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Pakistan, Iran resolve to expand ties especially in political & security domains

PM Kakar reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthen bilateral ties with Iran; Both sides have agreed to station liaison officers in Turbat and Zahedan at the earliest date; No doubt militants in Pak-Iran border areas supported by third countries, says Iran FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Monday agreed to further expand cooperation in the shared goals of security, regional stability, trade and economy, adopting a collective approach to address the confronted common challenges.

"Pakistan and Iran have agreed to adopt collective and collaborative approaches to confront the terrorism by fully leverag-

ing the robust institutional mechanism which already exists between the two countries," Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani said in a joint press stakeout after an extensive meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

He said the two sides recognized that the close bilateral relationship was not only imperative for shared prosperity and de-

velopment of the people of the two countries but also an important source of stability for the region.

He said during the meeting, both sides agreed to establish a high level consultative mechanism at the level of foreign ministers.

The two foreign ministers would meet alternatively in both Iran and Pakistan on a regular basis to oversee the progress

that "is being made in various areas of our cooperation", he added.

Stressing the need to address each other's concerns with regard to terrorism, FM Jilani said in that respect the two sides had agreed to station liaison officers on which an agreement was already in place. The liaison officers would be deployed in Turbat and Zahedan, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, in the Federal Capital.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir exchanging views with Amir Abdollahian, Foreign Minister of Iran during meeting held at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

Bench hearing appeal pleas against military court trials of civilians stands dissolved

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) bench hearing intra court appeals against apex court decision on civilian trial in military courts stands dissolved.

The bench has been dissolved as Justice Sardar Tariq Masood has recused him from hearing the case.

The trial of the persons arrested in May 9 and 10 incidents will continue.

Three members judges committee will constitute new larger bench to hear intra court appeals. Justice Sardar Tariq Masood has recused from hearing the case.

A six-member Supreme Court bench led by Justice Sardar Tariq Masood started hearing the intra-court appeals on civilians' military trials. Justice Ameenuddin Khan,

Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Irfan Saadat are also part of the bench. The counsel for Jawad S Khawaja raised objection over bench when it started the hearing on Monday.

Counsel Khawaja Ahmad Hassan said the matter be referred to judges committee for reconstitution of the bench.

Hamid Khan counsel for Lahore Bar tried to give arguments during this time.

Upon it justice Sardar Tariq Masood remarked don't give the arguments if we have not to hear the case. Objection is being raised that I should recuse from hearing the case. Therefore the matter is being returned to Chief Justice of Pakistan.



QUETTA: Chairman PkMAP and candidate for NA 263 & 266 Mehmood Khan Achakzai addressing a public gathering in Hazarhganji

Nawaz reiterates pledge to address common man's issues

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated on Monday his promise to alleviate problems facing the common man and make Pakistan self-sufficient, saying the PML-N would leave no stone unturned to address these challenges upon assuming power in the upcoming general elections.

Speaking at the inauguration of a party election office in NA-130, the PML-N supreme deplored that he was innocent yet made to endure punishment.

Nawaz, in a pointed comment directed at the founder of PTI, stated that the one who served as a watchdog in his legal matters was gone, emphasising the idea that "a guilty conscience requires no accuser".

Recalling his disqualification by a bench of the apex court, Nawaz casti-

gated the conspirators saying, "The judges who deposed me are all gone. One by one, they all unveiled their true faces.

They came and went, but Nawaz Sharif stands before you. They all left, while I am here in front of you."

He added that even the judge aspiring to become the chief justice of Pakistan had resigned, illustrating the proverb that suggests "the guilty often serve as their own informers".

The former three-time premier recalled that during his stints as the country's prime minister, "there was peace in every household. Flour and ghee were affordable."

If Nawaz Sharif had not been sent packing, people would not have been unemployed, he asserted.

General Elections: Federal ministers, govt officers barred from travelling abroad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign visits of Caretaker Federal Ministers and government officials have been canceled in view of holding general elections February 8, 2024.

Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has approved the cancellation of foreign visits of Ministers and officers.

According to sources, all permits of foreign visits of cabinet members, government officers and officials of autonomous bodies have been canceled.

Authorities and government officers will not make any foreign visit until election process is completed and new government is formed.

Sources said that cabinet members, government officers and authorities cannot make private foreign visit either.

COAS, Iranian FM reaffirm to remain closely engaged, bar any spoilers to divide brotherly nations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Foreign Minister of Iran Amir Abdollahian called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir here at the General Headquarters on Monday.

During the meeting, both sides reaffirmed the resolve to remain closely engaged and not allow any spoilers to drive a wedge between the brotherly nations, an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

"Pakistan and Iran are fraternal neighbours, and the destiny of both nations are intertwined," both the dignitaries resolved.

Realizing the historical, religious and cultural ties that bind Pakistan and Iran, both sides emphasized on strengthening bilateral ties and fostering greater understanding of each other's

concerns. The COAS underscored the centrality of respecting the other state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it sacrosanct, inviolable and the most important cardinal of state-to-state relationship.

The two sides observed that terrorism was a common threat that needed to be tackled through collaborative efforts, better coordination and intelligence sharing.

The COAS emphasized the need for sustained engagement and utilizing available communication channels to address security concerns. Both sides agreed to operationalize the mechanism of deployment of military liaison officers in each other's country at an early date to improve coordination and efficiency of response against common threats.

SC allows Akhtar Mengal to contest Feb 8 polls

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal, has received approval to participate in the upcoming general election scheduled for February 8.

The decision came after a three-member bench, led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, heard an appeal against the acceptance of Akhtar Mengal's nomination papers.

The appeal was filed by Yasir Ahmad, who contested the acceptance of Akhtar Mengal's nomination papers. Yasir's counsel, Advocate Sultan Ahmed, argued before the court that the Returning Officer (RO) had initially rejected Akhtar Mengal's nomination papers. However, the election tribunal later accepted the papers, overturning the RO's decision.

Assures fairness No solid reason yet to justify polls delay, says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that no solid reason had yet come to the fore to justify a delay in the general elections, assuring that the government was committed to holding polls as freely and fairly as possible.

The prime minister, in an interview with a newly launched television channel (Aik News) said the candidates were canvassing and all the rumours would fall to rest by the evening of February 8 - the date for general elections in the country.

Regarding the usual complaints of rigging before or after the elections, he said that learning lessons from the past, the parliament needed to address all the flaws regarding the laws, administration, or the Election Commission.

He said the observers would monitor and local and international media would report on the activity, assuring that as per the standards in the region, the elections would be free and fair.

He observed that the political parties were also involved in the poll rigging by making fake ID cards and casting the votes of deceased persons. He said voting time would be from 9 am to 5 pm on February 8 and everyone should use his constitutional right to vote to ensure a good turnout.

Emphasising the key focus on the improvement of the national economy, he said unfortunately no political party had yet come up with an agenda to boost the country's economic health.

MQM-P worker killed in clash with PPP in Karachi

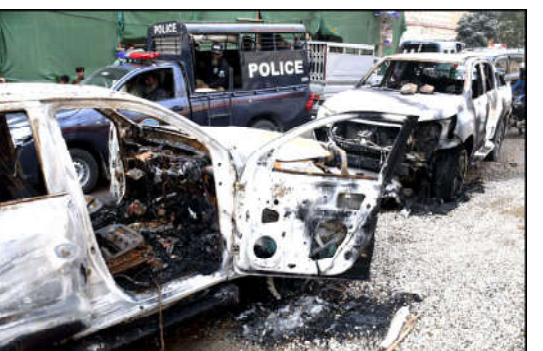
A PPP activist sustained injuries in the incident that led to torching of two vehicles, say police

KARACHI (Agencies): A political worker of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lost his life while a Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) activist sustained injuries during a violent clash between the two parties late Sunday night in Karachi's Nazimabad area, Express News reported.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as 44-year-old

Faraz Ahmed Qureshi, son of Ghayoor Ahmed Qureshi. The injured youth is identified as 25-year-old Rao Muhammad Talha, son of Rao Muhammad Salim.

Talha was initially rushed to a private hospital after receiving initial medical aid. According to local residents, the clash occurred when a PPP rally was passing by the area.



KARACHI: A view of burnt vehicles after clash between the workers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) during an election campaign rally at Nazimabad area, in Provincial Capital.

5028 polling stations to be set up with 14,882 polling booths for Election 2024 in Balochistan

Independent Report

QUETTA: As many as 5028 polling stations would be established for the general elections 2024 in Balochistan. These polling stations would include 1511 for male, 1317 for female and 2200 for combined voters.

In these polling stations, a total of 14,882 polling booths would be set up. According to the final list of the district-wise polling stations and polling booths for the general elections the other day, the highest number of polling stations would be established in Quetta district.

As per the detail shared by the Election Commission, a total of 810 polling

stations would be established in Quetta, which include 447 male, 356 female and seven combined polling stations.

A total of 2573 polling booths would be established within the premises of 810 polling stations to be set up in Quetta. They are included: 1459 male, 1114 female booths.

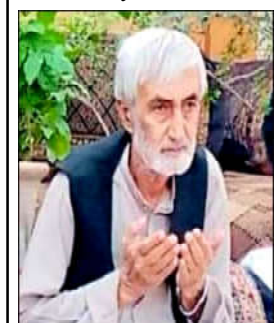
Moreover, a total of 312 polling stations would be established in Pishin district with 842 polling booths.

Similarly, 298 polling stations would be established in Khuzdar with 865 polling booths there.

In Kech, a total of 255 polling stations would be established with 821 polling booths.

Nawabzada Asadullah Raisani passes away

QUETTA: The tribal personality and elder brother of Chief of Sarawan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Nawabzada Asadullah Raisani passed away after protracted illness in Karachi on Monday.



According to the family sources, Nawabzada Asadullah Raisani was undergoing treatment in Karachi where he breathed his last.

Farooq Shah condoles death of Nawabzada Asadullah Raisani

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Editor Independent Group of Newspaper Syed Farooq Shah has condoled the death of tribal personality and elder brother of Chief of Sarawan, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Nawabzada Asadullah Raisani who passed away after protracted illness in Karachi on Monday.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

8th February sun to rise with good news of victory of BNP: Akhtar Mengal

Independent Report

QUETTA: The President of Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that the BNP has always raised voice and waged struggle for security rights of the province and its people, and the sun of 8th February would rise with good news of victory of the party.

The BNP chief was addressing a public gathering organized by BNP at Mir Asghar Mengal Stadium in Noshki on Monday.

The leaders and workers of BNP besides a large number of other people were also present on the occasion.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal maintained that the BNP is struggling for protection of rights of the people of Balochistan. He said that we always raised voice for recovery of the missing persons in the province.

He said that the manner, our opponents failed in getting his nomination papers rejected, they would be failed on February 8 as well. He on the occasion also criticized the Pakistan Peoples Party saying that the cruelties and high handedness meted out by PPP in the past are unprecedented in the history.

He said that the former President Asif Zardari allegedly sold the whole Sindh province, but Balochistan is not strayed at all.

He urged the people to vote to the Party so that it may continue its struggle for rights of the people and province.

Mafia controlling govt machinery in Islamabad: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that most of the government machinery of Islamabad is under the control of mafia.

Talking to the students, the PPP leader said his party had prepared its manifesto while emphasizing that the document would serve as his agreement with the inflation-stricken masses of country.

ECP warns of nullifying elections over women voter suppression

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has warned that elections might be annulled in constituencies where women face obstacles in voting or disruptions in the election campaign. A spokesperson for the ECP stated that the Election Commission may invoke Section 9 of the Elections Act, potentially leading to the nullification of the entire election process if women are impeded from casting votes.

The ECP took immediate action on reports circulating in certain media outlets on Monday, claiming that a group of scholars in the Kohistan region has purportedly issued a fatwa prohibiting women from participating in election campaigns.



NOSHKI: President Balochistan National Party Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal addressing a public gathering in connection with general elections

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Partial justice

It is unfortunate that, on Friday, the International Court of Justice did not endorse South Africa's demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Gaza as it delivered a preliminary ruling on the genocide case brought against Israel.

While legal intricacies are important, stopping the butchery of Palestinians is a more pressing concern. However, the court has upped the moral pressure on Tel Aviv to end its amoral campaign against defenceless civilians in the besieged Strip, even though the Zionist state has no intention of doing so.

Importantly, the judges felt that South Africa's evidence supporting the genocide case against Israel could not be ruled out "prima facie". Furthermore, the bench ordered Tel Aviv to take all possible measures to prevent acts of genocide, prevent and punish those involved in the incitement of genocide, and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Israel has been given a month to report back to The Hague with regard to complying with these measures.

In his reaction, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has termed the order "outrageous" and vowed to continue fighting his "just war" in which some 26,000 people have been massacred. Earlier, he had boasted: "Nobody will stop us — not The Hague..."

Meanwhile, the US that has lent its iron-clad support to Tel Aviv, which is responsible for a massacre that will go down in infamy, has said it continues to believe "allegations of genocide are unfounded". Though it may take the ICJ years to determine if, legally, Israel's actions in Gaza constitute genocide, in the popular view the murder of children, the collective punishment and starvation of an entire civilian population, and the ethnic cleansing of Gazans very much fit the definition of genocide. Other states have hailed the ICJ's order.

Where to from here? Most importantly, when will the slaughter of Gaza's people end? While the ICJ's rulings are binding, the court cannot enforce them. And as Israel's arrogant replies have proved, it has no intention of respecting the court's orders. This is a mockery of the very rules-based order the US, UK and other Western states have sworn to uphold.

In the past, these actors have bombed, or threatened to attack states that have, according to them, strayed from the "rules-based order". Will they take a similar line against Israel? Or will they continue to defend the indefensible? Kudos to South Africa for raising a voice for humanity and against barbarism, irrespective of religious and ethnic affiliations. It is hoped that when the court next meets, more concrete measures are proposed to end the bloodbath and that one day, those responsible for shedding the blood of innocents in Gaza are brought to justice, as are those who aided and abetted them.

Lesson plan

Muna Khan

Last year I felt a bit stumped when students in my news media literacy class told me they knew who Altaf Hussain was but didn't really believe the stories about his rule in Karachi in the 1990s. Did he really order the city to shut down on a phone call, that too a rotary dial phone? How did that even work in a mobile-less, internet-less time? Did I 'actually' experience it?

You may be tempted to berate them for not knowing this but pause for a moment and ask: how would they know this if Altaf Hussain has been banned from screens most of their lives and, more importantly, where would they have learned this? A cursory look at how they're taught history makes for a depressing read — it's likely you were taught the same stories about Mohammad bin Qasim landing in Sindh or that Pakistan was made for Muslims, etc. The denial of the country's multi-religious and multicultural past has done irrevocable damage and created so much of the confusion around identity. I don't think it's possible to break the idea that 'Pakistaniyati' — even the one packaged as 'naya' — is firmly tied to one religion.

Instead of beating up young people for not knowing about history pre-internet or social media, or 2018, perhaps those doing the educating can reflect on their role in creating a youth so disconnected or disinterested in knowing Pakistan before them.

I'll start: as a journalist, I didn't think of young people as my audience and was rarely in positions to fight back when ordered to remove XYZ from mainstream

media. As a journalism instructor, I didn't work hard enough to contextualise and frame events from a historical perspective. I should have used a megaphone to say 'this isn't the first time this is happening', etc.

Maybe, this is why I wasn't so surprised to read the results of a survey Dawn online conducted earlier this month about the elections. The majority of the 5,500 respondents fell under the youth category of 18 to 40 years in age. While 65 per cent said they would vote, they were sceptical of the election process. (You'd be hard pressed to find someone who isn't cynical about these polls.) Meanwhile, 62.69pc "felt their vote won't make a difference" followed by 20.41pc "who feel disenchanted with all candidates". A significant number of respondents said they had little to no faith in elected officials' ability to address issues like unemployment or poverty. This may explain why 64pc want to see the inclusion of 'None of the Above' on the ballot.

It is no surprise to read that the majority of respondents — 67.3pc — support PTI, though opinions about their rule from 2018 to 2022 are mixed with a majority saying it was "neither good or bad".

The part that interests me the most is trust in media, which sadly, is low. Only 7pc have confidence in the media for unbiased coverage; 45.83pc expressed complete distrust; 30pc "only slightly trust" while 16.4pc have moderate trust in the media in providing accurate and unbiased coverage of the elections.

This should be a wake-up call for many in the media who have not been able to connect

with younger audiences, most of whom consume news on platforms that speak to them like TikTok. Instead of berating youngsters for trusting influencers over anchors, perhaps news organisations should be adapting to these changes. And making an effort to connect with younger audiences, including children, who are absorbing the 'news' in their surroundings but don't know who to ask questions from.

Everyone should be taught how the news is created, how to identify disinformation and differentiate bet-we-en fact and opinion. Because once they understand why things happen the way they do, they may want to do something about it. Like vote. Like hold the powerful to account, something journalists commit to doing every day on the job, without bias or judgement but with courage and conviction.

In that same class last semester, one student shared a link of an interview with Altaf Hussain conducted by a YouTuber based abroad three months ago. It had nearly 750,000 views and I scrolled through the near 5,000 comments from viewers saying things like "we didn't know this about MQM".

This is what happens when the media isn't allowed to do its job. Not every journalist can afford to move abroad and/or start their own channel but media owners can afford to take a hard look at ground realities and vow to invest in the principles of journalism.

Technological advancements may change the medium but the message of impartiality will remain the same. -- Courtesy Dawn

Challenging times

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

The year 2024 could not have started on a worse note. First, a humanitarian catastrophe of genocidal proportions has been unfolding in Gaza for over three months, owing to daily attacks by Israel's defence forces. The Houthis are attacking merchant ships in the Red Sea, obliging the US and other countries to mobilise their navies. Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Syria carry the risk of the conflict engulfing the entire region.

Second, the war in Ukraine has devastated the country, once known for its fertile land and grain exports. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, with little access to food, water or electricity. Russia, too, has suffered losses, but remains determined to fight on despite economic sanctions and Nato's continued expansion eastward. Finland's inclusion as its 31st member has more than doubled the length of Nato's borders with Russia. Sweden, too, is gearing up to join. The war's end is not in sight.

Third, the US-China strategic competition is intensifying, deepening risk and uncertainty in a world already in disorder. The two countries remain locked in a technology war, with growing rivalry over AI supremacy and the manufacture of advanced semiconductor chips that power AI technologies. The US, which has an edge in semiconductors supply chains, is building up additional pressure on China through export controls and investment curbs. For its part, China retains dominance in supply chains for minerals, particularly cobalt and lithium used for manufacturing EVs, batteries and solar panels. To neutralise these advan-

tages, the US has imposed a high tariff on Chinese cars and other products. The rivalry has created alarm that the world is headed towards camp politics.

Fourth, the international security environment has been vitiated. Major powers are modernising their nuclear arsenals as arms control regimes give way to a nuclear arms race. In November, Russia de-ratified the CTBT, opening the door for further nuclear testing. The Iran nuclear deal remains in a state of stalemate. The US-Russia agreement, New START, which limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads, was suspended by Russia in 2023. The INF treaty, which sought elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces deemed essential for European security, was terminated by the US in 2019.

In the midst of all this, dozens of countries are heading towards elections in 2024. Anxiety surrounds the forthcoming presidential election in the US. Joe Biden, 81, and Donald Trump, 77, are up for a contest the outcome of which would have profound implications for geopolitics, particularly the transatlantic equation. Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking a fifth term in March. Indonesia and India are going to polls in February and May respectively. The UK will hold elections in the second half of the year. Acrimonious and populist rhetoric is sharpening societal polarisation in countries undergoing electoral transitions. The world economy has picked up pace, and the business use of generative AI has grown manifold. But most developing countries continue to suffer low growth, high inflation and unemployment challenges.

For Pakistan, 2024 is a watershed moment. For years, it has remained in the grip of political instability, economic uncertainty and rising terrorism. The pre-election environment is toxic. The blame game is at its peak. Investors are worried about Pakistan's economic future. The balance-of-payment crisis is not resolved. In this background, the Feb 8 polls are crucial. Pakistan needs a sustained period of political stability, which would ensure continuity in economic policies and help restore growth and industrial development.

In foreign policy, the next elected government has to manage ties with China and the US, despite their growing rivalry. One piece of good news is that the economies of both countries are so inter-dependent that the decoupling from China's economy the US had earlier envisaged is not happening. That opens up possibilities for Pakistan to maintain ties with both China and the US. In an age of rising unilateralism and declining multilateralism, countries like Pakistan need to engage in multi-alignments to promote their political, economic and security interests. Pakistan also needs to stabilise its frontiers with Afghanistan and Iran, shifting the focus to economic cooperation. The trajectory of Pakistan's ties with India will be determined by the outcome of India's elections. With the scare created in India against Muslim icons, especially historical mosques, and the tendency of Indian intelligence to target opponents on foreign soil — Canada, the US, and now Pakistan — the new government will need much effort and smart diplomacy to restore normal ties with India. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Dr Umar Saif says:

IXP & data center set up to boost reliability of internet connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif, Monday said that Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has established its first-ever carrier-neutral Internet Exchange Point (IXP) and Data Center to boost the reliability of internet connectivity in the country.

Addressing at the operational ceremony of 'Pakistan Internet Exchange (PIE) powered by DE-CIX', the first carrier-neutral IX in the

country, Dr. Saif underscored the significance of the telecom and Information Technology industry in Pakistan. He said: "Today is a monumental day for the Pakistan telecom and IT industry."

Three important milestones have been achieved today in collaboration with PTCL, SCO, PTA, DE CIX, PEACE Cable, and China Mobile, he added.

The minister said, we have reached an agreement with China to route its Internet traffic through Pakistan, thereby making Pakistan a regional hub for

connectivity. This strategic move is expected to generate substantial revenue for Internet transit traffic in Pakistan, he added.

Dr. Saif revealed that PTCL would be collaborating with DE CIX, a German data center, and IXP operator, to manage the operation of this new data center.

He emphasized that partnering with a world-class data center operator would enable Pakistan to introduce super-scaling cloud services such as AWS, Google Cloud, and Azure to the country.

Additionally, it

would serve as a local content hub for popular services like YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix.

With these advancements, the minister expressed optimism that Pakistan's internet users could now access services locally, positioning the country to become a hub of regional connectivity.

Over the past few years, he said, we have made significant strides in advancing fiber connectivity. We got two fiber loops from Kashgar to Rawalpindi, further extended to Karachi by PTCL, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif in a group photo on the occasion of Operational Launch of Carrier Neutral Pakistan Internet Exchange & Data Center.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik.

Businessmen honored commendation certificate for meritorious services

PESHAWAR (APP): A noted businessman from Peshawar, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has been honoured with the awarding of a commendation certificate by the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Amjad Zubair Tawana on the occasion of International Customs Day observed on January 26.

The certificate has been awarded to Zia Sarhadi for his outstanding and meritorious services for the cause of promotion of trade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and at the

regional level between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs).

On the occasion, Zia Sarhadi also received the honourable title of Babae-Customs for his decades-long services in custom clearing, shipping and goods forwarding fields. Zia Sarhadi presently holds the office of Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) and has vast experience of around five decades in import, export,

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Olympia, Silver Eburna, EceNurBayraktar and Simaisma carrying Containers, Palm oil, Urea and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Grain Terminal and Gas Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Yuktax, MSC Mumbai-VIII and FSM with Container and LPG are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours. total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Olympia and Silver Eburna are left the port on today morning and two more ships, MookdaNaree and Pacific Merit are expected to sail on same day.

Cargo throughput of 110,836 tonnes, comprising 109,226 tonnes imports cargo and 1,610 tonnes export cargo carried in 609 Containers (521 TEUs are Import and 88 TEUs are export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Encore.

Satisfied with SIFC initiatives FPCCI demands to know its incorporation in MQM-P manifesto: Saquib Fayyaz

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has appreciated that Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Convener of MQM Pakistan & Dr. Farooq Sattar, Senior Deputy Convener of MQM Pakistan, have visited the head office of the apex

initiatives being undertaken by Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC); and, wants to know how MQM Pakistan will incorporate those initiatives into their economic manifesto.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon added that the political parties should consult FPCCI before



formulating their economic policies for their manifestos as the business community can provide them with the right grass-root level information and advice.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon stated that Karachi is the fifth most livable city in the world.

SBP decides to maintain interest rate at 22 percent

KARACHI (INP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed announced that the State Bank Monetary Policy Committee has decided not to change the interest rate and to maintain it at 22 per cent.

SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed and the Monetary Policy Committee members held a joint press conference and informed the media persons about the financial statistics of the country.

He said in an important economic

assessment of the committee, that there has been a significant improvement in the foreign exchange reserves and in the last six months, the foreign exchange reserves have exceeded 8 billion dollars.

He added that the foreign exchange also saw an increase of four billion dollars despite paying the external debt and other payments.

The SBP governor said the current account deficit was 17.50 billion dollars last financial year.

He said the committee also focused on various projections after reviewing the economic statistics.

He said the productivity of the industry is improving now and economic activities have been taken positively by the industry.

SBP Governor Jameel also said that the inflation rate will be between 23 and 25 per cent at the end of this financial year.

Jameel Ahmed said that economic growth is expected to be 2 to 3 per cent this fiscal year.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,039 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 1,039.34 points, a negative change of 1.63 percent, closing at 62,773.72 points against 63,813.06 points the previous trading day. A total of 317,577,239 shares valuing Rs 10,693 billion were traded during the day as compared to 412,823,322 shares valuing Rs 16.185 billion the last day.

WAPDA organises Road Show in Bangkok to woo contracting firms

LAHORE (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Monday organized a day-long Road Show in Bangkok for the 300 MW-Floating Solar Project - the first of its kind in Pakistan.

According to a WAPDA spokesman here, the Road Show aimed at forging an enhanced

competition amongst the prospective bidders for the project. As many as 58 delegates, hailing from 50 international reputed firms participated in the event. Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen @ Sajjad Ghani, Pakistan's Charge d'Affairs in Thailand Yasir Hussain, World Bank's representatives.

South Punjab's development PML-N's top priority: Shehbaz

RAJANPUR (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured the people of Rajanpur of the revival of development projects after coming into power.

Former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz and other PML-N leaders are carrying out vigorous election campaigns across Punjab ahead of the general elections.

Shehbaz Sharif reached Rajanpur to address a public gathering in connection with the February 8 general

elections on a helicopter. The development of South Punjab remains PML-N's top priority, he added.

The former prime minister thanked the people of Pakistan for their continued support for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Recalling the 2010 super floods, the PML-N president said he reached Rajanpur to oversee the relief work in the region being the then-chief minister.

"Weather was not good so I reached Rajanpur in the vehicle, despite warnings from the authorities," Sharif said.

PML-N government

constructed Danish Schools in South Punjab and Basic Health Units so the people can get health services in the region.

On Saturday, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) launched its much-awaited election manifesto.

The manifesto was unveiled by PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

On the other hand, according to Election Commission of Pakistan sources, overall 90,675 polling stations have been set up across the country for the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.



President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan, at Governor House, Karachi

KP Governor formally inaugurates Governor's Secretariat website

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam Ali formally inaugurated the website of the Governor's Secretariat here Monday.

The website was inaugurated during a ceremony held here in the Governor's House.

Besides, Caretaker KP Minister for Education, Dr. Qasim Jan; Secretary IT Board, Mohammad Ali Shah; Vice Chancellors of the University of Peshawar, Khyber Medical University, and Agricultural University Peshawar; Director of

IMS Sciences, Dr. Usman Ghani; and officers of the Governor's Secretariat and IT Board were also present on the occasion.

With the launch of the website <http://governorkp.gov.pk>, the people will have easy access to the Governor's Office and the day-to-day affairs of the Governor's Secretariat.

All affairs of the Governor's Secretariat will now be available online.

Through the website, the employees of the universities could file applications against the administrative decisions of their respective universities, and any order on their online appeal would also be available on it.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Haji Ghulam Ali said, "Today is the era of information technology, so the public should also be provided information on the basis of the requirements of the modern era."

"The website is created for the access of the people to the affairs of the Governor's Secretariat and is the beginning of a journey towards the modern era," he said.

CM ensures full support for peaceful elections

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Ijaz Anwar Chauhan to discuss the peaceful conduct of the upcoming general elections and review the preparations.

Mohsin Naqvi, in his remarks, assured full support from the Punjab government for the seamless execution of the election process. He emphasized the

implementation of the Election Commission's code of conduct, and measures will be taken to ensure compliance.

The chief minister further stated that law enforcement, including the police and other security agencies, will play a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law during the electoral process.

The Provincial Election Commissioner acknowledged the valuable cooperation of the Punjab government in this regard.



LAHORE: Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

Minister says: Breastfeeding awareness drives safest way of preventing outbreak of 'Pneumonia cases'

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Professor Javed Akram Monday expressed that the low rate of breastfeeding is a major cause of the pneumonia deaths among kids.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that lack of breastfeeding can also result in stunted growth in children and so the health department is taking steps to encourage this feeding and nursing of infants in early ages.

To another question, he said that the Punjab has reported around 17,000 pneumonia cases so far this, with a mortality rate of 1.3 percent.

He said media need to run massive awareness campaigns to educate the public about benefits of mother feed and for timely vaccination.

"A majority of victims of pneumonia are malnourished kids with low immunity," he said, adding, mothers must breast-feed their children to boost their immunity against such diseases.

Minister for Health said that malnutrition and promotion of breastfeeding remained a top priority agenda of the current government as relevant ministries and departments have been endlessly engaged in efforts to address the issue of malnutrition and to control Pneumonia cases.



LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar listening to the problems of Police employees and people during open Katchery at Central Police Office.

DCM Schofer visits emperor Jehangir's mausoleum in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad Andrew Schofer on Monday visited the mausoleum of the Mughal emperor Nuruddin Mohammad Jahangir and hailed the artistic finesse of the 17th century architectural masterpiece.

Din Muhammad Salim, known as Jahangir, (1569-1627) was the fourth Mughal emperor who ruled India from 1605 to 1627. The tomb was decreed to be built at Dilkusha Garden - favourite sojourn of the Mughal emperor in Lahore - by his descendant emperor Shah Jahan. The mausoleum was completed in 1637.

DCM Andrew Schofer was accompanied by US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins and Public Affairs Officer Karl Rogers. After a warm welcome by the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) officials, Andrew Schofer was shown round the tomb while he also had a bird's eye view of the sprawling gardens and adjacent tomb of Asif Khan from one of the minaret of the tomb. DCM Schofer showed keen interest in the Mughal architecture and briefed on the facade of the mausoleum and was briefed about the red sandstone inlaid with marble motifs which were preserved in original.

CPO directs tight security for general elections

FAISALABAD (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (Retired) Muhammad Ali Zia has directed the police officers to ensure tight security at all polling stations during General Election 2024.

Chairing a meeting here on Monday, he reviewed security arrangements and said that the district would be divided into sectors, sub-sectors and clusters and their incharges would be bound to provide tight security arrangements in their respective jurisdiction. He said that the police officers should finalize their security plan and make it comprehensive from all aspects.

One killed, another injured in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): A man was killed while another sustained injuries in a road accident, in the limits of Roshanwala police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said on Monday the accident took place at Khannuana road where a rashly driven car overturned in a bid.

KP Govt to provide over Rs 5bln to govt hospitals for emergency: CM's aide

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister for Health Riaz Anwar on Monday said that the provincial government has decided to release more than five billion rupees to the health department to address the shortage of medical equipment and emergency and essential medicines at the government hospitals.

He said that in the next few days, mandatory medicines would be purchased for hospitals at the local level, adding that

Carrying arms banned in Swat

PESHAWAR (APP): District Magistrate Swat, Dr Muhammad Qasim Ali Khan on Monday under the Section-144 CRPC, imposed a complete ban on carrying firearms including the legal one.

A notification to this effect said a complete ban has been imposed in the jurisdiction of Swat district on exhibition and carrying of all kinds of firearms including the arms having valid license.

It said the violators of this order will face legal action under Section 188 PPC of the law.

International News

ICJ ruling may end up in UN Security Council, say experts

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) lacks the power to enforce its judgments, but it can seek a UN Security Council vote on its ruling, potentially paving the way for economic sanctions or military action against Israel, legal experts and scholars argue.

Last week, the ICJ issued a resolute order against Israel, emphasising adherence to humanitarian standards. The ruling directs Israel to prevent and penalise any public incitements to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza while also mandating the preservation of evidence related to such allegations. Israel is also obliged to ameliorate the humanitarian situation for Palestinian civilians in the enclave.

Commenting on the order, legal experts, think-tank scholars, and the Western media allude to the likelihood of this matter reaching the UN Security Council, where the majority is expected to demand Israel's compliance. They contend that, this time, the United States may face an even greater challenge in defending Israel, and the ICJ ruling may prove difficult for the United States to overlook.

Emphasising the significance of the ruling, former US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, Stephen Rapp, noted that Israel's non-compliance may make it difficult for its allies to continue defending the Jewish state.

"The US and all its major allies expect Israel to comply," because "if it defies the orders, the Israeli

government may find itself treated as a pariah," he wrote in an email to The Hill newspaper that covers the US Congress. Human Rights Watch's Israel and Palestine Director Omar Shakir underscored the importance of the ruling, stating, "This is quite a far-reaching order. The court has the opportunity in 30 days to review Israel's compliance or consider other options."

Explaining how this decision could be implemented, Shakir said in interviews to various media outlets that "the UN Security Council could take action to enforce the decision." He acknowledged that the US veto could once again protect Israel in the Security Council but warns that the veto would further weaken the US stance on this issue.



Palestinians carry bags of flour they grabbed from an aid truck near an Israeli checkpoint, as Gaza residents face crisis levels of hunger, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Gaza City.

Houthi claim missile attack on US warship

SANA'A (Online): Houthi militants fired a missile at a US warship in the Gulf of Aden on Sunday, a spokesman for the Yemen-based group has claimed. He described the incident as the latest response to American "aggression" in the region.

The attack, targeting the USS Lewis B. Puller expeditionary mobile base vessel, took place on Sunday evening, Yahya Saree said in a Telegram post in the aftermath of the alleged incident. The spokesman did not specify if the missile had hit the vessel.

Seven dead in Brazilian small plane crash

SAO PAULO (INP): Seven people were killed Sunday in Brazil's southeast Minas Gerais state when the small plane they were travelling in crashed, authorities said.

After leaving Campinas, in neighboring Sao Paulo state, the single-engine plane apparently broke up mid-air and crashed at around 10:30 am (1330 GMT) in the mining town of Itapeva.

Firefighters "found seven dead victims (who were) on board the aircraft," the department said in updated statement.

Three US troops killed in Jordan, Biden vows reprisal

Iran denies links to Jordan drone strike that killed 3 US troops

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Three US service members were killed and dozens wounded during an unmanned aerial drone attack on US forces stationed in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, President Joe Biden and US officials said on Sunday.

Biden blamed Iran-backed groups for the attack, the first deadly strike against US forces since the Israel-Hamas conflict erupted in October, sending shock waves throughout the Middle East.

It is the first time American military personnel have been killed by hostile fire in the Middle East since the start of the Gaza conflict, and the incident will further raise tensions in the region and fuel fears of a broader conflict directly involving Iran.

Hamas said the death of the soldiers shows Washington's backing for Israel could put it at odds with the whole Muslim world if the Gaza conflict continues and that it could lead to a "regional explosion."

Meanwhile: Iran denied US and British accusations that it supported militant groups behind a drone strike in Jordan that killed three US military personnel, Tehran's official IRNA news agency said on Monday.

"These claims are made with specific political goals to reverse the realities of the region," IRNA quoted foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani as saying.

Russia's drones, missiles target Ukraine's critical infrastructure, Ukraine says

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia launched drone and missile attacks targeting civilian and critical infrastructure across wide areas of Ukraine, Kyiv's Air Force said on Sunday.

Preliminary information did not show any casualties in the attacks, the air force said on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia and Ukraine have increased their air attacks on each other's territory in recent months, targeting critical military, energy and transport infrastructure.

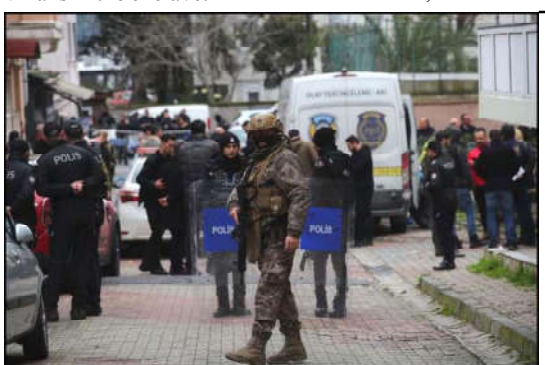
The air force said Russia attacked the central Poltava region with two ballistic missiles fired from the Iskander ballistic missile system, and three surface-to-air missiles over the Donetsk region in the east.

Filip Pronin, governor of Poltava region, wrote on Telegram that the attack struck an industrial site in the city of Kremenchuk, sparking a fire. Pictures posted on social media showed emergency crews battling a blaze.

Further southeast in the Zaporizhzhia region, Governor Yuri Malashko said an infrastructure site had been hit in a drone attack. Emergency crews were at the site, Malashko said, but gave no details of damage or casualties.

Ukraine's air defence systems destroyed four of eight Russia-launched drones overnight, the air force said.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Russia.



Turkish police stand guard outside the Italian Santa Maria Catholic Church after two masked gunmen were shooting during service, in Istanbul, Turkey.

China allows Philippines to supply troops at disputed reef

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: The Chinese coastguard said it had made "temporary special arrangements" to allow the Philippines to deliver supplies to troops at a grounded World War Two-era vessel at a disputed reef.

The Chinese coastguard has previously deployed vessels to block missions by the Philippines to supply troops on the transport ship, which has become a military outpost at the Second Thomas Shoal,

US reviewing Venezuelan sanctions policy in wake of court decision

Monitoring Desk
VENEZUELA: The US is reviewing its sanctions policy against Venezuela after a court in that country upheld a ban preventing presidential candidate Maria Corina Machado from holding office, the US State Department said.

The ruling by Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal on Friday means Machado, a 56-year-old industrial engineer, cannot register her candidacy for presidential elections scheduled for the second half of 2024. "The United States is currently reviewing our Venezuela sanctions policy, based on this development and the recent political targeting of democratic opposition candidates and civil society," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement. The US eased economically debilitating oil sanctions on the crude-exporting country in October after President Nicolas Maduro's government signed a deal with the opposition.

Several states halt funding to Palestinian refugees

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: While bad weather hit displaced Palestinians seeking refuge further north in the battered enclave, Israel pressed ahead on Saturday with its aggression in Gaza's Khan Younis area after the failure of UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) to call for a ceasefire. Aggravating the crisis for Palestinians, the UK, Australia, Canada, Italy and Finland suspended their funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) despite the Palestinian Authority insistence that the organisation needs 'maximum' support.

On the day of ICJ's ruling that Israel must prevent possible acts of genocide, 174 Palestinians were killed during the unabated hostilities. Gaza health authorities said on Saturday some 26,257 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 65,000 wounded so far, including 174 lives lost during the last 24 hours.

The majority of the enclave's 2.3 million population has been displaced. Residents reported heavy aerial and tank fire across Khan Younis, a part of southern Gaza that has become the focus of Israel's ground offensive against Hamas.

Iran executes four men convicted of spying for Israel

TEHRAN (INP): Iran executed four men at dawn on Monday after they were convicted of collaborating with the country's arch-foe Israel on a plan to sabotage an Iranian defense site, according to the judiciary.

The four defendants, identified as Mohammad Faramarzi, Mohsen Mazloum, Wafa Azarbar, Pejman Fatehi, were arrested in July 2022 and accused of plotting to carry out an operation against a Ministry of Defense centre in the central province of Isfahan.

EU to provide additional Eur100m to enhance post-flood resilience

ISLAMABAD (APP): The European Union (EU) will provide an additional EUR 100 million to reinforce Pakistan's resilience in the aftermath of the devastating 2022 floods that severely impacted the nation. According to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division, EU Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Riina Kionka and Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz signed five new EU grant agreements in this regard. "These agreements, under Team Europe's response to the 2022 post-flood Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction Framework, signify a substantial commitment of nearly EUR 100 million (equivalent to over PKR 30 billion)," the statement added.

The new EU support package aims to fortify Pakistan's resilience in the aftermath of the floods, bringing the total Team Europe response to the 2022 floods to over EUR 930 million.

The specific focus areas include revitalising the rural economy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and restoring the disrupted livestock value chains in flood-affected Balochistan.

Notably, these activities align with the expansive EU Global Gateway initiative, the largest EU investment program designed to propel the global green transition.

SHC stops police from arresting PTI leader Haleem in further cases

KARACHI (Online): Sindh High Court (SHC) has restrained police from arresting PTI leader Haleem Adil from arresting in further cases.

The petition against arrest of Haleem Adil in several cases came up for hearing before the court Monday.

The court ordered Haleem Adil Sheikh be not nominated in any new case or challan.

SHC ordered to send copy of this order to IG Sindh and jail superintendent.

The court remarked that according to November 02, 2023 police report Haleem Adil is nominated in 21 cases.

Justice Naimat Ullah Phulpoto remarked "tell us how many more cases have been registered."



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Riina Kionka, European Union Ambassador to Pakistan and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs signed Five New Additional EUR 100 Million Grant Agreements

PML-N to win with huge majority in election from Balochistan: Jamal Shah

QUETTA (APP)-General Secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Balochistan and Candidate Constituency NA-263 Quetta Jamal Shah Kakar on Monday said that the candidates of the PML-N would win with a huge majority in the general elections from Quetta and Balochistan.

He also termed the announcement of the withdrawal of independent candidate Sardar Idris Taj from PB 43 Quetta in favor of PML-N nominated candidate Naseemur Rehman Khan positive sign for the development of the area.

He expressed these views while addressing a press conference at the Quetta Press Club on the occasion of the withdrawal of Saradar Idris Taj PB 43 Quetta in favor of Naseemur-Rehman Khan.

Saradar Idris Taj said that the leadership of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif was the need of the hour, saying that Mian Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan the Asian Tigers thanks to reduction in load shedding and balanced foreign policy, but Tehreek-e-Insaf has turned the country into ruins.

On the order of the party leadership, I announced for the withdrawal of the election in favor of the candidate of the Muslim League-N.



QUETTA: PML-N Provincial Secretary General Jamal Shah Kakar addressing a press conference.

NP to gain success in elections with support of people: Sardar Bangulzai

QUETTA (APP): National Party (NP)'s Central Vice President and former MNA Sardar Kamal Khan Bangulzai on Monday said that his party would achieve success on February 8, with support of people in general elections.

He expressed these views while addressing the participation and support program organized by National Party Tehsil Dasht in Killi Umar-Abad Bangulzai Dasht Matura under the leadership of Asadullah Bangulzai and Master Muhammad Umar Bangulzai. Addressing at the program, Bangulzai said that the era of fixed stamping had passed, now people would make their decision with their votes.

He said that people would make successful their real representatives through their votes who were always present among them in difficult situation.

He said that the National Party was only party to believe serving of people, adding that therefore, the NP party was becoming



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the role of Masajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues, at Governor House.

NEC directs priority financial allocations for merged and backward districts

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Economic Council (NEC) Monday here directed that the development targets for all new merged and backward districts should be met on priority basis with appropriate financial allocations in the next budget. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar was chairing meeting of the council.

Federal ministers Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Sami Saeed, Shahid Ashraf Tarar, Chief Ministers Justice @ Maqbool Baqir, Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah, Sardar Ali Mardan Domki and high level officials attended the meeting.

The meeting was told that in the next financial year, instead of including provincial projects in the national development budget, only projects of newly merged border districts of erstwhile FATA and 20 backward districts would be included in the federal development budget.

The proper financial allocations for these areas would ensure provision of jobs to the people and economic progress.

The prime minister directed that the standard for compiling list of backward districts should be reviewed so that inclusion of all such areas should be ensured.

Speaking during the meeting, the prime minister said tax money belonged to the people and the focus of all development projects should be welfare and well being of the people.

He urged that work on the national level development projects should be speeded up and their completion in the stipulated time should be ensured.

He expressed satisfaction that the caretaker government achieved substantial success in securing development targets in its short tenure.

The prime minister said despite immense economic challenges, national progress could only be ensured by completing public welfare projects on priority basis.

The National Economic Council comprising

President says: Role of mosques, vital for educating out-of-school children, preventing diseases

KARACHI (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mosques might play a vital role in the provision of education to out-of-school children along with imparting religious ethos for bring about socio-economic development of the country.

He said the mosques had a central place in Muslim society and could be utilized to educate people about important social issues.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting about the vital role of Masaajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues.

The meeting was attended by the Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Dr Aneeq Ahmed, and religious scholars from various schools of thought.

Addressing the meeting, the President said that educating 26 million out-of-school children was an uphill task in the wake of inadequate educational infrastructure. Building new schools would require tremendous resources as well as time, he added.

He said that utilizing almost 2.5 lacs mosques across the country could be a unique and cost-effective avenue to bring these children back to education.

The President said that mosques could be used as centres of education by incorporating the Government's Accelerated Learning Programme. "Pakistan should have mosques at the centre of society, simultaneously imparting worldly and religious education to fight the challenges of society," he added.



ISLAMABAD: DG FIA Ahmad Ishaq Jahangir called on Federal Minister for Interior Dr Gohar Ejaz.

Shania visits Quetta central jail, distributes necessary items among prisoners

QUETTA (APP): The Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development, Ms. Shania Khan visited the central jail Quetta on Monday.

The Director General of Social Welfare, Tariq Javaid Mengal was also accompanied by the Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister.

During the course of visit, Ms. Shania Khan distributed clothes and other necessary items among prisoners including women in the jail.

She also distributed toys among the juveniles in the prison.

The sewing machines were distributed among female prisoners there.

Later, the Advisor went round of different parts of the prison.

The Superintendent of Quetta jail, Muhammad Ishaq Zehri briefed Ms. Shania Khan about the facilities and different parts of the prison.

She inspected in detail the measures taken for imparting technical skills to the female prisoners.

Secretary C&W reviews steps of departmental promotion BPS-1-15

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Communications and Works (C&W) Kamber Dashti on Monday presided over a meeting regarding departmental promotion BPS (1-15) in the department. Chief Engineer of the three circles of the province, Roads Additional Secretary of the Department of Communications and Works, Amir Hamza Zehri, Chief Engineer Design, Dr. Sajjad Baloch and senior officials of the Department of C&W were also present in the meeting.

The meeting was briefed in detail regarding promotion cases in the department. On this occasion, Secretary Communications and Works Kamber Dashti said that getting promotion during the service was very important and mandatory for the employees and it was the first effort of every employee to get promotion in his tenure period.

While giving instructions, he said that all the promotion cases of the department should be speedily completed.



KARACHI: A view of burnt vehicles after clash between the workers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) during an election campaign rally at Nazimabad area, in Provincial Capital.

Hamza issues instructions for better work on traffic, removal of encroachments

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat on Monday paid a surprise visit of the city and issued instructions for better work on traffic, removal of encroachments, cleanliness and restoration of street lights.

During his visit, he also inspected Circular Road Park Plaza and ordered that the case of the plaza for a better business model and better services for the public will be immediately sent to the Public Private Partnership Authority (PPPA).

He said that steps are being taken under various mechanisms to resolve the traffic problems in the city.

He also visited the main parking hubs of the city including Abdul Sattar, Archer and Prince roads and met with various trade associations.

He said it had been decided to open these roads for general traffic and convert them into "No" parking zones to resolve the traffic problems.

He directed RTA and Assistant Commissioner City Quetta to submit a proposal along with the traffic team to resolve the traffic issue.

He said that the resolving of traffic issues in the city is important, so the cooperation of all stakeholders is needed to resolve it. On the occasion, he also inspected various commercial banks and discussed with the bank managers about the installation of security cameras and making them fully functional, besides parking the vehicles in the parking area instead of parking them on the city streets so that traffic problems can be resolved.

Regional head offices of banks directed to ensure cameras installation

QUETTA: The Commissioner Quetta Division has asked Regional head offices of all banks to ensure installation of the high resolution cameras at the branches of their respective banks in Quetta Division including Quetta city.

In an official circular issued by the office of Commissioner Quetta, it has been stressed that installation of high resolution cameras is very necessary at the branches of all banks all over the province especially in Quetta just to improve the security measures.

This is also needed to do monitoring and adopt proper safety procedures in Quetta and other cities, therefore, installation of high resolution cameras should be ensured in all branches of the banks operating in Quetta and other cities of the division, it was further mentioned.

DC reviews election arrangements in Chaman

QUETTA: The arrangements made for the general elections in Chaman were reviewed on Monday.

A meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Chaman Captain (Retd) Raja Athar Abbas reviewed the arrangements including security. Those who were present in the meeting were included Superintendent of Police, District Election Commissioner, Education Officers, Returning Officers and other concerned officials.

The matters including security of the polling stations, cleanliness, deployment of the polling staff and their training, provision of transportation and other necessary facilities in detail at the meeting.

Dr Umar Saif says: Pak assembles around 9mln mobile phones worth \$1.5bln in 2yrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif on Monday said that the country had assembled approximately 9 million mobile phones worth around \$1.5 billion during the last two years. Addressing the Pakistan Mobile Summit, the first-ever mobile conference in the country, he said currently about 35 different mobile phone brands were actively contributing to the local mobile phone manufacturing industry.

He said the country had exported nearly 250,000 mobile phones and earned around \$ 200 million dollars foreign exchange.

The minister said local handset manufacturers in Pakistan had produced around 57 million phones, surpassing the annual domestic demand of 25 million units. He also informed the audience about efforts being made at the local level to prepare some components, with the goal of eventually manufacturing fully assembled phones within the country.

He said that Pakistan was the 7th largest market of cellular users in the world with 191 Million cellular connections. However, "We import most of our mobile phones. We need to manufacture them locally and develop an industry to export made-in-Pakistan phones" he added.

He said: "The Pakistani government has played a pivotal role in supporting the growth of this industry by offering various incentives."

Dr. Saif said: "Just the number of broadband users in Pakistan is more than the entire population of Canada."



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Hamza Shafqaat visiting different roads of city.

Secretary Health presides review meeting of EPI Balochistan

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Secretary Health Abdullah Khan on Monday presided the fourth quarterly review meeting of EPI Balochistan and reviewed the coverage of EPI, set goals and resources and evaluated the performance of all district health officers across the province.

The Secretary Health expressed his displeasure over the absence of Divisional Director Loralai and Divisional Director Rukhsan divisions.

Addressing the meeting, Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan said that District Health Officers should complete the targets set by EPI, MNCH and Nutritionist.

He directed that PPHI should ensure deployment of LHV and vaccinators.

He added that EPI will help in strengthening the services of MNCH and nutritionists. Abdullah Khan said that with the support of District Health Officers and Deputy District Health Officers and adoption of effective strategies, the vaccination and immunization targets set at the regional level can be achieved.

PPP submits reservations to ECP over election results system

ISLAMABAD (INP): The People's Party has submitted its reservations with regard to the election results system in writing to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"We are bringing our serious objections to your notice with regard to the new system of election results, the EMS," the letter read.

"The election commission had rejected the use of WhatsApp in the parliamentary committee session saying it would have Internet problems," according to letter. "When the WhatsApp will face problem, the new App would likely to have more problems," the PPP writes.

"The use of the EMS App will compromise transparency of the election," PPP argued. "We demand the use of WhatsApp for sending election results instead of the new application," PPP said.

"The Presiding Officers sending election result to the ROs, should also send it to the candidate and election agents," PPP suggests.



QUETTA: Advisor to caretaker Chief Minister for Social Welfare and Women Development Shania Khan distributing clothes and toys among women and children prisoners during her visit to central jail