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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet.

FTO should accelerate efforts to increase the registration and disposal of complaints: President

FTO resolves 8,128 tax-related complaints in 2023: Ombudsman briefs Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday visited the Federal Tax Ombudsman office where he was informed that the institution resolved 8,128 complaints against the maladministration of tax and customs authorities during the year 2023 as compared to 6,106 complaints in 2022.

During the briefing to the president, Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), Dr Asif Mahmood Jah said that the registration of complaints increased by almost 24% as 8,076 complaints were filed in 2023, compared to 6,480 in 2022.

The FTO also provided a relief of Rs 17.74 billion to taxpayers in 2023 as compared to Rs

7 billion in the previous year.

Besides Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), the advisors to FTO, regional heads, and senior officials of the FTO attended the meeting. Dr Asif Mahmood Jah briefed the president about the FTO's overall performance, outreach and initiatives taken for the facilitation of taxpayers.

He informed that FTO provided free-of-charge justice to complainants against the maladministration and high-handedness of tax officials within 60 days. The average time taken for the disposal of complaints had been reduced to 44 days during the last year.

Highlighting the achievements of FTO, he stated that FTO was a

public-relief-oriented organization that had provided tax relief to low-paid employees, teachers, salaried class, pensioners, and purchasers of vehicles through its decisions.

The FTO was making efforts to increase its outreach and registration. It is planning to open new regional offices, establishing a helpline, and raising awareness through seminars, and interactions with the business community in various cities of the country, he added.

The ombudsman said that FTO was also actively working to create awareness about its role and services in tax matters using social media and mass messaging through cellular companies.



PIA inducts one A-320 aircraft into its fleet

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has inducted one A-320 aircraft into its fleet. A ceremony to this effect was held in Islamabad on Wednesday.

This was one of the two aircrafts which were stuck in Malaysia over payment dispute.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister's Adviser on Aviation Air Marshal retired Farhat Hussain Khan said the induction would enhance the revenue of the national flag carrier. He further said the second aircraft would also be inducted in two weeks.

Won't let N-League run away from polls: Bilawal

LAHORE (INP): In a fiery pre-election salvo, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has thrown shade at his former ally, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), saying that he won't let the Nawaz Sharif-led party "run away from polls".

The nation is getting ready to cast ballots in the general election which is set to take place on February 8 — after much ado — and while the PPP is seemingly in an all-out electioneering mode, the PML-N's low-key electioneering has raised eyebrows as it delays ticket issuance to candidates.

Accusing the PML-N of "always running from elections" in their Lahore stronghold on Wednesday, Bilawal has upped the ante in the race for the upcoming polls, as he also said: "I heard the PML-N ruled the

NA-127 constituency, but I can't see its visibility here."

"We won't let Noon League run away from elections. We are on the ground, where is the PML-N?" Bilawal wondered as he continued his tirade of the Nawaz-led party not doing enough for electioneering and "undermining the electoral process".

"I can't even see the PTI [Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf] over here," he said, assailing the embattled party, which just secured its iconic 'bat' electoral symbol earlier in the day after a court order.

Just like the PPP, the PTI was also complaining about not getting a level-playing field. However, as the days pass, the PPP chairman — who became Pakistan's youngest foreign minister last year — has shifted focus on his campaign "to win".

Fazlur Rahman achieves great success during Afghanistan visit

ISLAMABAD/KABUL (Online): Maulana Fazlur Rahman, head of Jamiat Ulema Islam, had a great success during his visit to Afghanistan.

According to the sources, a one-on-one meeting between Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Haibatullah Akhundzada was held outside the city of Kabul.

During the meeting, the two leaders also agreed to increase mutual communication between Pakistan and the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan and to bring peace and stability in the region. Maulana Fazlur Rahman is the first Pakistani leader to have met Mulla Haibatullah.



Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick addressing a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine" Organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America, Quaid-e-Azam University in Islamabad.

Cabinet approves reconstitution of committee on missing persons

Approves regularisation of 227 daily-wage teachers; PM vows to continue anti-polio mission till its complete eradication

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Wednesday approved the reconstitution of its committee on missing persons headed by the law minister.

The reconstitution is being done on the recommendation of the Ministry of Interior. The position became vacant after the resignation of the previous head of the committee, Sarfraz Bugti.

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also approved regularisation of 227 daily-

wage teachers as proposed by the Federal Directorate of Education and recommended by the Federal Public Service Commission in line with the Islamabad High Court's decision of 2018.

For the construction of the Supreme Court Karachi Registry building, the cabinet on the recommendation of Ministry of Law and Justice as endorsed by the Supreme Court Building Committee, approved the transfer of federal courts and tribunals across the city.

It approved the sum-

mary regarding the operationalization of the Livestock and Dairy Development Board so as to fulfill the legal requirements for the appointment of chief executive, in line with the decisions of the Islamabad and Balochistan high courts.

The cabinet gave in principle approval to the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority Ordinance 2024 and forwarded it to the Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases.

PM Kakar vowed to continue the anti-polio

mission of the government till the complete eradication of the crippling disease.

The meeting offered Fateha for the security officials protecting the polio eradication team who were martyred in a terrorist incident in Bajaur.

The prime minister paid tribute to the martyred personnel and said the State would not forget their invaluable sacrifice for the homeland.

He said the officials sacrificed their lives for the safety of future generations.

He said the terrorists could not deter the resolve of the nation to fight polio.

The cabinet approved the decisions of the Economic Coordination Committee taken during the meetings held on 13th, 15th and 20th December, 2023.

The cabinet gave approval to the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on State Owned Enterprises on 28th December, 2023.

It approved the decisions taken by the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases in a meeting held on 22nd December, 2023.

Supreme Court Justice Mazahir Naqvi resigns amid pending reference

ISLAMABAD (INP): Supreme Court Justice Mazahir Ali Akbar Naqvi has tendered his resignation to the President, citing the decision as a result of the challenging circumstances surrounding his position. Justice Naqvi expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to serve in both the Lahore High Court and the Supreme Court but stated that continuing under the current conditions is untenable.

The resignation, once approved by the President, will leave two vacancies in the Supreme Court.

It is noteworthy that a reference against Justice Mazahir Naqvi is awaiting consideration by the Supreme Judicial Council.

Recently, a 3-member Supreme Court bench dismissed a request for an injunction on the council's proceedings.

Justice Naqvi had previously submitted a detailed response to the show cause issued by the Supreme Judicial Council, denying the allegations against him. He emphasized that while the council can receive information, it lacks the authority to act on any complaint against a judge.

In his comprehensive reply, Justice Naqvi argued that the council's orders are in violation of established rules, contending that individuals providing information to the council should not play a role in the proceedings as per the rules.

PTI founder Imran Khan out of election race

LAHORE (INP): Justice Tariq Nadeem of the appellate tribunal of the Lahore High Court (LHC) Wednesday upheld the returning officer's verdict rejecting PTI founding chairman Imran Khan's nomination papers for constituency NA-122.

Imran's nomination papers were rejected from NA-122 (Lahore) and NA-89 (Mianwali) on December 30. The verdict issued by the RO for NA-122 stated that the papers were rejected on "moral" and other grounds.

In the detailed decision, the election officer quoted the judgment of the additional session judge (Islamabad) that established the conviction of the respondent related to the offense of moral turpitude.

Similarly, Imran Khan's appeal against the RO verdict rejecting his nomination papers from NA-89 Mianwali has also been rejected.

Mushaal highlights double standards in global discourse on Kashmir & Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Wednesday highlighted the prevailing double standards in the global discourse on Kashmir and Palestine.

She was addressing a seminar on "US policies on the issues of Kashmir and Palestine", organized by Area Study Center for Africa, North and South America of the Quaid-e-Azam University.

The event, which saw participation from distinguished speakers including Ambassador of Iran in Pakistan Reza Amiri Mughaddam, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Ambassador Ali Sarwar Naqvi, and Ambassador Naila Chohan, drew a sig-

nificant audience comprising students, media professionals, and members of civil society.

Mushaal said the world appeared to be divided between those who supported the oppressive regimes and those who advocated for the rights of the oppressed.

In the contemporary global landscape, she added, moral values and principles took a back seat to economic opportunities, power dynamics, and materialistic gains.

She pointed out the shifts in the United States policies towards Kashmir and Palestine, which, she said, were dictated by their own strategic interests rather than a steadfast commitment to democratic principles, human rights, and the right to self-determination.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with the officials of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) during his visit to FTO Office.

State institutions should have confidence on rule of law: IHC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has remarked state institutions should have trust on rule of law.

He further remarked states institutions don't have confidence on courts therefore people are being lifted.

He gave these remarks during hearing of petition filed by Imaan Mazari in IHC regarding recovery of Baloch students Wednesday.

He observed the day this cycle ran reverse then no enforced disappearance will take place. The state does not need to be afraid of any one. State has to deal with all. The concept of missing persons prevails in our country. There is no such like thing in other countries.

He further remarked people of agencies will have to be prosecuted. Trial runs for 3 years. State provides protection to institutions. State can do every thing.

Attorney General (AG) Mansoor Awan told the court the petitioner Imaan Mazari provided the list of missing Baloch students. 9 among missing students have been recovered.

Efforts are underway to recover 15 missing students.

ECP to unveil preliminary candidate lists today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The preliminary lists of candidates will be released by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday, and candidates can opt to withdraw their nomination papers until Friday.

According to the spokesperson of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the process of hearing appeals against the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers by the appellate tribunals for the general elections 2024 concluded Wednesday.

These tribunals are being headed by judges of the High Courts. Electoral symbols will be assigned on Saturday, coinciding with the release of the final list of candidates on the same day.

Solangi says Current situation in country better than 2008, 2013 elections period

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday reiterated the commitment that general elections would eventually be held on February 8 in the country.

Talking to the media, he said that in the past elections were conducted even in the worst conditions.

Murtaza Solangi pointed out that the current situation in the country was much better than the years 2008 and 2013.

He said that the government had been in constant contact with the Election Commission of

Pakistan since the first meeting of the Caretaker Cabinet.

The minister said the communication with ECP was underway on the day basis and his visit was part of the routine communication process. He said he had not met the Chief Election Commissioner Raja Sikandar Sultan.

He expressed the optimism that security situation in the country would further improve in the coming days.

He said that Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ECP would provide information regarding the foreign media teams' arrival in Pakistan for election coverage.



PESHAWAR: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Lawyers are celebrating after the Peshawar High Court verdict in favor of the party intra-party elections and electoral symbol of bat, at High Court in Peshawar.

PTI gets back bat symbol as PHC annuls ECP decision

PESHAWAR (Online): Peshawar High Court (PHC) after hearing arguments in PTI intra-party election and election symbol case annulled the decision of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and restored the bat election symbol of PTI.

The court said that as a political party, PTI is entitled to the election symbol of the bat, and the election symbol should be given.

ECP's decision of December 22 is unconstitutional. PTI intra-party election certificate should be released on the website.

The case was heard by a two-member bench comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Syed Arshad Ali of the PHC, in which the lawyers of the parties objecting to intra-party election of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) gave arguments.

Earlier, the lawyers of PTI and Election Commission had completed their arguments last day. During the hearing, Qazi Javed Advocate said in his arguments that my client was the former district general secretary of PTI, who was found out from the media that intra-party Elections are taking place. He wanted to participate in the election but was not given the opportunity.

Justice Ijaz Anwar said that he did not say that the intra-party elections should be conducted again. If the Election Commission annulled the intra-party elections, then you should have called for re-elections.

If you were from the party, then you should have objected to withdrawing the party symbol, but you did not, to which Qazi Javed said that we were not given a chance in the elections and went to the Election Commission against it.

11 family members found dead in Lakki Marwat

LAKKI MARWAT (INP): A total of 11 bodies, including children and women have been found in a house located in the town of Takhti Khel, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) on Wednesday.

According to police statements, the discovery was made by the brother of the deceased household's head upon his return. The initial investigations by the local police suggested that

the unfortunate incident is believed to have happened two days ago from the consumption of a toxic substance mixed in the food. The police officials claimed that the relative of the deceased family allegedly bought food from Waziristan two days ago. However, the local police team arrived at the scene and cordoned off the area to collect evidence related to the case.

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Maulana's mission

If one of the main purposes of JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman's visit to Afghanistan was to convince the Afghan Taliban to rein in the banned TTP and prevent the terrorist group from using Afghan soil as a launchpad for anti-Pakistan activities, either the message did not get through, or the TTP are in no mood to listen.

The maulana received official protocol upon his arrival in Kabul and on Monday met the 'Islamic Emirate's' Prime Minister Mullah Hassan Akhund. Incidentally, on the day the maulana was meeting the Taliban leadership, the TTP launched a murderous assault on policemen escorting polio vaccinators in Bajaur. At least six police personnel were martyred in the attack.

Mullah Akhund also brought up the issue of Afghan migrants' expulsion from Pakistan with the maulana, decrying the allegedly 'cruel' treatment meted out to his compatriots by that country.

Maulana Fazl, who was accompanied by a delegation, also had Pakistan's top diplomat in Kabul with him during his engagements, indicating that the JUI-F chief's visit has state sanction. According to media reports, Mullah Akhund assured the JUI-F chief that his government bore no malice towards Pakistan, while adding that they would not let Afghan soil be used against any country.

The Afghan Taliban have long denied that their country is being used by terrorist groups to target regional states, while Pakistan has firmly argued that the TTP have havens on the other side of the Durand Line.

While maulana sahib's efforts are welcome, questions arise about how effective these will prove to be in actually bringing down militancy. It should be remembered that in 2022, a delegation of Pakistani Deobandi ulema, led by Mufti Taqi Usmani, made a similar trip to Afghanistan and met both the Afghan Taliban as well as the TTP leadership.

While the Pakistani divines were received with great reverence in Afghanistan, their visit failed to dampen the TTP's appetite for violence against this country. Even if Maulana Fazl is able to convince the Afghan Taliban that controlling militancy is in Afghanistan's interest, will Kabul's rulers be able to rein in their ideological comrades in the TTP?

At the end of the day, both the Afghan Taliban and the TTP — though bound by ideology and worldview — are two different organisations, with separate leadership structures.

For the Taliban, the marching orders are received from the Kandahar-based Mullah Hibatullah Akhundzada, while the TTP has its own hierarchy. The Taliban can and should apply pressure on the TTP to stop attacking Pakistan.

But while some militants may be reverential to the clergy, ultimately they are free agents, and not bound by the usual rules of engagement. Therefore, the days ahead will tell if Maulana Fazl's mission has been a success.



Mahir Ali

Across almost six decades of investigative journalism, John Pilger unsurprisingly torchlit many of what George W. Bush described as "the darkest corners of the world", relentlessly exposing the realities edited out of the mainstream Western media's distorted narrative.

The concept of speaking truth to power may have been sullied by overuse, but Pilger stands out among those who seriously made the effort — and, in the process, made a discernible difference.

It's hard to know where to begin in evaluating his multifarious — and multimedia — contributions to reportage. I first encountered him, indirectly, in the 1980s when ITV in Britain re-broadcast some of his groundbreaking 1970s documentaries. It's hard to be sure, but most probably the first one I viewed was The Quiet Mutiny, an account of small but consequential revolts among American troops in Vietnam that invariably went unreported in the US.

This was followed by further reports on Vietnam and Cambodia, in the latter case notably a soul-shattering report on the aftermath of the depredations decreed by the Khmer Rouge, Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia. As an eyewitness to the consequences of genocide, he was inevitably appalled when the US and China conspired in a cover-up only because they resented the fact that it was Vietnamese forces that had liberated Phnom Penh. Pilger, who died on the eve of 2024, was born

in Sydney in 1939 and joined the Australian city's press corps as a teenager before travelling to Europe, beginning with Italy. The Reuters news agency was his first way station in London, from where he moved on to a 20-plus year residency at the Daily Mirror, where he was elevated to the post of chief foreign correspondent.

Pilger's days at the Mirror were numbered once Robert Maxwell acquired the tabloid, but he found a potentially wider-reaching outlet at ITV, which hosted his film reports, interviews and some of his longer documentaries. Beleguared as it was in the Thatcher and Blair years, British media — or at least sections of it — stood up to the challenges from the British establishment, the US State Department and CIA, and even the Israel lobby.

Pilger latched on to the dilemma of the Israeli-occupied territories in the early 1970s, and his pair of documentaries titled Palestine is Still the Issue are separated by almost 30 years, illuminating how little has changed. Recently re-watching the second of these documentaries, I was reminded of Pilger's interview technique with subjects he probably found repulsive, notably the Israeli regime's official spokesperson: his tone never got belligerent, but his questions gave them just enough rope to expose the absurdity of their contentions.

There are some conflicts to which Pilger did not turn his attention, including Balochistan and Kashmir, which is a pity. And his area of operations as a forensic investigator across the decades stretched from South Africa, Palestine and Iraq to the cre-ation of Bangladesh and the absurdity of 'India shining', as well as Myanmar, East Ti-mor, the US (he witnessed the assassination

of Robert F. Kennedy from metres away), Nicaragua, Venezuela, the Czechoslovak Republic and Ukraine, among other regions. His laser-focus on his native Aus-tralia related chiefly, but not exclusively, to the horrendous treatment of the colonised continent's indigenous population, and he devoted several documentaries (and thousands of words) to the subject. Not surprisingly, he also delved extensively into the woes of his adopted country, and his last documentary reflected on a subject that had bothered him for at least half a century: the creeping privatisation and spiralling neg-lect of Britain's vau-nted National Health Service.

As he would have proudly acknowledged, Pilger belonged to a long line of Western journalists who have defied the odds — often their own governments and their allies — to sift the truth from propaganda or PR, and to report what they see, notably Martha Gellhorn, Wilfred Burchett, Paul Foot, Robert Fisk and Seymour Hersh.

Pilger wasn't perfect and very occasionally succumbed to the leftist disease of glossing over the inadequacies or repressive tendencies of regimes justifiably opposed to the long arm of American imperialism. In my humble opinion, it's possible to point out the flaws of the Ortega regime 2.0 or the cruelty of the mullahcracy in Tehran without lapsing into the "Washington consensus", without losing sight of the hypocrisy that unfailingly guides the US worldview. But Pilger was at most a peripheral cult in this sense.

He leaves behind a visual and written legacy that will serve humankind for decades, and although he wasn't alone in his endeavours, in many ways he was one of a kind. -- Courtesy Dawn

Neoliberal approach



Nazir A. Jogezi

The advent of neoliberalism has been marked by the transition from an administrative state, which was previously accountable for both the economy and human welfare, to one that empowers multinational corporations. This transition implements systems and ideologies that re-shape individuals into economic entrepreneurs and transfer accountability for domains such as education, healthcare, and security.

This represents more than a mere revival of liberal principles that regard self-sufficiency and independence as prerequisites for self-respect, self-esteem etc. Rather, it signifies a disregard for collective responsibility for the vulnerable and marginalised and an emphasis on enterprise and the capitalisation of existence via calculated investments and actions.

The public service institutions that initially implemented the novel modes of governmentality were educational institutions and universities. But the implementation of neoliberal policies has significantly transformed the discourse, structure, and role of education within society.

Academic institutions, including schools and universities, are undergoing significant changes to cultivate subjects who bear the responsibilities of entrepreneurs and operate in every aspect of their lives. As a result, policy currently frames and justifies education as a venue for constructing

human capital and fostering economic productivity beginning from early schooling and continuing through higher education.

The underperformance of young individuals on international standardised tests, or their failure to complete secondary education, constitutes a policy issue as it imposes an economic burden on the nation. Put simply, the lack of success exhibited by young individuals in their pursuit of education is perceived as an economic issue, given that education is primarily regarded as economically significant.

A similar argument posits that public education is unproductive, excessively uni-oni-sed, indifferent to the needs of its students, devoid of accountability, and inadequate in fostering the development of human capital. Neoliberal strategies have included market practices such as the chartered status of failing schools in the United States and their quasi-marketisation in other countries. Public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives, such as voucher programmes, serve as a means to reduce the burden of the state in terms of public education. Lack of investment in education and indifference to the deteriorating quality of education contribute to the desire for PPP. As a consequence, an alternative approach is to propose the privatisation of public education. Within the framework of neoliberal education, institutions strive to create the illusion that they are fulfilling the expectations of their "clients". This is accomplished through various means, such as strategically prioritising exam-oriented instruction, allocating additional support to students deemed likely to perform

well on assessments, attracting academically superior students who will elevate the school's standing, and reallocating resources away from students with special needs.

Critics frequently consult the works of theorists such as Foucault, who delineates the instruments of disciplinary authority as hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and their amalgamation within a procedure known as the examination. Normalising judgement creates a consistent benchmark for every learner, whereas hierarchical observation oversees and controls conduct. Curriculum and standardised examinations employ these instruments to quantify and regulate individuals by delineating their worth in relation to a predetermined standard. This standardised approach exacerbates inequities and has adverse effects on teaching, learning, and institutional culture. It compromises inclusion in terms of identities, ideologies, ethnicity and history from the outset. Furthermore, it undermines holistic human development, erodes the capacity for critical thinking, and most significantly, transforms education into an afterthought rather than something that originates from individual and societal requirements. This mode of education also strengthens social dichotomies and empowers those in authority and the privileged. For continuous attempts to improve education, the emphasis should not be solely on its economic methods and ramifications, but rather on the broader social welfare through public ownership and the promotion of diversity and inclusion. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

EU keen to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in various fields, including trade: Ambassador

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the European Union H.E. Dr. Rima Kionka, Wednesday said that the EU is keen on enhancing cooperation with Pakistan and focusing on exploring more avenues of trade, and investments in multiple sectors like information technology, surgical instruments, sports business, women entrepreneurs, education and textile industry.

In an exclusive interview with a private

news channel said that the EU was continuing support to Pakistan's economic development, adding, that the bonds between the two nations are much older which is cementing with each passing day.

Answering a question about educational cooperation, she said our institutional partnerships between universities of EU and Pakistan in the field of science and technology and higher education are seeking more potential

for better outcomes, adding, that EU application for 2024 scholarships is open for Pakistani students, they can apply for different study fields through EU program and enjoy their higher full funded studies in European countries.

She said that highest number of Pakistani students have been receiving scholarships to study in European universities under the EU's flagship program this year.



Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, is presenting the commemorative shield to Dr. Jeanette Forbes, Scottish Chambers Ambassador for Pakistan. Mr. Asif Inam & Abdul Mohamin Khan, VPs FPCCI; Mr. Khurram Ijaz & Mr. Shakil Ahmed Dhingra, former VPs FPCCI and other prominent business personalities were also present on the occasion.

Minister says: EV charging stations to come up at 50 locations of Punjab province soon

ISLAMABAD (APP): Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad Wednesday said that Punjab was making a big push for electric vehicles in controlling environmental pollution where over 50 charging stations will soon be set up at various points of the province. Talking to a private news channel, he said that CM had issued the first E-Rickshaw license while providing over 10,000 electric bikes

will be distributed among graduate university students, adding, 2,000 electric three-wheeler bikes will also be granted to special individuals free of interest.

He said that the government's historic initiative aims to become a manufacturing hub for electric vehicles, EV batteries, and components, adding, that the electric three-wheeler market is the most ripe market right now for electrification.

Workers' remittances record \$2.4 bn inflow in Dec

ISLAMABAD (APP): The overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.4 billion during December 2023, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday said.

In terms of growth, during the month under review, remittances increased by 5.4 per cent on month on month basis and 13.4 per cent on year on year basis.

Rupee gains 10 paise against Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistani Rupee on Wednesday witnessed an appreciation of 10 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs281.12 against the previous day's closing of Rs281.22. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market stood at Rs280.5 and Rs283 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 94 paise to close at Rs307.16 against the last day's closing of Rs308.10, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Business community representatives meet SM Tanveer

LAHORE: The representatives of business community of Lahore and Faisalabad met Caretaker Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce SM Tanveer, here on Wednesday.

Problems being faced by the industry were discussed during the meeting. The delegation congratulated the minister on success of United Business Group in the election of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI). The minister said, "We have to solve business community problems together. By promoting the industry, the direction of the economy will be corrected. The economy will move forward only

when the wheel of the industry will move."

SM Tanveer said due to efforts of the government and the hard work of farmers, production of cotton had doubled this year. The government would also achieve record production of wheat.

One-window facility had been given to investors for setting up new factories.

After Lahore, he said, Business Facilitation Centers (BFCs) were in the final stages of completion in five major cities including Faisalabad. He said the success in election of the Federal Chambers was a manifestation of confidence of the business community in the leadership of UBG.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers cutting wood into pieces for selling purpose at his workplace in the Federal Capital.

DC Khyber assures Businessmen dealing in Pak, Afghan trade of facilitation for smooth sailing of trade

PESHAWAR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Khyber, Sanaullah Khan has said the government believes in the facilitation of businessmen and keeping in view the prevailing harsh economic situation it is need of the hour to take all possible measures for the smooth sailing of trade and commerce in the country.

He expressed these views while talking with a

delegation of businessmen dealing in Pak-Afghan trade, according to a press statement issued here on Wednesday.

The delegation was led by the Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi. Other participants of the delegation included Former VP of SCCI, Engr. Manzoor Ellahi, Vice Chairman All Pakistan.



MULTAN: Deputy DS Railway Saima Bashir cutting the ribbon during the opening ceremony of the inauguration of the dining sleeper of Bahauding Zakria Express.

Commissioner directs to ensure smooth fertilizer's supply among farmers

MULTAN (APP): Local Commissioner Aamir Khattak ordered to ensure a smooth supply of fertilizers to cope with its increasing demand among farmers.

Chairing a meeting here Wednesday, he maintained not exceeding urea's prices beyond the purchasing limit of farmers. Regarding the preparation for the upcoming general election, Amir Khattak directed to the requisite authority to complete all-out

arrangements to carry out the needful.

Extending "full cooperation" to the EC body, he asked to expedite measures for marking places of polling stations by choosing the dedicated staff to conduct the poll smoothly.

He ruled out compromising on the code of conduct of the Election Commission to hold free and fair elections in the divisions across the country.

Gold rates decline by Rs.300

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.300 and was sold at Rs. 216,100 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.216,400 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs. 257 to Rs. 185,271 from Rs. 185,528 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs. 169,832 from Rs. 170,067 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

SNGPL replaces 254 km outdated gas pipeline at cost of Rs 709m last year

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has replaced 254 kilometres outdated gas pipeline in last fiscal year 2022-23 at a cost of Rs 709 million to address the gas leakage complaints. Deputy Chief Engineer Operations SNGPL Multan region, Hussain Zafar, while talking to APP here on Wednesday said that the department had conducted scanning of areas

across the region after every three years to examine the condition of sui gas pipeline. He said that the outdated lines were replaced after scanning. He said that the scanning process was underway at various places to check the pipelines. He informed that they have set target to replace 235 kilometres outdated gas line for current fiscal year as Rs 510 million would be spent on the replacement of lines.

Naqvi lays foundation stone of GOR-9 project at DHA phase 9

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi laid the foundation stone of GOR-9 project at DHA Phase 9, here on Wednesday. A total of 29 houses were established for the officers of the Punjab government at GOR-9 and for this purpose 56 kanals of land has been allocated. Addressing the ceremony of laying the foundation stone of GOR-9, the CM stated, "Earlier, we laid the foundation stone for the construction of residences of low ranked government employees, and today laid the foundation stone for the construction of official residences."

The government employees have to wait for a long time in order to acquire their residences, he said. "We are striving that the officers should not have to wait for their residences" he added. Mohsin Naqvi apprised that 29 houses are going to be constructed in GOR-9. Hopefully, the residences would be built before the stipulated 15 months timeline. "We are making a consultation jointly with the Chief Secretary for establishing one main GOR near the Mall Road so that the shortage of official residences can be fulfilled" he said. He said the problems increase manifold due to non-allocation of houses for the staff members and government officers, apprising that concrete measures would be taken with regard to shortage of residences in coming 10 to 15 days. High-Tech design smart houses are being built in GOR-9, he apprised. The problem of residences would be resolved with the establishment of GOR-9, he added.



ABBOTTABAD: Deputy Commissioner Abbotsabad, Khalid Iqbal presiding over the polio review meeting for anti-polio campaign, in Abbotsabad.

Rawalpindi police launch Pak's first regular school classes for transgenders

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a major development, the Rawalpindi police have launched regular school classes catering specifically to the transgender population of the city. The classes, conducted at Islamia Higher Secondary School in Liaquat Bagh, have garnered support from the district administration and the Education Department. A spokesperson for the Rawalpindi police told media on Wednesday that 52 transgender individuals had been enrolled in these special classes, emphasizing the significance of providing education as a fundamental right. This initiative is aligned with the broader efforts of the Rawalpindi police, which recently established Pakistan's inaugural Transgender Protection Center, he added. The spokesperson highlighted the multifaceted approach of the Transgender Protection Center, which extends beyond education.

1500 liter adulterated milk wasted

MULTAN (APP): A team of food watchdogs disposed of about 1500 liters of substandard milk after holding picket at one of the main external routes of the city. Team of food watchdogs disposed of about 1500 liters of substandard milk after holding picket at one of the main external routes of the city. The checking was conducted at different external and internal routes of the city early in the morning under the supervision of Director Operation South of Punjab Food Authority (PFA) Shahid Maggessi.



PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of Lecturers appointed under a Project in Government Colleges meeting with Governor Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali.

Governor urged to rehabilitate lecturers appointed under projects in merged districts

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of lecturers of colleges situated in newly merged districts called on Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Wednesday and urged him to rehabilitate lecturers appointed under various projects. The delegation was comprised of districts, including Kurram, Waziristan, FR Bannu, Khyber, Kohat, Mirali Dara Adam Kail, and Alizai. The governor was informed that about 42 lecturers have been suspended by the Managing Unit Higher Education Department. Speaking on the occasion, the Governor assured cooperation to the delegation and directed the secretary of higher education and Chief Secretary to resolve the issue. He urged lecturers to work with dedication and said that lecturers would not be removed.

Two-day book fair inaugurated at Lower Dir

PESHAWAR (APP): The District Administration, National Book Foundation, Youth Department and Town Municipal Administration jointly arranged a two-day book fair for youngsters in Lower Dir on Wednesday. Deputy Commissioner, Wazir Khan and Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Nida Iqbal inaugurated the book festival that was the first event of its kind in Lower Dir. Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that the event was arranged to invite attention of the youth towards benefits of book reading.

Passing out ceremony held for 96 prison staff's success

HARIPUR (APP): The Passing out ceremony was held at the Prison Staff Training Academy in Haripur on Wednesday marking the successful completion of training for 96 prison staff members. The event encompassed foundational training for jail warders, along with advanced courses for the promotion of head warders and chief paid warders. Inspector General (DIG) of Prisons Hazara Division, Muhammad Naem Khan, graced the occasion as the special guest. Amir Khan, the Superintendent of Central Jail Haripur, also attended the event. Addressing the participants of the ceremony, Academy Commandant Amin Shoaib extended heartfelt congratulations to the graduating prison staff. He provided a comprehensive overview of the academy's performance and achievements during the training period. DIG Naem Khan while addressing the ceremony emphasized the pivotal role of training in enhancing the capabilities of prison staff and the academy's crucial contribution to this process. He assured that funds and necessary facilities would be promptly provided to further bolster the academy's training programs.

3 killed, ASI injured in encounter

FAISALABAD (APP): Three under-custody accused were killed while an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) received multiple injuries during a police encounter in the area of Sadar police station. Police spokesman said here on Wednesday that Sadar police had caught three accused including Akhlaq alias Akhlaq Don, Waqar alias Qari residents of Chak No. 189-RB Gidari and Shehbaz alias Moota resident of Chak No. 113-RB Badhumali few time ago over their involvement in a murder cum attempt to murder case. The police was carrying these accused for investigation and recovery of case property.

AJK PM orders for early arrest of accused of UK based local expatriate

MIRPUR (AJK): (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has taken strong notice of the recent cold-blooded murder of a young Kashmiri expatriate by unknown assailants near Islamabad international airport on his return from abroad. The AJK premier expressed his profound grief and sorrow over this tragic incident and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. The Prime Minister has also directed the Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir to contact the IG Punjab police to ensure early arrest of the absconding accused, according to an official handout issued here late Tuesday. It may be mentioned here that the slain youth, hailing from AJK's Dadyal town of expatriates in Mirpur district, was gunned down by unknown attackers near Islamabad international airport on his return from abroad.



LAHORE: Visitors and staff are taking interest in the pictures during exhibition at Lahore College for Women University regarding the oppression on Palestinian people.

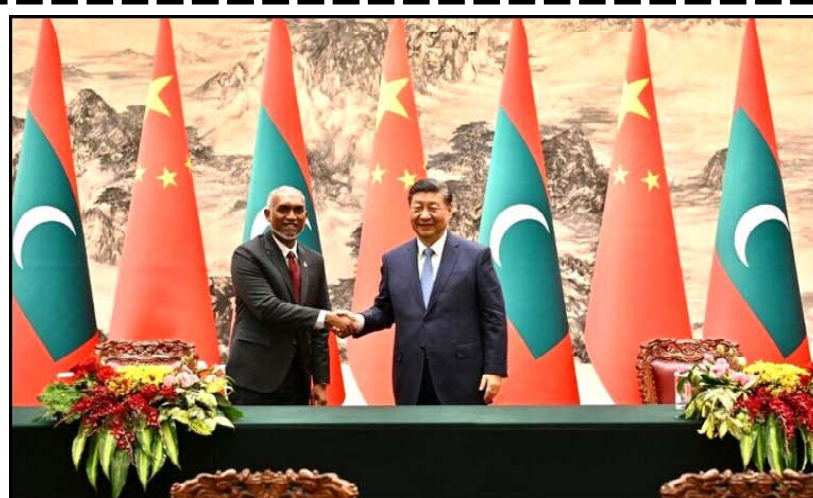
ANF seizes 65 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover 65 kg drugs and arrested 12 accused including four women, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 28.8 kg hashish and 1.2 kg opium were recovered from the possession of an accused netted near Chungi No. 26. 10.5 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of six accused including four women arrested near Burhan Interchange Attock. 8 kg heroin and 2.2 kg Ice drug were recovered from two suspects near Sangiani Toll Plaza Islamabad. 8.4 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects near Bahria Town Phase 4 Islamabad. In fifth operation, 5 kg hashish was recovered from Khar border area in Khyber. In sixth operation, 1.1 kg hashish was recovered from an area in Gilgit while in 7th operation, 175 ecstasy tablets were recovered from the possession of an accused near Labor Colony Peshawar.

International News

Maldives upgrades ties with China amid pivot from India

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China and the Maldives upgraded their relationship on Wednesday during newly elected President Mohamed Muizzu's first state visit to Beijing, following a campaign in which he cast China's regional rival India as a threat to sovereignty. His government has since asked dozens of locally based Indian military personnel to leave while talking up opportunities for Chinese investors despite being heavily indebted to Beijing. Relations between India and China nosedived after soldiers from both sides clashed in the western Himalayas in June 2020, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and four Chinese troops. By upgrading ties with the Maldives, China is setting the stage for further investment in a region where India has already seen another neighbour, Sri Lanka, gravitate towards China. "During the talks, President Dr Muizzu expressed gratitude for China's significant role in the Maldives' economic success... and infrastructure development," a statement from his presidential office read following the meeting, adding that "20 key agreements between the two countries" were signed. The Maldives owes China \$1.37 billion, or around 20 per cent of its public debt, according to World Bank data, making Beijing its biggest bilateral creditor ahead of Saudi Arabia and India.



Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu and Chinese President Xi Jinping sign key agreements in Beijing, China.

Hezbollah targets Israeli base to avenge Lebanon killings

BEIRUT (INP): Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah group said it targeted a command base in northern Israel on Tuesday in retaliation for the killings of one of its commanders and a Hamas leader. Hezbollah said the attack was part of its response to the killings of top field commander Wissam Tawil on Monday and Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aruri on January 2. The Shiite Muslim movement, a Hamas ally, said in a statement that it had targeted the "enemy's northern command centre" in the Israeli city of Safed with "several suicide drones". The Israeli military confirmed that a "hostile aircraft" had crashed at one of its bases in the north, and said that "no injuries or damage were reported". Hezbollah and its arch-foe Israel have been exchanging near-daily fire across the border since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on October 7. Tawil—the highest-ranking Hezbollah member was killed since October 7 — was buried in his south Lebanon home village of Khirbit Silm on Tuesday.

Holy Quran desecrated in Jharkhand

RANCHI (INP): The Hindutva members desecrated and burned the pages of Holy Quran in the Indian state of Jharkhand. According to Kashmir Media Service, the incident occurred when the Hindutva members who mostly belonged to RSS, BJP, VHP and Banjra Dal burned the pages of the Holy Quran in a field near Fatehpur Bazar mosque in Jamtara district. The atrocious action aimed at inciting the religious tensions has been reported before the upcoming state elections. As news of the incident quickly spread, Muslims strongly condemned the heinous act.

Gunmen in Ecuador storm TV studio in wave of gang violence

Monitoring Desk
ECUADOR: Gunmen with explosives stormed a TV station on-air in Ecuador on Tuesday during a wave of violence around the nation that prompted President Daniel Noboa to name 22 gangs as terrorist organisations to be hunted by the military. Police eventually rescued the TV staff and arrested the 13 men who burst into TC's studio during a live broadcast with long-range guns, grenades and dynamites, according to witnesses in the coastal city of Guayaquil. Elsewhere in Ecuador, at least seven police officers were kidnapped and there were several explosions. "Thank God, we are alive, because it was an extremely violent attack," said Jorge Rendon, deputy director of the news program that was interrupted. Noboa, who took office in November promising to stem drug-related violence, declared a 60-day state of emergency on Monday in response to prison violence — including hostage-takings of guards by inmates — and the apparent escape of Los Choneros gang leader Adolfo Macias over the weekend. In a revised decree on Tuesday, Noboa declared nearly two dozen gangs terrorist groups, including Los Choneros. The government has said the violence is a reaction to Noboa's plan to build a new high security prison for gang leaders. "They have created a wave of violence to frighten the populace," said Admiral Jaime Vela, head of the joint command of the armed forces, adding that the decree made the gangs military targets. Prison transfers of gang leaders have historically led to violence, with hundreds of inmates killed in recent years.

SFJ besieges Indian consulate in San Francisco with Indira Gandhi float

Monitoring Desk
SAN FRANCISCO: Pro-Khalistan Sikh for Justice (SFJ) blocked and besieged the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, challenging India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) team visiting America with a float depicting the assassination of Indira Gandhi by Satwant Singh and Beant Singh. The participants exuded enthusiasm as they passionately chanted slogans in support of Khalistan. The Khalistan Freedom Car Rally, organized by the secessionist group SFJ ahead of the Khalistan Referendum voting on 28th January in San Francisco, serves as a stark reminder to Modi that "Violence begets violence." Simultaneously, as reported by Indian media, an NIA team is currently in the United States. Gurbatwam Singh Pannu, General Counsel of SFJ, pointed out that Modi, who instigated the cycle of violence through the orchestrated assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, should be mindful of the historical response of Sikhs to the violence unleashed by the Indian state on Oct 31, 1984. Hundreds of SFJ activists took part in the blockade and the rally. The Khalistan freedom car rally marked the 35th anniversary of the martyrdom of Shaheed Satwant Singh and Shaheed Kehar Singh as it journeyed from Berkeley Marina to the Indian Consulate in San Francisco, said the SFJ. With over 1,000 vehicles, the rally commenced at Marina Berkeley, proceeding towards the San Francisco Indian Consulate.



People accused of invading and taking over television station TC with weapons and forcing staff to lie and sit down, lie handcuffed on the floor in Guayaquil, Ecuador.

US, British forces shoot down 21 drones and missiles fired from Yemen

WASHINGTON (INP): American and British forces shot down 18 drones and three missiles Tuesday that were launched by Yemen's Iran-backed Huthi rebels toward international shipping lanes in the Red Sea, the US military said. The attack came a week after 12 nations led by the United States warned the Huthis of consequences unless they immediately halted firing on commercial vessels — strikes the rebels say are in support of Palestinians in Gaza, where Israel is battling militant group Hamas. "Iranian-backed Huthis launched a complex attack of Iranian designed one-way attack UAVs... anti-ship cruise missiles, and an anti-ship ballistic missile from Huthi-controlled areas of Yemen into the Southern Red Sea," the US Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement.

Israel in the dock as International Court of Justice takes up genocide case

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: Israel and South Africa face off at the UN's top court from Thursday, after Pretoria accused Israel of "genocidal acts" in Gaza, charges the Israelis have dismissed as "blood libel". In an 84-page submission to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), South Africa urged judges to order Israel to "immediately suspend its military operations" in Gaza. South Africa alleges that Israel "has engaged in, is engaging in, and risks further engaging in genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in Gaza". Israel has angrily hit back at the accusations, with government spokesman Eylon Levy vowing to fight the South African case he described as "absurd blood libel". Top officials from the two countries will face off in the ICJ's Great Hall of Justice housed in the extravagant Peace Palace in The Hague.

Pentagon reviews Secretary Austin's not disclosing his hospital stay

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Both the White House and Pentagon said Monday they would look into why President Joe Biden and other top officials weren't informed for days that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin had been hospitalized. A Pentagon spokesman pointed to one reason: A key staffer was out sick with the flu. Even as the Biden administration pledged to look into what rules or procedures weren't followed, it maintained its silence about why Austin had been hospitalized for a week. Late Monday, the Pentagon issued an update saying Austin "is recovering well." Some Republicans have demanded Austin's resignation, but the Pentagon said he has no plans to step down. Austin, 70, went to the hospital on Dec. 22 for what the Pentagon press secretary called an "elective procedure" but one serious enough that Austin temporarily transferred some of his authorities to his deputy.

Judges question Trump's immunity claim in poll subversion case

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A Washington appeals court questioned Donald Trump's claims that he is immune from criminal charges for trying to overturn the 2020 election, as the former US president on Tuesday warned he could prosecute Joe Biden if he returns to the White House. Trump looked on as his legal team sought to convince a panel of three judges that former presidents should not be prosecuted for actions they took in office.

PM for establishing global fund to ensure worldwide health security

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday stressed the need to explore mechanisms for global funding that could support nations in need, ensuring that no one was left behind, in the global pursuit of health security. "The call for a sufficiently funded, widely supported country medium-term road-map, as highlighted in the International Health Regulations Core Capacities evaluation, resonates globally. We must invest in open, transparent, and multi-sectoral processes to strengthen buy-in and commitment at all levels," the prime minister said while addressing the inaugural session of the first-ever two-day Global Health Security Summit 2024.

search, and collaborative strategies for an effective response during emergencies." He stressed the need for a strong, visible, active surveillance and tiered public health laboratory system that was integral to early detection, response, and mitigation. He also called for collaboratively working towards establishing international standards for food safety, harmonizing regulations to ensure the highest level of protection for populations worldwide. "A cross-sectoral approach to managing antimicrobial resistance requires international collaboration," he said adding "We need a unified front against antimicrobial resistance, with coordinated efforts to develop and enforce global standards for the responsible use of antibiotics and infection prevention," he remarked. Highlighting the need of collective response to address external and internal health challenge, he said no state in the world could meet the health challenges all alone. Likewise, he said the internal challenges posed by population growth, rapid urbanization

and climate change could not be dealt with by a country alone. "New diseases, like COVID-19 and climate-induced incidents such as the historic floods of 2022 in Pakistan, are disrupting our citizens' health and causing social and economic impacts. While the developed world has systems in place to timely respond to such health emergencies, a similar ideal system is lacking in the developing world as health systems are relatively weak," he added. The prime minister said the COVID-19 pandemic had taught us invaluable lessons about the importance of collaboration, preparedness, and a unified response. "It is in this spirit that we convene today, not merely as representatives of our respective countries, but as overseers of global health security." He called for establishing a shared vision of the world where health security was not a privilege but a universal right and where the strength of a nation's health systems was measured not only by its capacity to respond to crises but also by its ability to prevent, detect, and mitigate health threats.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the Global Health Security Summit.

Privatization Commission approves structure for 51pc stake sale in PIA

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Privatization Commission Board, chaired by Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad, has greenlit the transaction structure for the sale of a 51% stake in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). Ernst & Young-led consortium presented the proposal, suggesting the sale of the majority stake along with the division of PIA's assets and liabilities. Despite the government's eagerness for foreign buyers, legal hurdles have surfaced, preventing the sale of a substantial number of shares to overseas investors. Government sources reveal that at least 51% of shares have received approval, with plans to involve a local partner once legal complications are resolved, emphasizing a sale with management control. The caretaker government's endeavors to privatize PIA face a hurdle due to pending

dues of 281 billion rupees. The matter, now approved by the board, will be presented to the Privatization Committee of the Cabinet before reaching the caretaker federal cabinet. The advisory report, currently incomplete, lacks the valuation of PIA's assets, with a deadline set for the third week of January. Financial advisers recommend granting the new buyer the option to terminate employees after one year, with proposals to extend this period to three years. Additionally, it is suggested to consolidate non-core assets and liabilities in a holding company, making the federal government responsible for debt and interest payments. Financial advisers propose transferring 640 billion rupees to the new holding company.

Security personnel briefed for vigilance and rapid response

ISLAMABAD (APP): Security personnel assigned to the High-Security Zone received comprehensive instructions to carry out their duties effectively and respond promptly to any unforeseen incidents. The meeting, chaired by SP High-Security Zone Saud Khan, gathered officers responsible for overseeing the High-Security Zone. The zone encompasses critical government and private facilities, diplomatic missions, and other essential assets, emphasizing the need for unwavering attention to their protection. During the briefing, security personnel were specifically instructed to remain prepared to handle any untoward incidents promptly. Officials were reminded to maintain vigilance during their duties and closely monitor any suspicious vehicles or individuals.

SC maintains death sentence to Musharraf in high treason case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Wednesday maintained the death sentence of former president Pervez Musharraf while upholding the verdict of the special court in the high treason case. The apex court said heirs of former president didn't pursue the case despite the repeated notices, hence the appeal was dismissed. The apex court also turned down the verdict of Lahore High Court (LHC) in which it had terminated the special court.

passed away on February 5, 2023 and his appeal was fixed for hearing on November 10, 2023. The lawyer told the court that he had conveyed several messages to the family of ex-president to pursue the case but he received no response. The court further said that it had served notices to the legal heirs of Pervez Musharraf at their available addresses in Pakistan and abroad. The notices were also published in the newspaper, it added. A four-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Amin ul Din Khan and Justice Athar Minallah, heard the case. It may be mentioned that the LHC had terminated the special court after declaring it against the law. Petitioner's lawyer Salman Salfar informed the court that former president



ISLAMABAD: Political Counselor German Embassy Janine Rohwer called Opposition leader in Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem.

Caretaker minister assures to resolve teachers, students issues

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi on Wednesday assured to resolve teachers and students issues on priority basis. According to a press release issued here, the minister met with a delegation of daily wagers and assured them to address all genuine issues relating to their profession. The minister informed that the Cabinet has also approved the regularization of 227 daily wagers. He further stated that those daily wagers who passed the test of the Federal Public Service Commission, would have regularization as per judgement of the high

court. The judgement was also upheld by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, he stated. Madad Ali said that teachers form the nations and they should be facilitated in an appropriate manner. He vowed that all out efforts would be made to uplift the quality of education in the public sector, especially in the capital. He said that out-of-school children is also a top priority of the government and for this, steps are being taken to bring them back to school for imparting education. He was of the opinion that these are critical issues and that should be given the highest importance.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi talking with journalists during a meeting.

Tribunal dismisses appeals against nomination papers of Nawaz, Maryam

LAHORE (APP): An appellate tribunal on Wednesday dismissed an appeal against acceptance of nomination papers of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif for National Assembly constituency NA-130 (Lahore). The tribunal comprising Justice Ahmad Nadeem Arshad announced the reserved verdict and upheld the decision of the returning officer. The tribunal had reserved its verdict on an appeal after hearing arguments of the parties on January 8.

Mahaz chief Advocate Ishtiaq Chaudhry had filed the appeal, challenging the acceptance of Nawaz Sharif's nomination papers. He argued that the returning officer erroneously approved Nawaz Sharif's papers, contrary to factual evidence. He requested the tribunal to reject the nomination papers of Nawaz Sharif. Meanwhile, the tribunal also dismissed an appeal against acceptance of nomination papers of PML-N Vice President and Chief Organizer Maryam Nawaz for National Assembly constituency NA-119 (Lahore).

ECP directs authorities to provide voter info via SMS

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has instructed the relevant authorities to provide detailed information on voter registration status and constituency details for national and provincial assemblies on 8300. According to ECP spokesperson, the eligible voters can verify their registration status on the voter lists by sending their Computerised National Identity Card (CNIC) number to 8300. Upon sending an SMS to 8300, an automated response will provide details, including the electoral area's name, block code, serial number, National and Provincial Assembly constituency numbers, district name, electoral region name.

ICCPO meets Kohsar alternative dispute resolution members

Emphasizes that ensuring the safety of citizens' lives and properties and addressing their current issues remains a top priority for Islamabad Capital Police

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: According to the details, the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, met with Kohsar Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) members at the Central Police Office Islamabad. On this occasion, the DPO City Zone and SDPO Kohsar were also present, a public relations officer said. He said that the ICCPO discussed citizen issues with the ADR members to find more effective solutions. They evaluated the functionality of the cen-

life routines through community policing. The ICCPO instructed the officers of the Islamabad Capital Police to pay special attention to individuals affected by mental illnesses and ensure the protection of recreational areas for citizens. Moreover, effective arrangements for parking and protection at Sunday markets and shopping centers were also directed to ensure citizens' safety.

structured the officers of the Islamabad Capital Police to pay special attention to individuals affected by mental illnesses and ensure the protection of recreational areas for citizens. Moreover, effective arrangements for parking and protection at Sunday markets and shopping centers were also directed to ensure citizens' safety.



BISP cautions citizens about fraudulent messages

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has cautioned the citizens about the fraudulent messages being circulated through different mediums including social media and cell numbers about its programmes. "All the BISP messages are sent from 8171 only and those received from other numbers are fake," the Programme said. The official social media accounts and website of the BISP can be accessed

by the users to get authentic information about its programmes. The BISP said, "The fake messages claim that the stipends of the beneficiaries have been approved, seek contact details for transferring amount or promise inclusion in the BISP programme and issuance of the stipends. "While the real messages from the BISP do not promise provision of any financial assistance without verification and documentation."



ISLAMABAD: A female traffic police officer is busy in issuing E-challan ticket to a driver for violating traffic rules at Jinnah Avenue.

ICP achieved a significant reduction in traffic violations in 2023

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Safe City Command and Control Center issued e-challans to drivers who violated traffic laws, such as driving without seat belts, fancy number plates, zebra crossing violations, red signal violations, over-speeding, and using mobile phones while driving. According to the details, following the special directives of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO), Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, the Safe City Islamabad issued 222,195 e-challans in 2023 on different traffic violations, including 4,495 for seat belt violations, 206,747 for

over-speeding, 431 for mobile phone usage during driving, 2,008 for zigzag crossing, 37,019 for fancy number plates, and 4,619 for red signal violations, a public relations officer said. He said that there was an increase in the rate of challans for traffic violations in 2023, primarily aimed at reducing violations of traffic laws and minimizing traffic accidents. CPO Safe City/Traffic emphasized that maintaining peace and security in the federal capital along with safeguarding the lives and property of citizens remains a top priority for Islamabad Capital Police.

Four plots auctioned on first day

ISLAMABAD (INP): So far four plots were auctioned on the first day of the auction organized by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) here on Wednesday. On the first day of the auction, a large number of investors participated and intense competition was seen in which plots were auctioned for 7.796 billion rupees.

The three-day auction of plots will continue till January 12 at Gandhara Centre, F-9 Park. According to the details, on the first day of the three-day public auction of commercial plots, plot number 9 of the blue area was sold for Rs 4.453 billion. Plot No. 53H located in the I-8 center of Islamabad was auctioned for Rs 1.46 billion.

Four dead bodies recovered from ECP office in Kandhkot

KHANDKOT (INP): Bodies of four persons were recovered from the room of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) office in Kandhkot, reported on Wednesday.

According to the district health officer (DHO), all four of them, who worked at the office, died due to gas leakage while they were asleep at night. Police shifted the bodies to hospital for the post-mortem.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Seemee Ezdi, Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Senate Body on Climate Change briefed on various aspects of fog

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination on Wednesday briefed the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change on various aspects of fog, including its formation, types, frequency in winter, and the related issue of smog: covering its types, causes, and impact.

In discussions about the way forward, the ministry emphasized key factors, such as enhancing fuel quality, implementing mandatory annual certification for vehicles, promoting clean energy and sustainable transportation, adopting cleaner agricultural practices, improving waste management, raising public awareness and education, and implementing urban forestation. Additionally, the ministry suggested installing smog towers as a potential solution, citing their successful installation in China and ongoing efforts in India.

Chaired by the meeting of the Senate Body on Climate Change held at Parliament House, Senator Seemee Ezdi emphasized the challenges posed by fog in urban areas. Senator Farooq Hamid Naek emphasized that fog is a natural phenomenon, whereas human activities contribute to the formation of smog. He stressed the need to implement measures to combat smog, particularly in areas like Lahore. The ministry clarified that both carbon-intensive industries and general pollution contribute to smog. It was conveyed that 45 percent of smog is attributed to vehicle emissions.

Two soldiers martyred, two terrorists killed in Lakki Marwat clash

RAWALPINDI (APP): Two terrorists were killed in an exchange of firing with security forces in Lakki Marwat. According to the ISPR, the troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location as a result of which two terrorists namely Ahab Malang and Masood Shah were killed. These terrorists remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as well as target killings of civilians. Weapons, ammunition and explosives

were also recovered from them. However, during intense exchange of fire, two soldiers; Sepoy Muhammad Afzal and Sepoy Ibrar Hussain having fought gallantly, embraced Shahadat. Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area as the Security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) spokesperson Shoaib Shaheen talk with media outside Supreme Court.

ET Islamabad issues judgments on over 70 appeals

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Appellate Tribunal of Islamabad High Court (IHC) has ruled on more than 70 appeals against decisions of the Returning Officer (RO) to reject nomination papers of the candidates who want to contest the elections from the three Islamabad constituencies. IHC Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir were constituted as Election Appellate Tribunal to hear appeals against ROs, PTI's expected candidates Zafar Ali Shah, Shoaib Shaheen, Niazullah Niaz, Ilyas Mehrban, Aamir. The decision of Mughal's returning officers to reject the nomination papers was annulled. Appeal against rejection of nomination papers

from two constituencies of Islamabad was accepted. After paying his dues, Zafar Ali Shah informed the court that he was not aware of these dues and no notice was ever given by the concerned institutions to pay the arrears. Candidate Malik Amir's appeal was rejected due to rejection of nomination papers for concealing dual citizenship. RO's decision was upheld. On December 26th, he submitted nomination papers and concealed dual citizenship. The application to renounce dual citizenship was made on December 28. The appeal against acceptance of nomination papers of enunch Nayab Ali was dismissed. A registered enunch voter in Multan approached the tribunal against the RO's decision.