average value for 2022. Notably, the international sugar price index was the only one higher over the year, despite experiencing a significant drop of 16.6pc in December due to increased sugar production in Brazil and reduced use of sugarcane for ethanol production in India.

The Cereal Price Index saw a 1.5pc increase in December 2023, driven by rising prices of wheat, maize, rice, and barley, primarily due to shipment limitations faced by exporters.

Americans divided on US role in Mideast crisis

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A recent Gallup survey shows that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is rapidly becoming unpopular in the United States, so is the war he has unleashed on Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

The survey's assessment of Americans' views on Netanyahu, who faces charges of fraud, bribery, and breach of trust are getting increasingly unpopular. Netanyahu's unfavourable rating of 47 per cent surpasses his favorable rating of 33pc, marking a significant reversal in trend since 2019.

Republicans continue to view him more favorably (55pc), while Democrats (14pc) and independents (30pc) show lower favourability.

The poll, conducted from Dec 1 to Dec 20, 2023, provides insights into public opinions on the level of US engagement, approval of Israel's military actions, and perceptions of support for Israel and the Palestinians.

Gaza has simply become 'uninhabitable', says UN

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israel bombed southern Gaza on Saturday as the UN warned that the besieged Palestinian territory has been rendered "uninhabitable" by three months of war.

Top Western diplomats were in the region as part of a fresh push to boost the flow of aid into Gaza and address mounting fears of a wider conflict.

The Egyptian Red Cr-c-scent on Friday said 1,200 water purifiers, 100 oxygen cylinders, one oxygen generator, 1,000 solar-powered items, 24 power generators and 418 medical supplies had been blocked by Israel from reaching Gaza since the conflict started. The fighting, triggered by the October 7 attacks on southern Israel by Hamas, has sent tensions soaring across the region, and shows no signs of abating with the conflict entering its fourth month.

Civilians in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip have borne the brunt of the violence as the scale of the destruction has triggered mass displacement and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Jordanian army says it killed 5 drug smugglers in clashes on the Syrian border

Monitoring Desk
AMMAN: The Jordanian army said Saturday that it killed five drug and weapon smugglers and arrested 15 in a day of clashes with armed groups of smugglers attempting to cross into Jordan from Syria. The army statement said the clashes broke out before dawn between Jordanian border guards and armed organizations "that practice smuggling and rely on systematic infiltration operations."

EU Council President Michel says to step down in July

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Belgian politician Charles Michel has announced he will step down as European Council president after running in the European Parliament elections set for June. The surprise move will heighten speculation about who will be the next EU leaders as negotiations begin for a new round of top jobs in November. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen of Germany, who like Michel was appointed to her post in 2019.

US regulator orders inspections on some Boeing 737 MAX 9 planes after panel blows out mid-flight

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US air safety regulator said on Saturday that it had grounded some versions of Boeing's 737 Max 9 jets pending inspections, causing dozens of flight cancellations a day after a panel blew out of one of the planes over the western US state of Oregon.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "is requiring immediate inspections of certain Boeing 737 Max 9 planes before they can return to flight", the agency said on X.

It added that around 171 aircraft worldwide would be affected, with each inspection taking four to eight hours.

Alaska and United Airlines fly the largest number of Max 9 planes, while Turkish Airlines has a smaller fleet.

As of Sunday, all three airlines had grounded their jets for inspection.

Boeing has so far de-

livered about 218 of the 737 Max planes worldwide, the company told AFP.

US-based Alaska Airlines grounded all 65 of its Boeing 737 Max 9 planes on Friday after a flight carrying 171 passengers and six crew was forced to make an emergency landing.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said a sealed-over door panel had opened and come off mid-flight.

Alaska Flight 1282 had departed from Portland International Airport and was still gaining altitude when the cabin crew reported a "pressurisation issue", according to the FAA.

The plane quickly returned to Portland and there were no major injuries.

Images posted on social media showed a side panel of the plane blown out, with emergency oxygen masks hanging from the ceiling.

Italian foreign minister calls for formation of EU army

Monitoring Desk
ROME: The European Union should form its own combined army that could play a role in peacekeeping and preventing conflict, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said.

In an interview with the Italian newspaper La Stampa, Tajani said that closer European cooperation on defence was a priority for the Forza Italia party that he leads.

"If we want to be peacekeepers in the world, we need a European military. And this is a fundamental precondition to be able to have an effective European foreign policy," he said in an interview published on Sunday.

"In a world with powerful players like the United States, China, India, Russia - with crises from the Middle East to

the Indo-Pacific - Italian, German, French or Slovenian citizens can only be protected by something that already exists, namely the European Union," he added.

European defence cooperation has risen up the political agenda since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine almost two years ago.

However, efforts have been more focused on NATO expansion, with EU nation Finland joining the alliance last year and Sweden also on track to become a member.

Tajani also said the 27-nation EU should streamline its leadership and have a single presidency, rather than the current structure of a European Council president and a European Commission president.



Pakistan Navy Ship escorting merchant vessel in Arabian Sea.

Pak Navy deploys warships in Arabian Sea to ward off attacks by Houthi rebels

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Navy, after recent incidents of breach of maritime security in the Arabian Sea, have deployed their warships.

According to the spokesman for the Pakistan Navy, these ships are constantly patrolling in order to ensure the protection of Pakistan's trade routes.

He has informed that the navy is also conducting aerial surveillance of these routes. "The purpose of patrolling is not only to ensure the safety of Pakistani ships but also those belonging to other coun-

tries," the spokesman has elaborated.

Last month, Yemen-based Houthi rebels had also claimed an attack on a Pakistan-bound ship from Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea.

"Pakistan Navy is well aware of its national responsibility in maintaining maritime peace and order in the region," the statement noted.

Last week India announced it had deployed three warships in the Arabian Sea after a drone hit an "Israel-affiliated" merchant vessel about 200 nautical miles (370km) off the coast

of the western state of Gujarat. No casualties were, however, reported in the attack, which the US blamed on Iran, which the latter dismissed.

Exporters from around the world are in trouble these days because of a spate of attacks on commercial vessels by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.

The rebels who have vowed to avenge the massacre of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli forces, have said they will target any ship passing through the Red Sea that are bound for the Jewish state.



QUETTA: National Cricketer Ahmed Shahzad meeting with Caretaker Provincial Minister for Information Jan Achakzai. Provincial Information Secretary Imran Khan and DGPR Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran are also present.

Shehbaz resolves to restore masses and investors' confidence

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said on Sunday that his party will take all-out steps in a bid to control ballooning inflation.

The former prime minister held a meeting with the party leaders separately. Prominent among those who met Shehbaz Sharif were Khawaja Saad Rafique, Khawaja Salman Rafique, Mian Javed Latif, Atta Manika, Afzal Khokhar, Mohsin Ranjha, Zulfiqar Bhatti, Sardar Irfan Dogar, Malik Saif ul Malook Khokhar, Chaudhry Tufail Jutt, and Ashraf Jutt.

On this occasion, matters pertaining to the party

and the upcoming elections were discussed.

Expressing his thoughts, Shehbaz Sharif said, "We will take revolutionary steps to address the masses' problems."

"Only Nawaz Sharif had fulfilled the promises with the masses. With the exception of the PML-N, all the political parties had deceived the masses," Shehbaz Sharif said.

He expressed his resolve to restore the confidence of the masses and investors. "We will come up with a balanced economic policy," he added.

Few days back, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif directed the party leadership to unveil the economic agenda with the masses.



LAHORE: President PML-N Lahore Saif-ul-Malook meeting with President PML-N and former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Verdict reserves on Imran's appeal against rejection of nomination papers

LAHORE (Online): In the Election Tribunal established in Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench, the verdict was reserved on the appeal against the rejection of the nomination papers of former chairman PTI Imran Khan, which will be heard on January 10. According to the details, Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz heard the appeal while Barrister Ali Zafar represented the former Chairman PTI.

At the beginning of the hearing, Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz asked Barrister Ali Zafar how long will it take you to complete your arguments? To which he replied that I need 45 minutes to complete my arguments.

Barrister Ali Zafar, opening the arguments, told the court that the crime is

in moral turpitude, I will divide my arguments into three parts. Barrister Ali Zafar said that this case is different from the moral turpitude case. Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz remarked that the moral tribute should be discussed first. The tribunal asked whether the details of the items taken from the coffin were given. We are not discussing the merits of the Tosha Khana case here, the money obtained by selling Tosha Khana's items was stated? Barrister Ali Zafar replied that yes it was stated.

Earlier, while talking to the media outside the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi bench, PTI's lawyer Ali Zafar said that it is not moral turpitude, it is a misdeclaration, it cannot be transferred to disqualification.

Wife of Jam becomes active for poll; would contest from NA-257

Independent Report QUETTA: As the election process moves on, the candidates contesting polls are becoming active in Balochistan province as elsewhere in the country.

In Balochistan, some female candidates have also come on the forefront to contest and venture the elections.

Among them is also the wife of former Chief Minister and leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Jam Kamal Khan, Ms. Maria Jam Kamal.

Ms. Maria Jam Kamal is going to contest elections from NA-257 after her husband Jam Kamal decided to contest polls from two constituencies of the provincial assembly i.e., PB-21 & PB-22.

Maria Jam Kamal has submitted her nomination papers as an independent candidate.

Needless to mention here is that it is for the first time that any family member of Jam Kamal and that her wife is taking part in the general elections.

Tragic accident on Hazara motorway takes 6 dead, 8 injured

HARIPUR (APP): At least six persons died and eight others were injured when a passenger van was struck by construction machinery working on the Hazara motorway for maintenance work near the Shah Maqsood interchange, at the same time, another passenger coaster hit the van.

According to the details, a devastating accident unfolded on the Hazara Motorway near Shah Maqsood, two vehicles from Manshera en route to Lahore. The collision involved a flying coach, a speeding passenger van, and construction machinery, resulting in the loss of six lives and leaving eight individuals injured.

The Rescue 1122 Haripur conducted a one-hour operation, successfully extricating individuals trapped in the vehicles following the collision.

SIFC efforts to boost economic stability in Pakistan: Nauman

LAHORE (INP): Appreciating the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) efforts, the business community said on Sunday that the revolutionary measures in the Information Technology field could stabilise the economy of the country in a befitting manner.

The initiatives and steps taken by the SIFC in its recent meeting, especially in the field of Information Technology will enhance exports from 40 to 50 percent exports.

The se were the views expressed by renowned chief of Leading Technol-

ogy Company of Pakistan—Pakistan Tech Entrepreneurs Investor and Information Technology Startups—Nauman Saeed while talking to a delegation of Pakistani investors Sunday.

He said Pakistan's IT industry has great potential to expand their business and our startups need to be able to attract bigger investments. Offering his services, Nauman Saeed said that his forum is ready to submit suggestions and ideas in the field of Information Technology to boost country's exports.

ECP releases list of preliminary polling stations for constituencies

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan has released the preliminary list of polling stations for casting public votes in constituencies across the country.

According to Election Commission of Pakistan's spokesperson, the list of preliminary polling stations according to constituencies has been published, voters and candidates of the constituency can submit objections or suggestions on the preliminary polling list till January 11.

DROs will give verdict on these objections and proposals during January 12 to 17. Election Commission spokesman said that after the decisions on the objections filed on the preliminary lists, the final list of polling stations will be issued 15 days before the general elections.

It should be noted that elections will be held across the country on February 8. Nomination papers have been submitted by the candidates for the general elections.



SHIKARPUR: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shikarpur, Dr. Muhammad Imran Khan along with Rangers Colonel visiting Kacha area where they started search and targeted operation against the criminals.

Tribunal dismiss appeal, Hammad Azhar, Sanam out from electoral field

LAHORE (Online): After the Returning Officer, the Election Tribunal has also rejected the appeals of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Hammad Azhar and Sanam Javed, maintaining the decision of the Returning Officer to reject the nomination papers and both the candidates have been disqualified from the election field.

According to the details, Justice Tariq Nadeem upheld the decision of the returning officer against the former federal member of the National Assembly Hammad Azhar and dismissed the appeal against the rejection of the nomination papers of NA-129 of the President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Punjab.

Hammad Azhar's ineligibility to contest the election will remain after the appeal from the Election Tribunal is dismissed.

Leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf announced to approach the Supreme Court of Pakistan against this verdict of the

Election Tribunal and to participate in the upcoming general elections.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's social media activist Sanam Javed's appeal against rejection of nomination papers was dismissed, with which she was out of the electoral field as the Election Tribunal upheld the verdict of the Returning Officer (RO) to reject the nomination papers of Sanam Javed Khan.

In this regard, the judge of Appellate Tribunal, Justice Tariq Nadeem, gave a verdict on Sanam Javed's appeals, in which the Election Tribunal rejected Sanam Javed's appeal against the rejection of Sanam Javed's papers from NA 119, 120 and PP 150.

Regarding Sanam Javed's papers, the objection said that she signed on December 21 and the papers were submitted before the Returning Officer on December 22. Sanam Javed mentioned a joint account in nomination paper.



QUETTA: Church Missionary Trust Association President, Peter Hami addresses to media persons during press conference, at Quetta press club.

Federal Govt to be contacted for approval of WB's proposed projects from ENEC, says caretaker CM

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the federal government would be contacted for approval of the projects proposed with cooperation of World Bank in the irrigation sector from ECNEC.

This would ensure implementation on the WB's projects without any delay. The caretaker Chief Minister was presiding over the meeting about on-going development projects in irrigation department here on Sunday.

The Additional Chief

Secretary Planning and Development, Abdul Saboor Kakar, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Rashid Razaq Khan, Secretary Irrigation, Hafiz Abdul Majid and other concerned high ups participated in the meeting. The Secretary Irrigation briefed about different development projects including those of World Bank. Addressing the meeting, Chief Minister stressed that it is very necessary to start implementation on the projects of irrigation other line departments so as to ensure correct use of the available resources timely.

In this regard, a special committee led by the Additional Chief Secretary development would ensure implementation on the projects after preparing suggestions, he said.

He also directed to propose projects for over-come the depletion of underground water table.

Moreover, the correct use of available resources should also be ensured to meet the public requirements in irrigation sector under master plan.

The Chief Minister also directed to complete all the schemes of public importance including Bhag

Kachhi water supply scheme within the minimum possible time so that the local people may benefit from them. Meanwhile, the caretaker Chief Minister also chaired high level meeting of Balochistan Development Authority here the same day. The Chairman BDA briefed the meeting about overall performance of the Authority besides the issues being faced by it.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister directed to take steps for bringing improvement in performance of BDA by decreasing the non-development expenditures so as to create balance.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki chaired a meeting to review ongoing projects of Irrigation Department.

SC 9-member larger bench to hear ZAB presidential reference today

ISLAMABAD (Online): A 9-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa will hear the Zulfiqar Bhutto presidential reference on January 8 (today). Notices have also been issued to the parties for this. On the other hand, last week, the People's Party submitted a 108-page written response to the presidential reference against the death sentence of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in the Supreme Court. Lawyer Farooq H. Naik submitted to the Supreme Court on behalf of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. The written reply includes references to various books and also the details of the interview of former Chief Justice Naseem Hasan Shah. Along with the USB and CD of the interview of Chief Justice Naseem Hasan Shah, transcripts of the said interview in English and Urdu have also been submitted.

He said that over a million people do not pay tax at all, adding that unless they are brought into the tax net, it will not be possible to achieve the revenue collection targets.

He said that a policy board consisting of bureaucrats, technocrats and tax experts should be formed which would be able to achieve the goals for the coming years by examining

Senator Abdul Qadir welcomes decision of restructuring FBR

QUETTA (APP): Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Petroleum and Resources and Economic Affairs, Senator Muhammad Abdul Qadir on Sunday welcomed the decision of the restructuring of FBR to make it able to achieve the goals.

In a statement issued here, he said that another major challenge for the FBR is to increase the scope of the tax net.

The Chairman Standing Committee said that the tax machinery would be divided into FBR and FBC. The officers appointed at the district level should ensure 100 percent tax collection in anyway, he added.

He said the promotions and rewards for the best and poorly performing officers in achieving tax collection targets should be implemented.

Abdul Qadir said political interference and transfer posting issues in FBR are adversely affecting the performance of the institution.

The FBR's Policy Board will be consisted on highly qualified experts to run the tax authority in a professional manner, so that the tax collection authority can be run in a professional manner, he said.

Minister says ethnic conflicts to benefit country's enemies

ISLAMABAD (INP): Nawabzada Jamal Raisani said on Sunday that people belonging to different ethnic backgrounds lived in Pakistan.

He was addressing participants of the protest demonstration organised by Balochistan Shuhada Forum outside the Islamabad Press Club.

Holding placards in their hands inscribed with slogans in the favour of their

slain relatives, the protestors shouted slogans against India at the top of their voice.

He said a conspiracy had been hatched to create a rift between different ethnicities in the country. "Have we ever realized that the blood that sheds as a result of this conspiracy benefits our enemies," he added. The minister said that militant outfits like BLA exist in Balochistan.



CHARSADA: President Awami National Party (ANP) Aimal Wali Khan addressing public those who joined party at NA-125 during election campaign.

Traffic accident in Mastung claims life of woman, several injured

QUETTA (APP): One woman was killed while several people were injured on Sunday in an accident on the national highway in the Mastung area of Quetta.

According to a private news channel, a wedding convoy met with a tragic incident as one of the cars overturned, resulting in the loss of a woman's life and leaving several individuals injured, including women and children.

Upon receiving the distress call, both police and rescue teams swiftly reached the scene.

The body and injured were promptly shifted to nearby hospitals and rescue operation was started.

According to rescue officials, the condition of six individuals is reported to be critical. Preliminary investigations suggest that the wedding convoy, en route from Quetta to Mangochar, faced the unfortunate incident due to high-speed circumstances.

Hassan Zehri says: PPP has made great sacrifices for democracy

Independent Report HUB: Senior leader and spokesperson of Pakistan People's Party Asif Ali Zardari and nominated candidate for Balochistan Assembly PB-21 Hub Mir Ali Hassan Zehri has strongly condemned the resolution presented in the Senate to postpone the elections.

He said in a newspaper statement that the resolution presented in the Senate is a conspiracy against the upcoming elections and democracy. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri strongly opposed the proposed resolution and said that the anti-democratic resolution is the personal wish of Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani.

He wants to postpone the elections through their supporters. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that Pakistan Peoples Party created the environment for the elections and PPP was the only political party that fought for the elec-

tions while other parties wanted to escape from the elections. Resolution presented in the Senate is against democracy.

Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that Pakistan Peoples Party has made great sacrifices for democracy and those who block the way of democracy and kill the blood on democracy. He said that tense conditions and weather have been mentioned in the resolution, so it can be seen that the conditions in the last elections were much more serious than today's conditions, but still the elections were held.

If such so-called justifications continue to be presented, then elections cannot be held. The Supreme Court has also confirmed the date of the elections on 8th February and the elections will be held on the decided date and Pakistan Peoples Party will win. PPP workers continue their preparations vigorously.