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SC expresses resolve to end enforced disappearances once and for all

CJP says matter of missing persons is of serious nature; Says every institution should remain within its limits; We cannot order Parliament to legislate

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa on Tuesday said that the Supreme Court wanted to solve the problem of missing persons and enforced disappearances "once and for all".

"This country belongs to all of us, even those who may have other points of view," he said. "This matter will only be resolved when we all work together and take responsibility. Let's make Pakistan strong from within. If Pakistan is strong from within, no outside forces can touch it," the CJP added.

Justice Isa passed these remarks as a three-member bench comprising the CJP, Justice Musarrat Hilali and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard a set of petitions against missing persons. One of the pleas included an application filed by former Senator and senior lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan.

Online adds: Supreme Court (SC) while adjourning hearing of enforced disappearances and missing persons case till today (Wednesday) has sought reply from Attorney General (AG).

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked we cannot order parliament to legislate. Every institution should remain within its limits.

The matter be not politicized. Senate is there at present too.

The CJP while moving to Shoaib Shaheen remarked Farrukh Habib, Sadaqat Abbasi and Usman Dar, who are these persons. Are you grieved over it that these people have quit the party. Should we say this to them to return to party.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Tuesday. Khushdil Khan Malik petitioner for missing persons came on rostrum at the inception of hearing.

He requested that the judiciary should order parliament to legislate for enforced disappearances.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked a commission has been constituted already in connection with enforced disappearances.

The CJP inquired which commission has been constituted.

Khushdil Khan Malik said commission on enforced disappearances was constituted under Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal. But it has done nothing so far. The court should issue notice to government and inquire why the legislation has not been enacted about missing persons since the last 50 years. Justice Qazi Faez Isa inquired how can the court order parliament to make such and legislation. SC practice and procedure law-2023 has been made. Please bother to read it.



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in an interactive session with the students of Beaconhouse National University.

No one has impunity to spread violence; State to ensure law & order: PM Kakar

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reiterated that the State would not allow anyone to unleash violence and kill people in the name of political, ethnic and religious divides as it was its responsibility to ensure law and order.

The prime minister, in a lengthy interaction with the students of the Beaconhouse National University, said that no one could be given a licence to kill and eliminate others on the basis of political, ethnic and religious differences.

"To maintain law and order is the responsibility of the State, and I assure you that such elements will never prevail on the State of Pakistan," he asserted.

The prime minister, elaborating his viewpoint while responding to a question, said that the one who reverted to fighting with the State and the countrymen would get the befitting response.

He said that the government would not allow terrorists and militants to kill people with impunity as they had openly declared fight against the State and the civilians in the country.

"We have accepted their challenge," he said and expressed the resolve to fully respond to all threats with full force.

To another query, he said that the government functioned primarily on revenue generation system. The country had a tax collection of over Rs 9,000 billion, but there was tax evasion of more than almost Rs 10,000 billion. The lack of effective revenue system had been a persistent problem which required effective steps to rectify.

He said that it was a consistent story with different past political set-ups and military dictators. For strengthening of economy, it was the first and foremost requirement to develop a robust tax system, he added, citing the Scandinavian countries with the highest tax revenue figures to their GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

The caretaker prime minister said that if the interim set-up in the country could achieve the tax target, then why not an elected government! If they were not able to achieve such, then there was a serious flaw in the governance system, he opined.

He also underlined the need of improvement in the structure of bureaucracy and the governance system.

About a question related to Gaza, the caretaker prime minister said that Israel was displaying a force of brutality with impunity.

Armed forces fully prepared to thwart any aggression: COAS

Lauds operational preparedness of PAF in incorporating state-of-the-art weapon systems



RAWALPINDI (Online): An Induction and Operationalization Ceremony was held at an operational base of Pakistan Air Force, today.

General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) Chief of Army Staff, attended the distinguished ceremony as the Chief Guest.

Upon his arrival at the base, Chief of Army Staff was received by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

The ceremony showcased the newly inducted weapon systems and defence assets of PAF.

Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to the COAS.

During his speech CAS highlighted the latest inductions in the PAF's arsenal comprising of J-10C fighter jets, air mobility platforms, modern Radars, Unmanned Aerial Systems, Loitering munition capabilities and Long Range Vectors which have significantly bolstered the aerial defence capabilities of the country.

CAS also mentioned that Center of Excellence for Air Mobility & Aviation Safety, College of Air Defence and reinvigoration of Air Power Centre of Excellence alongside operationalization of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park has provided PAF the capability to stay abreast with the evolving challenges. He emphasized upon the progress achieved by PAF in the emerging domains of Cyber and Space technologies to ensure an impregnable defence of the country.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the slain terrorists had been actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces. They were also planning to conduct a high-profile terrorist attack, which was averted due to the proactive response by the security forces.

Arms, ammunition, and explosives were recovered from the killed terrorists.

A sanitization operation is currently underway to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country.

Security forces kill four terrorists in NW operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Four terrorists, including a suicide bomber, were killed in an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan on Tuesday.

Speaking in a seminar organized by BRSP in collaboration with PPAF, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed, Caretaker Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Balochistan Mir Zubair Jamali, and Balochistan Minister for Education Qadir Bakhsh Baloch underscored the significance of religious scholars, federal and provincial governments, media, civil society, and interfaith, and social harmony in Balochistan.

Aneeq advocates collective action for national interfaith harmony

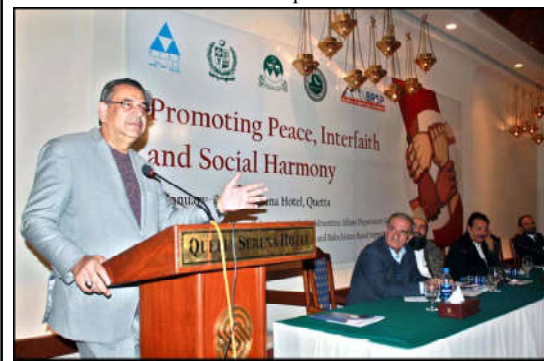
QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, stressed on Tuesday stressed the need for collective efforts to promote peace and interfaith harmony in the country.

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The Federal Minister said a sum of Rs 100,000 reduction has been made in this year's Hajj package. The Ministry has also developed a mobile application to assist pilgrims throughout their Hajj journey and stay in Saudi Arabia, along with the provision of complimentary mobile SIMs for Hajj.

Aneeq Ahmed stated that the Ministry will provide Abayas with the Pakistani flag embossed for female pilgrims this year. He emphasized the government's tangible efforts to foster interfaith harmony, highlighting the pressing need for dialogue among religions and civilizations to establish peace.

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed addressing a seminar titled Promoting Peace, Interfaith and Social Harmony.



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Dr. Nadeem proposes allocation of 2 pc of GDP for health sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Nadeem Jan on Tuesday proposed allocation of two percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the health sector.

In response to a calling attention notice moved by Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani regarding the non-availability of vaccines, especially the anti-diphtheria serum in the country, with a specific focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leading to the unfortunate deaths of children, the minister said that our request to the next government would be to allocate at least two percent of the GDP for health, a sector that has been overlooked by all previous governments.

Regarding the Anti-Diphtheria Serum (ADC), he clarified that the provision and procurement of ADC was the responsibilities of the provinces.

ISLAMABAD (Online): U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome met today with Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani to discuss a wide range of important bilateral issues, including expanded diplomatic engagement, the safe and efficient processing of Afghan citizens eligible for resettlement to the United States, as well as other issues of mutual interest.

The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Bloom, called on Foreign Minister today. Discussions focused on some major aspects of bilateral relations including the recent visit of the Chief of Army Staff to the United States.

The Foreign Minister underlined that in 2024, the two sides should continue to build on the recent exchanges and the momentum gained in bilateral ties.

U.S. Envoy calls on FM Jilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Tuesday said that the issue of human trafficking would remain an insurmountable menace unless the overall economic situation of the country was improved benefiting the downtrodden masses who risk their lives for pursuing better future abroad through illicit means. He said that the state as per its capacity, was taking measures but the issue demanded a holistic and national approach towards it. "Unless the underlying issues are resolved, things will not improve."

Human trafficking menace insurmountable sans improved economic situation: Solangi

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The questions pertaining to the government measures and their outcomes to curb the human of human trafficking were put to the floor by Senator Kamran Murtaza of Jamaat-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI-P). Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) and independent Senator Nuzhat Sadiq.

Solangi noted that the Senators had raised important points, whereas the solution lied in the fact that the country had to fix its economy. He said that the state as per its capacity, was taking measures but the issue demanded a holistic and national approach towards it. "Unless the underlying issues are resolved, things will not improve."



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Fahad Sulaiman Khalf Alkharusi, Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Six barbers killed in North Waziristan

MIR ALI (INP): At least six barbers were killed by unidentified armed men in the Mir Ali area of the North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, says in media reports.

According to police, the victims were running barber shops in the local bazaar, adding that they were abducted a day earlier and their bodies had been recovered on Tuesday from a nearby area.

Meanwhile, police have launched an investigation into the incident and started search for the arrest of culprits. The latest incident from North Waziristan came after five labourers had been killed and a watchman was injured by unidentified gunmen while they were sleeping in Wana.

According to the locals of the area, the victims were constructing a police station. At night when they were asleep in their tent, unidentified gunmen shot them dead and fled.

Among the dead, three labourers belonged to the Burki tribe of Shikai and two to the Wazir tribe of Suparkai. The bodies were shifted to the hospital for post-mortem. On the other hand, South Waziristan Police Department is investigating the killings.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari exchanges views with Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) Sindh General Secretary, Maulana Rashid Mahmood Soomro during condolence meeting on the death of his young daughter, held at his residency located on Model Colony area in Karachi.

ECP enforces conduct rules, removes candidates' ads above prescribed limits

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) monitoring teams have started removing the illegal advertisement hoardings of the candidates aspiring to participate in the elections of National and Provincial assemblies.

Monitoring teams deployed nationwide are currently removing advertisement hoardings that exceed prescribed limits, stated an official of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the monitoring teams in Multan and Sialkot are removing promotional materials of candidates who have erected advertisement hoardings in contravention of the code of conduct.

In accordance with the Election Commission of Pakistan's Code of Conduct issued on December 20, 2023, individuals and political parties are prohibited from affixing or distributing posters, handbills, pamphlets, leaflets, banners, or portraits larger than the specified sizes outlined by the ECP.

The specified dimensions are as follows: posters should measure 18 inches by 23 inches, pamphlets, leaflets, and handbills can have a maximum size of 9 by 6 inches, banners should not exceed 3 by 9 feet, and portraits should be limited to 2 by 3 feet.

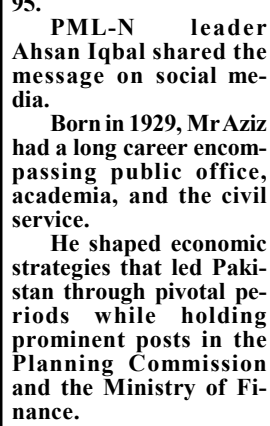
Former FM Sartaj Aziz passes away

Islamabad: Former federal minister for finance Sartaj Aziz passed away on Tuesday at the age of 95.

PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal shared the message on social media.

Born in 1929, Mr Aziz had a long career encompassing public office, academia, and the civil service.

He shaped economic strategies that led Pakistan through pivotal periods while holding prominent posts in the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance.



Exercise BARRACUDA-XII commences at Karachi

KARACHI (APP): International Exercise BARRACUDA-XII formally commences here at Headquarters Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), on Tuesday.

The event started with an impressive flag hoisting ceremony followed by wreath laying on Shuhada (martyrs) monument, a Pakistan Navy news release said.

The ceremony was attended by observers from 13 friendly countries and officers of Pakistan Navy and PMSA. Exercise BARRACUDA-XII is scheduled from January 02-04 and comprising Harbour and Sea phases.

The opening brief of the exercise was held at Karachi. Federal Minister for Climate Change Ahmed Irfan Aslam graced the occasion as Chief Guest.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Climate Change, Ahmed Irfan Aslam addresses to participants during opening ceremony of the BARRACUDA XII Exercise, held at Headquarters Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA).

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

SBP's projections

The State Bank Governor's Annual Report for FY2023 is "cautiously optimistic" about the economy. It projects headline price inflation to drop, the current account deficit to narrow, and GDP to expand during the ongoing fiscal year.

However, the report warns, this outlook hinges on the absence of adverse shocks stemming from geopolitical tensions, unforeseen climate events and unfavourable movements in global commodity prices. That aside, the bank expects inflation to slow down to 20pc-22pc, the current account gap to narrow to 0.5pc-1.5pc of GDP, and the economy to grow by 2pc-3pc. The projected recovery is modest but still a source of comfort after a tumultuous year in which Pakistan barely avoided default.

"The economic landscape of Pakistan has faced unprecedented challenges throughout the fiscal year," the report notes, highlighting that political uncertainty was another factor impacting business and consumer sentiments, thus affecting economic activity. The report asserts the "SBP's commitment to maintain price stability", highlighting the "crucial role of fiscal policy and effective administration in supporting stability". But, such assertions have featured in most previous SBP reports, including the bank's monetary policy statements, in the last few years.

There is no doubt about the core role of fiscal policy in our balance-of-payments crisis as well as escalating inflation — the bank cannot absolve itself of its own part. Its past projections have often proved wrong, and the SBP has been behind the curve when it comes to taming inflation and checking the dollar's flight.

It may be impossible to undo the past but with 2023 behind us, many want to know if our rulers have learnt their lesson and are prepared to meet the upcoming challenges. This year should see stabilisation. The new government, which will take office after the February polls, will have its work cut out.

The first and most crucial challenge for it would be to negotiate a bigger, medium-term IMF loan to stabilise the external sector and raise funds from other bilateral, multilateral and commercial creditors in order to build the country's foreign exchange reserves. Such a deal will entail a series of difficult fiscal, governance and structural reforms. The question is: will a government taking office as a result of a tainted election and questionable mandate be able to execute the required reforms and make tough decisions? This year is going to be a defining one for Pakistan's future trajectory. Many countries have managed to turn their crises into opportunities for fixing their respective economies.

All our economic challenges, including the ongoing balance-of-payment crisis and shortage of foreign currency, can be fixed. We are at a crucial juncture from where we can turn either way: towards a brighter and prosperous future or total collapse. It is all in our own hands.

Fertiliser subsidy



Aijaz A. Nizamani

Wheat is the most important dietary component in food consumed in Pakistan. The same is reflected in Pakistan's cultivation trends, with over 22 million acres of farmland — more than 50 per cent of the cropped area — allocated to wheat crops in the winter. The winter season is when fertiliser requirements peak, and fertiliser plants have to compete with power plants for natural gas in order to produce nitrogenous fertiliser.

However, dwindling domestic supplies and increased competition in the international market for natural gas have made these competing demands nearly impossible for Pakistani policymakers to manage. Invariably, bureaucrats and politicians make a mess of the situation, and the high cost of their mess is passed on to consumers and producers alike. It is no surprise that the country imports millions of tonnes of wheat worth hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

The current year's budget has allocated Rs30 billion for fertiliser subsidies. This subsidy is used to pay for cheap gas to fertiliser plants, which, in return, are supposed to provide their urea and phosphatic fertiliser products at administered rates to farmers through their distribution networks. The list of ministries and bureaucracies involved in the disbursement of this subsidy is mind-boggling. For a comparatively low figure of Rs30bn, the list of ministries involved includes the Ministry of Industries and Production,

the Ministry of Petroleum, the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority, the Cabinet Division, the Ministry of Food Security and Research and the Ministry of Finance.

Since their bureaucrats get caught up in turf wars, making timely decisions is not possible. Each year, delayed government decisions on setting gas prices for fertiliser plants also result in bottlenecks in the value chain. Gas supply bottlenecks give rise to discrimination: the Competition Commission of Pakistan is often approached by plants that do not receive enough supply of gas, while others are reportedly favoured.

The impact of this mismanagement is seen in the small-town markets of rural Pakistan, where farmers are paying between Rs5,000 and Rs5,500 for a bag of urea in the black market, which is supposed to be sold at Rs3,250 this season. The situation was no different under the PTI government when farmers queued all day to receive just two bags of fertiliser.

Industry sources say the country has enough plant capacity to produce more fertiliser than needed by local farmers. So, why are wheat farmers forced to buy from the black market each year in winter, especially for a crop as important as wheat? The price differential is not the only issue: producers also suffer from what economists call high transaction costs, as well as the loss of valuable time. They are unable to provide crops with vital plant nutrients when they are critically needed, resulting in loss of production, which is ultimately met through wheat imports.

The fertiliser subsidy is not provided to farmers but to fertiliser plants — in other words, to industrialists. The rationale provided for this arrangement is that it ul-

timately helps farmers. However, as the experience every year shows, it does not work that way, as farmers invariably pay more than administered prices for their requirements. Some studies done by the Pakistan Institute for Development Economics also show that the fertiliser subsidy does not significantly impact food costs for the poor. The logical question is: why not do away with the subsidy altogether when both consumers and producers (farmers) do not get the value it is paid for?

Since farmers are net losers in this subsidy regime, it is they who should demand a liberal fertiliser import and export mechanism. It looks like even fertiliser manufacturers are not averse to a market-based mechanism: they believe they can export fertiliser under such a regime, bringing in as much as \$500m in foreign exchange. Free imports and an export facilitation policy would go a long way towards improving food security while cutting out meddling bureaucrats. This will, undoubtedly, require government regulation, but this must be light and enable activity, instead of stifling it. The next question would be how to incentivise the wheat crop in case the fertiliser subsidy is done away with. The solution lies in direct fiscal transfers to farmers, as is done in all OECD countries. The government may support a certain amount, like Rs5,000 per acre, with a ceiling of 10 acres per farmer. This will be a targeted production subsidy for small and medium farmers. It can easily be put into practice using satellite and technology, and disbursed directly to farmers' bank accounts with minimum involvement of bureaucratic personnel. — Courtesy Dawn

Mass extinction



Aisha Khan

The end of the 28th session of the Conference of Parties in December 2023 moved the needle forward on climate action but not at the pace needed to avert the sixth mass extinction. As eco-anxiety grows and optimists try to rationalise slow progress, with the inherent constraints of multilateral processes, the clock keeps ticking, reminding us of the perils and predilections of change and the timescale for keeping life systems alive.

The conversation on climate has become so jargon filled and technical in its approach that at times it loses sight of the here and now, becoming occasionally delusional and sometimes capricious.

Anatomically, modern humans emerged around 200,000 years ago in a process of evolution from ancestral Homo sapiens dating back six million years. Civilisation as we know it started around 6,000 years back and the advent of the industrial age began in 1850.

In the span of 173 years, humans have successfully landed on the moon but degraded ecosystems and destroyed the environment on planet Earth. Today, with advancements in science and technology, life expectancy has increased, progress in communication has transformed connectivity and creature comforts have enhanced life quality beyond imagination.

Ironically, all this has come at the cost of development that has turned into an existential threat. The main culprit for disrupting planetary balance are greenhouse gases.

As we enter 2024, it is important to put some things in perspective. The blame game at negotiations has gone on for 28 years. Perhaps it is time to take more individual responsibility and combine the two to save our species. A change in perspective may also alter thinking and help in finding solutions faster.

The dilemma facing the world is not only about how to reduce carbon emissions; in fact, it is more about how to retain existing lifestyles without compromising on quality or changing consumption patterns.

At COP28 Sultan al-Jaber earned flak for his statement that was interpreted to mean that giving up fossil fuels is tantamount to going back to the cave age. Seen in a broader perspective, perhaps it suggests that no one is quite ready yet to give up on lifestyles supported by fossil fuel. This applies to people from all tiers of society, across sectors, institutions and affiliations.

The outcry every year at climate summits is on the ascendant, and disappointment outshines hope. However, the fundamental question that holds the key to the climate conundrum remains unanswered. How much are we willing as citizens and societies to give up on current consumption patterns to embrace a low-carbon footprint lifestyle? After all, it is possible to curtail supply by reducing demand.

Data demonstrates that modern food systems drive 90 per cent of deforestation and 60pc of biodiversity loss, and account for 70pc of the world's use of freshwater. Overall, food systems alone contribute to over one-third of global greenhouse emissions. By going vegan the global population could reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food production by 28pc. And yet

only 1-2pc of the world population is vegan.

The list of possible individual actions is as long as the list of commitments made by nations at climate summits.

Extinction is not a new phenomenon on planet Earth. There have been five previous mass extinctions. Many researchers argue that we are in the middle of a sixth mass extinction. The common denominator in all previous extinctions was a drastic change in the carbon cycle. The Permian-Triassic Extinction that took place 250m years ago was the largest mass extinction event in Earth's history, affecting a range of species. The loss of biodiversity ended all life.

Today, the overgrowth and transformative behaviour of a single species is destroying habitats and unleashing a crisis. A European Commission modelling study shows likely extinction of 27pc of plants and animals by 2100. This continued disruption in the biosphere poses an extinction threat to one-half of Earth's higher life forms by the turn of the century.

From all evidence, it seems that human beings are an aberration in the evolutionary process. They show scant respect for nature, are wasteful in their use of natural resources, degrade the environment,

harm biodiversity, destroy the ecosystems that support them, and kill their own species. Rich, developing and poor nations all follow the same exploitative pattern of human behaviour.

The home truth is that the battle for human survival will not be won at the negotiating tables but by solutions provided by science and technology. Evolution will not stop with Homo sapiens. We might even be taken over by other forms of life in a new world order governed by artificial intelligence. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

High-profile Chinese business delegation meets Planning Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-profile business delegation of China, led by the Chairman of Chang Chinag Chamber of Commerce Li Ting, met with Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed potential collaboration opportunities between Pakistan and China in various sectors, fostering business expansion and

exploring new investment avenues, a news release said.

Comprising eight members, the delegation represented diverse industries such as import and export, technology, electronics, machinery, office supplies, apparel, and building materials. The discussions centred on strengthening bilateral ties and identifying strategic areas for mutually beneficial partnerships. Minister Sami Saeed

emphasized key sectors for investment, including Agriculture, Information Technology & Telecommunications, Mines & Minerals and Energy sectors.

He highlighted the opportunities to utilize Special Economic Zones (SEZs), stating that Pakistan encourages foreign investment, especially Chinese investors for the joint ventures and relocation of industries to Pakistan.



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New FPCCI Regional Chairman, VPs assume offices

LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FPCCI) newly elected Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Aijaz Qureshi and Vice President Zain Iftikhar Chaudhry assumed the charge of their offices in a ceremony held here at FPCCI Regional Office on Tuesday.

A special ceremony was held in honor of the newly elected officials in which Punjab's Minister for Industries and Commerce and Patron in Chief of United Business Group (UBG) SM Tanveer, former President FPCCI Zubair

Tufail, former Senior Vice President FPCCI Aamir Atta Bajwa, former LCCI President Almas Hyder, Momin Ali Malik, Ali Hussam Asghar, Ahmed Chennai, Mian Zahid Hussain, Muhammad Sohail, Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Malik Tahir Javed, Mian Shafiqat, Sohail Lashari, Mahmood Ghaznavi, Khawaja Shahzad Nasir and a large number of businessmen participated in the ceremony and congratulated to the newly-elected office-bearers on their historic success in the FPCCI elections.

Export set to reach the targeted capacity of \$3bn per month soon

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investment announced today that exports in December 2023 increased by 22.2% to USD 2.812 billion from USD 2.301 billion in December 2022. He said that the increase is 9.3% with USD 2.573 billion exports in November 2023.

He also said that the said positive trend extends to imports as well which decreased by 12.25% in December 2023 to USD 4.514 billion compared to USD 5.144 billion in December 2022.

Looking at the broader picture, the exports in Jul-Dec 2023 witnessed continued export growth and increased by 5.2% to USD 14.981 billion from USD 14.244 billion during the same period in preceding year. Notably, imports during this period saw a significant 16.28% reduction compared to the same period in 2022, falling from USD 31.209 billion to a much lower USD 26.129 billion.

These developments translate to a substantial narrowing of the trade deficit. In December 2023 alone, the deficit shrank by a significant 40% to USD 1.7 billion, representing a decrease of USD 1.141 billion compared to the previous year.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, MSC Jemima, Luna Rossa and IVS Crimson Creek carrying Container, Wheat and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Kensington, Rich Rainbow, FSM and Limra also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours to load/unload Containers, Palm oil and LPGs respectively.

A total of ten ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Ullswater and Sunray are left the port on today morning and three more ships, MSC Jemima, Leila Confidence and Al-Bidda are expected.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) on Tuesday released its three years performance report from 2021 to 2023, during which the department disposed of around 17,101 complaints.

Addressing a press conference, FTO Registrar Muhammad Majid Qureshi along with Advisor Media Nazim Saleem and Advisor Customs Dr Arslan Subcutageen highlighted performance of the FTO year by year.

The performance report covered three major aspects of the organization including registration of complaints, disposal of complaints, and implementation of the recommendations.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif in a meeting with British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms. Jane Marriott.



LAHORE: A delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry led by Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister of Finance, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar and Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce, S. M. Tanveer in a group photo with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

BISP Savings Scheme Landmark step to instill financial independence among vulnerable sections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The newly launched 'Savings Scheme' by the internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) will prove as a landmark step towards instilling financial independence and promoting a savings culture among the vulnerable sections of society.

The BISP Saving Scheme is aimed at providing a financial buffer to the piece-rate workers for unexpected expenses

and emergencies, making them self-reliant. According to the Director General National Socio Economic Registry (NSER) BISP, Naveed Akbar, the piece rate workers were the biggest affectedes during the COVID-19 who found it hard to earn their livelihood as they lacked savings. Therefore to mitigate their sufferings, the government provided one-time financial assistance to them of Rs. 12,000 during that difficult time.

Gold rates up by Rs.1,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.1,600 and was sold at Rs.221,300 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.219,700 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.1,372 to Rs.189,729 from Rs.188,357 whereas the price of 10 grams 22 karat gold went up to Rs.173,918 from Rs.172,661, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten-gram silver remained unchanged at Rs2,680 and Rs.2,297.66 respectively.

Railways staff' efforts for record revenue earning of Rs. 41.b acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs, Shahid Ashraf Tarar has commended the efforts of Railways Staff and management for record revenue earning of 41 billion rupees during the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24.

There is a 46 percent increase in revenue of Pakistan Railways in comparison to the same period of last year, said a

news release.

Pakistan Railways earned revenue of 24 billion rupees from passenger trains and 11.5 billion from freight trains in the first six months. Income from other sectors was about five billion rupees. The increase in revenue is the result of effective and efficient reforms introduced by Pakistan Railways management and the tireless work and dedication of railway employees.

KP govt invests in youth prosperity: CM

Inaugurates technical training under 'Khushal KP Programme'

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah said on Tuesday that youth are our assets, and the KP government is investing in them to build prosperity.

He addressed the inaugural ceremony of the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program, which aims to create technical training and employment opportunities for the youth.

He expressed concern over the longstanding issue of unemployment in the country, emphasizing the distress caused by witnessing the youth facing

joblessness. "We have implemented a program prioritizing the training of the youth on preferential grounds," he said.

He highlighted that this training program is a crucial component of the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program, describing it as a comprehensive initiative that will have lasting effects.

He stated that this is a program for the welfare of humanity, and its success requires collective efforts. In the first phase, over one hundred thousand young individuals will undergo vocational

courses, aimed at equipping them with skills beyond just information technology.

Chief Minister outlined the program's definitive goal of providing training to at least five hundred thousand youth, ultimately facilitating their employment.

He emphasized the clear roadmap established for the welfare of the youth, which will also serve as a helpful guide for the incoming government. As part of the programme, initially, over 0.1 million young individuals will undergo various courses, including IT, in addition to other fields.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates academic block for Bachelors Degree Programme Paramedics at Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Postgraduate Paramedical Institute.

Punjab CM says: Efforts would be made to induce artificial rainfall with assistance of the UAE team

Independent Report
LAHORE: Ahmed Al-Kamal, head of the cloud-seeding team from the United Arab Emirates' meteorology department, chief pilot Michael Anstis and pilot Col Ubaid called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Tuesday.

The CM thanked the

team members for their endeavors to induce artificial rainfall to reduce smog and expressed gratitude for the UAE's cooperation, acknowledging it as the first-ever successful attempt at artificial rainfall in Lahore's history.

Chief Minister Naqvi stated that the Punjab government appreciates the

collaboration with the UAE, and reiterated the need for artificial rainfall to combat smog. He assured that further efforts would be made to induce artificial rainfall, once again, when the required atmospheric conditions are met, with the assistance of the UAE team. Highlighting the success of the first-ever artificial rainfall in Lahore.

Governor requested to play role in preventing use of e-cigarettes among youth

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins and the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control, a CSOs led alliance working to lead tobacco control initiatives, has requested Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali to play his effective role in preventing use of e-cigarettes and vapes among young population.

In a letter to Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali, both Blue Veins and Provincial Alliance for Sustainable

Tobacco Control brought his attention to a pressing issue that is affecting the youth of the province. "The leadership of Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali can set a precedent for other provinces of Pakistan, showcasing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as role model for proactive and preventive health governance," reads the letter. A concerning rise in use of e-cigarettes and vapes has been observed among youngsters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adds the letter.

Former CJ PHC, Qaisar Rasheed passes away

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC), Justice Qaisar Rasheed breathed his last at a local hospital here on Tuesday.

Hospital sources said, Justice Qaisar Rasheed was admitted at the hospital for the last many days. Justice Rasheed was on a ventilator for the last three days and today he left this mortal world.

One killed, another injured

FAISALABAD (APP): A woman was killed in an accident while a youth was injured during a robbery near here on Tuesday.

According to the Rescue 1122, a woman was hit to death by a rashly driven car near Kohistan express service. The victim was later identified as Zahra Kalsoom of Muzaffar Colony Saman Abad. The body was handed over to police while the driver fled away.

Certificate of Sadiq, Ameen being maintained for play boy: Mian Latif

LAHORE (Online): PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif has said certificate of Sadiq and Ameen is being maintained for play boy.

"The country is undergoing uncertain situation at economic, political level, he said this while talking to media men here Tuesday.

He went on to say those who are making policies are not accepting their mistakes.

He held millions of rupees were spent on those who made narrative on social media. Had some one investigated then it would have come to surface the links of May 9 and 10 incidents go to which countries.

He questioned can the armed forces of the country

be threatened.

He remarked May 9, 10 attack is matter of grave concern for the institutions. No one is there to ask from those who were schemers of 2017-18.

He added 7 to 8 months have passed and now mitti pao program cannot work.

Had Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif attacked defence institutions.

Today much cry is raised on the matter of election symbol but no one had spoken in our case, he observed.

The sword of disqualification is being hung on the head of the person who has been acquitted.

ANF recovers 214 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 214 kg drugs and arrested six accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 2.4 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a passenger, going to Doha on Qatar Airways at Lahore Airport.

100 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Sri Lanka at a courier office on Shahrah-e-Faisal, Karachi.

209 kg hashish was recovered in four operations conducted near Morgah border area.

Minister Murad reviews PUNJMIN performance

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad, during a meeting held here on Tuesday, reviewed the performance of Punjab Minerals Development Corporation (PUNJMIN) and advocated its digital transformation.

PUNJMIN Managing Director presented updates on salt projects, coal projects, and the Mianwali project, emphasizing progress through a detailed presentation.

During the briefing, it was revealed that PUNJMIN is set to digitize its operations, adopting Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). However,

the initiative requires skilled professionals in IT, mining engineering, and accounting. A request for relaxation in new recruitment has been sent to the Chief Minister's office.

The minister highlighted the importance of digitalization for enhancing the corporation's efficiency, citing its profitability due to effective government strategies. He noted the positive impact of increased industrial salt prices on government revenue. Stressing the need for continued improvement, the minister instructed PUNJMIN to implement e-bidding and e-auction systems to curb corruption.



HYDERABAD: Residents of Gul Goth Muhammad Jakro are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Hyderabad press club.

World-class sports complex, universities to be built in Zafarwal: Ahsan Iqbal

ZAFARWAL (APP): Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and candidate for NA-76 Narowal and PP-54 Zafarwal constituencies, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal announced building a world-class sports complex for the youth of Zafarwal, so that they could participate in sports activities and bring laurels to the country.

He expressed these views at the closing ceremony of the All Punjab Shah Faisal Shaheed Football Tournament here on Tuesday. The former federal minister said, "I promise to the youth of

Zafarwal that I will soon build a sports complex in Zafarwal like the Narowal Sports Complex, where world-class sports and coaches are available."

He said that the future of Pakistan was linked to the youth and for their bright future, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had taken practical steps. "More steps will be taken for their welfare in the future. More than 7,000 youths are studying in three universities in Narowal and world-class universities will also be set up in Zafarwal soon," he added.

International News

China willing to work with US for stable relationship: Xi

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping on Monday said he was willing to work with the United States to promote stable bilateral ties, exchanging congratulations with his US counterpart Joe Biden on the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations, state media said.

Xi, in his message, said both countries have "weathered the storms and moved forward in general", which has enhanced the well-being of their peoples and contributed to world peace, stability and prosperity, according to the ministry statement.

Xi called China and US forming ties "a major event" in the history of bilateral relations and in international relations.

China-US ties have

been frosty but Biden administration officials have visited Beijing and met with their counterparts to rebuild communications and trust in the months leading up to a high-stakes summit between Xi and Biden in San Francisco in November, deemed an opportunity to cool tensions between the world's two largest economies.

Xi said the summit has pointed out the direction for both nations' ties, under a future-oriented vision.

"I am willing to work with President Biden to continue to steer and navigate the China-US relationship for the benefit of China and the US and the two peoples, and to promote the cause of world peace and development," Xi said.

The US is due its presidential election in November, in which former president and outspoken critic of China Donald Trump is campaigning against Biden to come back for a second term.

Xi also exchanged New Year's messages with North Korea leader Kim Jong Un, and both announced 2024 to be a "friendship year" for both countries, launching a series of activities for that, the Chinese foreign ministry said separately. Xi said China is willing to work with North Korea to deepen strategic mutual trust, enhance exchanges and cooperation, promote greater bilateral ties and make new contributions to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region. On New Year's Eve, the Chinese leader exchanged greetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin as well.

UN to boost food ration for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: The United Nations will increase the food ration for each Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh by \$2 a month, to \$10 from Jan. 1, the World Food Programme (WFP) said on Tuesday, as it thanked donors for coming to the rescue of a cash-strapped effort.

The United Nations had cut food aid last year to the refugees by a third, to \$8 each every month, as it had raised less than half of the \$876 million required to support them.

Nearly a million members of the Muslim minority from Myanmar live in bamboo-and-plastic camps in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar, most of them having fled a military crackdown in 2017.

The WFP cut the refugees' food entitlement to \$10 from \$12 in March, and further in June, to stand at \$8 each a month, in the wake of a severe funding crunch.



ISTANBUL: Tens of thousands of people demonstrate to show solidarity with the Palestinian people amid the Gaza crisis, at the Galata Bridge.

Gaza war to continue through 2024, warns Tel Aviv

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israel warned on Wednesday that its war in Gaza would continue throughout 2024 as unrelenting strikes killed at least 25 people in the besieged enclave on New Year's Day.

Israel's military spokesman Daniel Hagari said in a New Year's message that some of the 300,000 army reservists would get a break in order to prepare for the "prolonged fighting" ahead.

"The army must plan ahead, understanding that

we will be required for additional tasks and warfare throughout this year," Hagari said.

"We are also currently adapting the planning of the force deployment in Gaza and the reserve system. Some of the reservists will return to their families and employment this week."

"This will significantly ease the burden on the economy and allow them to gather strength for the upcoming activities in the next year, as the fighting will continue and they will still be required," Hagari added.

Five dead as planes catch fire after collision at Japan's Haneda airport

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A passenger plane and a Japanese coast guard aircraft collided on the runway at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on Tuesday which claimed five lives.

Transport Minister Tetsuo Saito confirmed that all 379 occupants of Japan Airlines flight JAL-516 got out safely before the plane was entirely engulfed in flames. The pilot of the coast guard plane also escaped, but five crewmembers died, Saito said.

Japan quake toll nears 50 with many feared trapped in freezing cold

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A powerful earthquake that hit Japan on New Year's Day killed at least 48 people, with rescue teams struggling in freezing temperatures on Tuesday to reach isolated areas where many people are feared trapped under toppled buildings.

In Suzu, a coastal town of just over 5,000 households near the quake's epicentre, 90 per cent of houses may have been destroyed, according to its mayor Masuhiro Izumiya.

"The situation is catastrophic," he said.

The quake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 struck on Monday afternoon, prompting people in western coastal areas to flee to higher ground as tsunami waves swept cars and houses into the water.

Around 200 tremors were detected since the quake first hit on Monday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency, which warned more strong shocks could hit in the coming days.

A Coast Guard aircraft en route to deliver aid to the quake-hit region collided with a commercial aeroplane in Tokyo's Haneda airport on Tuesday, killing five Coast Guard crew while all 379 on board the Japan Airlines flight miraculously escaped a fire.



South Korean opposition party leader Lee Jae-myung, who was attacked in Busan, gets off from a helicopter on a stretcher to be transported to Seoul National University Hospital, at a heliport in Seoul.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy says Russia suffering heavy losses

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russian forces are suffering heavy losses and the notion that Moscow is winning the nearly two-year-old war is only a "feeling" not based on reality.

"Thousands, thousands of killed Russian soldiers, nobody even took them away," he told The Economist magazine in an interview published on Monday, referring to fighting around the besieged eastern town of Avdiivka

which he visited last week.

He provided no evidence to back up his assertion but Western military analysts agree Russia is paying a heavy price in men and equipment for relatively minor gains in eastern and southern Ukraine. There was no response to a request for comment from Russian officials on Zelenskiy's remarks. Russian officials have said Western estimates of Russian death tolls are vastly exaggerated and almost always underestimate Ukrainian losses.

South Korean opposition leader in intensive care after being stabbed in the neck

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung was recovering in intensive care after he was stabbed in the neck on Tuesday by a man who pushed through a crowd pretending to be his supporter, his party said.

Lee was surrounded by journalists when a man lunged and struck him on the left side of his neck, Busan police official Son Je-han said at a press briefing.

Bangladeshi Nobel winner convicted of violating labour laws

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus was convicted on Monday of violating Bangladesh's labour laws in a case decried by his supporters as politically motivated.

Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering microfinance bank but has earned the enmity of longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor.



Palestinians protest in solidarity with Gaza in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.

Somalia to hold emergency meeting on Somaliland-Ethiopia deal

Monitoring Desk
MOGADISHU: Somalia will hold an emergency cabinet meeting on Tuesday, state media said, after the breakaway region of Somaliland struck a controversial deal with Ethiopia giving Addis Ababa access to the Red Sea.

Monday's surprise pact has triggered fury in Mogadishu, which considers it a violation of its sovereignty. It was announced only days after Somalia's central government had agreed to resume dialogue with the separatist northern region after years of stalemate. Somaliland has been seeking full statehood since claiming independence from Somalia in 1991,

a move fiercely opposed by Mogadishu and not recognised internationally.

The Addis Ababa agreement gives landlocked Ethiopia long-desired access to the Red Sea, a key waterway for global trade.

"This historic agreement ensures Ethiopia's access to the Red Sea for their naval forces, reciprocated by formal recognition of the Republic of Somaliland, marking this as a significant diplomatic milestone for our country," Somaliland's foreign ministry said in a statement on X, formerly Twitter, that there would be an emergency cabinet meeting on Tuesday to discuss the agreement.

President emphasizes need to provide employment opportunities to women

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr. Arif Alvi has emphasized the need to provide employment opportunities and enabling working-environment to women to increase their economic participation. He was speaking at a meeting chaired by him during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAP) in Islamabad Tuesday. Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace, Ms. Fauzia Vihar, Secretary FOSPAP, Mr. Arif Karim, advisors and officials of FOSPAP attended the meeting. Ms. Fauzia Vihar gave a detailed presentation about the role and achievements of FOSPAP in protecting women's rights. She informed that FOSPAP was providing speedy justice in harassment cases at the workplace and property cases of women who had been deprived of their ownership rights. She informed that 725 harassment cases were registered with FOSPAP, during 2023, out of which 517 cases had been decided. She said that an upsurge had been witnessed in the registration of harassment and women's property cases with FOSPAP due to the awareness campaign about its role and functions. She apprised the meeting that harassment of women and denial of property rights to women were pervasive issues in Pakistan. Appreciating the continued support of the President Dr. Arif Alvi, she told the meeting that so far 208 representations against the decisions of FOSPAP had been filed with the President, out of which only 10 were under process with the office of the President

while the rest had been decided. The President called for taking appropriate legislative measures at the federal and provincial levels to ensure the protection of women's property rights, besides discouraging the transfer of property by women to their family members due to pressures. He said that he was conducting personal hearings of the Ombudspersons' cases to expedite the process of justice. He stated that highlighting important decisions of FOSPAP in harassment and women's property cases through media would help increase awareness about the role of the Ombudsman. He said that police at the local level needed to improve their response to women's complaints in property cases, adding that police officials should be educated about the provisions of the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAP) Head Office.

Islamabad police chief emphasizes effective policing, transparency for public trust

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has called upon all police officials to garner public appreciation through robust policing and increased transparency in their affairs. According to details, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan held a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office Islamabad, to assess the current situation of crime, a public relations officer said. The meeting was attended by AIG Operations, SSP Operations, AIG Investigation and Complaints, SSP Investigation, all zonal DPOs, SDPOs and all Incharge Police Stations.

Each officer was individually scrutinized. ICCPO praised the officers for their outstanding performance and encouraged them. He also directed them to continue learning for further improvement and ensure commitment towards the process of self-accountability. Instructions were given to take action against those carrying arms outside the institutions enforcing the law. ICCPO emphasized maintaining the law and order situation in the city, enhancing the security of government and other important installations, intensifying the campaign against drug dealers and professional beggars. He also directed the officials to expedite the provision of facilities to the public, setting an example through police stations, and enforcing the law according to the rules and regulations against those violating the law. Officials were also directed to enhance security on internal and external routes of the city and keep a strict eye on suspicious elements. ICCPO directed officers to encourage subordinates for good performance and assured of rewards. Measures were emphasized to ensure the protection of the lives and property of citizens, making the arrangements even better. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan stressed the need for bravery, civility, and transparency to be the distinguishing features of the Islamabad Capital Police.

No case of JN.1 Corona variant reported in Pak: Health Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Tuesday said that so far, no case of the JN.1 variant of Corona has been reported in any part of the country. According to the spokesperson of the ministry, a new variant of Corona, JN.1, Omicron, has been reported in some countries as per media reports, which is a matter of concern. The minister assured to proper implementation of the recommendations of international health regulations. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that there is an effective screening system at international airports at entry and exit routes of the country. Meanwhile, caretaker federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan said that the government is continuously monitoring the situation as this subvariant of Omicron was found in some countries. He said that the risk of this variant spreading in Pakistan is very low, but caution is necessary. The minister assured to proper implementation of the recommendations of international health regulations. Dr. Nadeem Jan said that there is an effective screening system at international airports at entry and exit routes of the country.



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets with the President of Pakistan Muslim League (Q).

Dr. Saif holds meetings with UAE Ambassador, UK High Commissioner

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif on Tuesday held separate meetings with UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi, and UK High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott. During the meeting with the UAE ambassador, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, particularly those related to the IT and telecom sectors, said a news release. Dr. Umar Saif emphasized the significance of Pakistan's ties with the UAE, expressing the government's desire to strengthen these ties, especially in the IT sector. He highlighted the ongoing efforts to boost IT exports, considering the UAE as an attractive market for Pakistani IT companies. Additionally, he mentioned plans to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UAE government for a Digital Government Experience Exchange Program. In a separate meeting with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, Dr. Umar Saif acknowledged the longstanding support of the UK government in governance reform within Pakistan, particularly in the health, education, and public finance sectors. He underscored the immense potential of Pakistan's IT industry to expand its business in the UK, emphasizing the need for startups to attract larger investments from UK-based venture capitalists.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson and Women Commission Women Wing of Azad Kashmir Ms. Rehana Khan meeting with the Caretaker Foreign Minister of Pakistan Jali Abbas Jilani.

Wafaqi Mohtasib takes serious notice of shortage of rabies vaccine

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has taken a serious notice of the non-availability of the Anti-rabies Vaccine in the Federal Government hospitals/dispensaries located in the Islamabad (ICT) and summoned the heads of the NIH and DRAP on January-09, 2024 in this regard. He said that the non-availability of such essential vaccines for human life in major hospitals of Islamabad is a matter of deep concern. According to the details, a resident of Islamabad, Mr. Nazim Hussain sent an e-mail to the Wafaqi Mohtasib stating that his son was bitten by a rabid dog. He approached various hospitals in Islamabad to get his son vaccinated but he was told that the vaccine was not available. Responding to the complaint promptly, the Wafaqi Mohtasib directed his Registrar, Mr. Muhammad Saqib Khan to conduct an inquiry in this connection. The Registrar contacted the heads of both these organizations and it was confirmed that the said essential vaccine was not available. The Wafaqi Mohtasib ordering an immediate probe into the matter, has summoned the heads of both institutions.

Caretaker PM meets Ch Shujaat

LAHORE (Online): Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaar ul Haq reached residence of PML-Q president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and inquired about his welfare. Sources told Online Care taker PM met Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence. The two exchanged views on overall political and economic situation of the country. Sources said Caretaker PM inquired about welfare of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain. Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi also accompanied caretaker PM.

Interim bail of PTI founder, Bushra Bibi extended till Jan 16

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has extended interim bail of PTI founder in six cases and Bushra BIBI in one case till January 16. Duty judge Ahmad Arshid Mehmood took up six cases in respect of PTI founder and one case of Bushra Bibi for hearing Tuesday. Bushra Bibi appeared in the court along with her lawyers Khalid Yousof Chaudhry, Umar Niazi and Usman Gul in the court. The court allowed Bushra Bibi to go after marking her attendance.

Sheikh files appeal against rejection of nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Awami Muslim League chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid on Tuesday lodged an appeal against the rejection of his nomination papers from the NA-56 constituency in Rawalpindi. In a statement to a private TV channel, Sheikh Rashid's lawyer asserted that the receipts for rest house arrears are fabricated, emphasizing that Sheikh Rashid never stayed at the rest house. The legal representative urged the annulment of the returning officer's decision to reject the nomination papers. The rejection of Sheikh Rashid's nomination papers was officially communicated on January 1.

Akhuwat Foundation denies liability for fraudulent use of its name

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Akhuwat Foundation on Tuesday distanced itself from any responsibility for fraudulent activities conducted under its name, emphasizing non-accountability for dishonest transactions. In a statement, a spokesman of the Akhuwat Foundation clarified that Akhuwat Islamic Finance operates as an interest-free loan provider, offering loans and managing installments through its branch network. The spokesperson noted that individuals are misusing the institution's name and educational services for fraudulent activities.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Provincial Minister Muhammad Ismail and Member GB Assembly, Amjad Hussain Adv in a group photo with Musa Ali, who traveled from near Siachen to Islamabad on a horse with the message of peace.

Health camps to be established in FDE schools to ensure children well-being

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education an Professional Training, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health is initiating comprehensive health camp for students within the institutions working under the ambit of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to assess their health condition and ensure the well-being of the students. According to the official sources, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), in that regard, has directed all the Director colleges and schools and the Area Education Officers Rural area, Islamabad to arrange health camp in the educational institutions. FDE, in this regard, requested to direct all Head of Institutions to compile the necessary data of their students to share with the Health Camp upon their arrival in the concern institution and compile the date by 05-01-2024. Meanwhile, commenting the arranging of health these camps, Rifat Jabeen, Director Academics, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) while talking to APP on Tuesday said that the aim of this activity is to ensure the health and well being of the students. She said that the camps will start work in next two weeks. She said that FDE has directed the heads of educational institutions specifically to encourage students to actively participate in health camps without compromising routine academic activities. She further informed that the doctors team from all major public and private hospitals of federal capital will be hired for the check up of schools children. Under this Program, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training had already distributes 'Hygiene Kits' among students.

Swat Press Club office bearers elected unopposed

By Haroon Siraj
SWAT: Hazrat Bilal, chairman of the election committee of Swat Press Club, has announced the office-bearers for the year 2024 who were all elected unopposed. According to details, Swat Press Club and Swat Union of Journalists and Government Body elections for the year 2024 have been completed yesterday. Sherin Zada was elected as President of Swat Press Club unopposed for the second consecutive term while Hazrat Ali Bacha was elected unopposed President of Swat Union of Journalists in the annual elections of Swat Press Club for the Year 2024. Mohammad Hayat Chaman Senior Vice President Swat, Vice President Parvaiz Alam Papa, General Secretary Fazal Khaliq Khan, Deputy General Secretary Shiraz Khan, Joint Secretary Umar Farooq, Muhammad Shafiqullah Finance Secretary were elected for Swat press club. Hazrat Ali Bacha President Senior Vice President Javed Iqbal Mir Khankhel, Vice President Muhammad Khaliq Sagar, General Secretary Khurshid Ali, Deputy General Secretary Shahzad Naveed, Joint Secretary Murad Ali and Finance Secretary Shah Asad Ali were elected in Swat Union of Journalist. Similarly members for the Governing Body, Fazal Rahim Khan, Salim ullah Athar, Niaz Ahmad Khan, Ismat Ali Akhun and Ifikhar Ali have been elected in governing body. On this occasion, an oath-taking ceremony was held, Deputy Commissioner Swat Dr Qasim Ali Khan, DPO Swat Shafi ullah Gandapur were also present at the occasion. Election committee Chairman Hazrat Bilal and Saeed Khan president Swat bar announced the cabinet and later on the Chairman Election committee Hazrat Bilal took oath of the newly elected cabinets.

Layer of fog envelops Islamabad city as cold wave tightens its grip

ISLAMABAD (APP): The biting cold combined with dense fog threw routine life out of gear and disturbed traffic flow on roads here on Tuesday. Islamabad Traffic police official talking to a Private news channel urged citizens to stay home and avoid unnecessary travelling as dense fog has disrupted traffic at several places due to low visibility. He also appealed to citizens to drive slowly and switch on fog lights to avoid traffic accidents. In an unexpected turn of weather, dense fog has descended upon various areas of the federal capital, causing disruptions in the daily lives of residents, said a motorist.

Dr. Shahzad urges political parties to contest upcoming polls on manifesto

ISLAMABAD (APP): Opposition leader in Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem has urged political parties to contest the upcoming elections based on a manifesto focused on public welfare. Speaking during a session in the Senate, he emphasized the need for unity among political parties to address the challenges being faced by the country. Dr. Shahzad Waseem also called for economic stability and the continuity of policies beneficial to the country.



ISLAMABAD: UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif.

542,637 patients were provided treatment in BKMC in 2023

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Bacha Khan Medical Complex (BKMC-MTI), Swabi has released 2023 annual data regarding facilities provided to patients. According to the report, in 2023, total 542,637 patients were treated at the hospital, 331,312 patients were facilitated in outpatient department (OPD), and 211,325 patients received emergency care. Throughout the year, the hospital conducted 660,505 different types of tests, performed 12,142 dialysis procedures, and carried out 6,908 surgeries of various kinds. The report further reveals that a total of 68,320 X-rays, 22,188 ultrasounds, 11,417 CT scans, and 1,029 endoscopies were performed. Additionally, 12,509 births were recorded in the hospital in the year 2023. Last year, the hospital admitted a total of 37,545 patients. According to spokesperson of BKMC-MTI, significant initiatives were undertaken in 2023 to improve treatment facilities for patients. The Programmatic Management of Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis TB (PMDT) and an HIV/AIDS center were also established, where not only diagnosis but also free treatment is provided, the spokesperson said. Spokesperson stated that, in the best interest of public convenience, the hospital has started an Outpatient Department (OPD) for infectious disease patients. Additionally, newly established surgical, isolation, and ICU wards are now operational, with fully functional emergency services catering to both surgical and medical emergencies, and new operation theaters and surgical ICU are expected to be functional soon, focal person added.



Independent Report
KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's low-cost airline, has partnered with 1-Link to streamline payments for flight bookings. Under this innovative collaboration, passengers will have a dedicated time window to confirm their bookings by completing the payment process, offering unmatched flexibility and convenience. 1-Link, which is Pakistan's largest payment gateway and switch system will enable customers with any bank account to easily complete their bookings by making payments from their phone or laptop, eliminating the need to visit a physical Fly Jinnah office for the channels available to customers. Payments can be made through various means, including any bank's branch or ATM connected to the extensive 1-Link network. Additionally, customers can swiftly complete their transactions through their bank's website or mobile app integrated with 1-Link. This diversity of payment options empowers travelers to choose the method that best suits their preferences.



ISLAMABAD: Engr. Aamir Hasan, Member, PMIC is chairing the meeting at PMIC, PM Office, Islamabad on PSDP project titled 'Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad' and getting briefing from the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing & Works, PakPWD, NHA, ICT, CDA, RDA & Punjab Prison Department.