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COAS vows to enhance defense with self-reliance, latest technology

Says path to national progress is defined by indigenous, local industries like POF Wah

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Tuesday paid a significant visit to the Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) in Wah, a crucial hub for the nation's defence production, the military said.

The visit aimed to gain insights into POF's production capabilities, its role in meeting the defence needs of the Pakistan Armed Forces, and its potential for export, according to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During his visit, the COAS was briefed on various aspects of POF's operations, including its contributions to the national defence through the develop-

ment and production of a wide range of military equipment. The army chief had the opportunity to witness firsthand the testing and trials of indigenously designed and manufactured weapons and ammunition, showcasing the organisation's commitment to innovation and self-reliance.

Addressing the officers and staff of POF, Gen Munir applauded their dedicated efforts in bolstering the security and economy of Pakistan, emphasising the pivotal role of POF as the primary defence industry in the country. He acknowledged the significance of indigenous and local industries in the path to national progress.

"The path to national progress is defined by indigenous and local industries like POF Wah. We will continue to work for self-reliance and the adoption of the latest technology, which is essential towards ensuring reliability and strengthening the defence of Pakistan," remarked the army chief. Genl Munir's visit highlighted the military's commitment to promoting self-sufficiency and technological advancement in the defence sector. The COAS emphasised the need for continuous efforts to enhance the capabilities of indigenous defence industries, aligning with the broader goal of ensuring Pakistan's defence is built on reliable and cutting-edge technology.



WAH: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visits Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) Wah.

President for scientific based knowledge sharing tendency to benefit entire humanity

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday while alluding to the significance of the technological advancement and innovations in diverse fields and availability of abundance of knowledge, stressed the need to share the latest breakthroughs, experiences and achievements for the greater benefit of the entire humanity.

The president said that the availability of knowledge should not be contained under the mere tag of 'copyrights' as greater accessibility could help humanity to move through the current economic, social and global challenges.

The president was speaking as a chief guest at a ceremony to mark the 29th-anniversary celebration of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The event was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, former diplomats, members of academia and the media.

The president said there was a need that the profuse availability of knowledge should be shared among the nations without any hindrance by resetting the priorities which were focused somewhat elsewhere.

"Open learning knowledge resources should be utilized and priorities of the world should be changed towards mutual transfer of knowledge. The injustices should be addressed," he emphasized.

The president further said that transformation in the world could take place in the presence of 'ethics or humanity-based order', adding the new world would be dependent upon these shifts.

ECP launches new policy on electoral symbols of candidates

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) stopped ROs and DROs from changing election symbols of candidates for the upcoming elections.

The ECP told ROs and DROs that at this phase stage with the elections coming near the changing of election symbols should be avoided. "If the need to change the election symbol is so important then the commission should be asked for a change," the ECP told ROs.

According to the ECP, the printing of the ballot papers has started and it may not be possible at this stage to change the election symbol.

Pakistan, Lebanon agree to strengthen bilateral relations

DAVOS (APP): Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati Tuesday met Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

During the meeting, the two leaders discussed the overall situation in the region, and reiterated their resolve to strengthen the bilateral relations.

They also expressed concerns over the atrocities committed by Israel on innocent Palestinians, especially children and women.

PTI founder, Bushra Bibi indicted in marriage case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The local court on Tuesday indicted the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and his wife Bushra Bibi in the marriage case.

Senior Civil Judge Qudrat Ullah read the charge sheet during the case hearing at Adiala Jail, with the PTI founder in attendance. The court expressed annoyance at the absence of Bushra Bibi and rejected the defence counsel's plea for exemption from her attendance. It questioned with whose permission Bushra Bibi had left from the courtroom. She entered the prison at 11:30 a.m. and left the courtroom at 1:45 p.m., as confirmed by the jail superintendent.

The PTI founder rejected the charges against him and pleaded not guilty.

The court adjourned the hearing till January 18 and summoned witnesses on that date.

PM Kakar, US special envoy discuss issues relating climate change

ISLAMABAD (Online): Under the theme "Rebuilding Trust", the event aims to reinforce and strengthen the fundamental principles of transparency, consistency and accountability among world leaders.

The annual meeting of the Forum will continue till Friday.

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday met US Presidential Special Envoy on Climate John Kerry on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

During the meeting, they discussed the local and global impacts of climate change. The two leaders also discussed the climate change related challenges being faced by the developing countries.



DAVOS: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets U.S. Presidential special envoy on Climate John Kerry on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

Maryam pledges to work 'day and night' for public's welfare

LAHORE (INP): Maryam Nawaz, Chief Organizer of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), on Wednesday declared that February 8 will resound with the roar of the "lion", her party's election symbol.

Addressing a rally in Lahore's Gajju Matta, Maryam expressed gratitude for the warm reception, stating, "Gajju Matta, I thank you wholeheartedly for your overwhelming welcome. You have chosen me, and in return, I promise to serve day and night for the welfare of the people if you help bring victory to the lion."

She highlighted the infrastructure developments in Lahore by PML-N, particularly the sight of Speedo Bus service on Ferozepur Road and the Orange Line train, attributing them as symbols of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's dedicated service to the people of Lahore.

"We want to tell Lahore that when the opponents sat idle, the PML-N established records of service. The Orange Line could not become operational earlier due to [former Chief Justice] Saqib Nisar," she remarked.

The PML-N leader said that there was no one to even pick up trash in Lahore during the tenure of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "On February 8, we will lift the downtrodden and throw the intruders out of Lahore," she added.

Maryam declared that PML-N would change the destiny of Pakistan and Lahore. "Only the lion will roar in Lahore on February 8. Congratulations in advance to all of you." She also urged people to not sit at home on election day, urging them to vote for PML-N to make Pakistan a prosperous country.



LAHORE: Chief Organizer PML (N) Maryam Nawaz warmly welcome upon arrival at PP-159.

Minister seeks DSSI report to ensure prevention of edibles' profiteering, hoarding

ISLAMABAD (APP): The caretaker government on Tuesday established a six-member joint investigation team (JIT) to "reveal the facts surrounding an alleged malicious social media campaign" against the Supreme Court judges.

According to a notification issued by the interior ministry, the committee was formed under Section 30 of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016. Headed by the additional director-general of the Federal Investigation Agency's Cyber Crime Wing, the JIT comprises representatives from the Intelligence Bureau, Inter-Services Intelligence, the deputy inspector-general of Islamabad police, a representative from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, and any other co-opted member.

The notification specified that the JIT is required to submit a preliminary report to the Ministry of Interior within a fortnight, with additional support from the FIA headquarters during the investigation. No specific social media posts were identified as part of the alleged campaign.

The JIT's mandate, as outlined in the notification, is to "ascertain the facts behind a supposed malicious social media campaign aimed at damaging the reputation of the honorable judges of the Supreme Court."

The committee is responsible for identifying and prosecuting the culprits according to relevant laws, presenting charges in appropriate courts, and recommending measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi cutting cake to mark the 29th anniversary celebration of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Bilawal warns PML-N of fate similar to PTI in future

NAUDERO (INP): In an apparent reference to the rivalry between PML-N and PTI, PPP chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Tuesday that the former will face the same circumstances that the latter is facing today.

Bilawal, while speaking to a public gathering in Naudero, said that the PPP had always exposed the 'selected' governance system, adding that his party also thwarted PML-N's dream of self-appointing himself as the 'Ameer Al Momineen' (leader of the faithful).

"No one has any sense or concern about the worsening situation of the country," the PPP scion said, adding that terrorists were raising their heads again. "They have been invited to come and settle in Karachi," he added. Read Bilawal says only an arrow can be used to hunt a lion.

Bilawal stated that the current political climate in Pakistan has proved detrimental for the wellbeing of the country, adding that political instability will damage the country, economy, the federation and also the entire governance system.



LARKANA: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to Party workers Gathering at Bhutto House Naudero.

Six-member JIT constituted to probe social media campaign against SC judges

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Sheikh Rashid arrested after bail rejection

RAWALPINDI (APP): Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed was arrested on Tuesday after the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) rejected his bail in a case pertaining to the May 9 incidents.

The former minister appeared before ATC Judge Malik Asif Ejaz, who dismissed his plea for bail.

Talking to the media, Rashid's counsel Sardar Abdul Razzak said that his client had attained bail in 12 out of 13 cases pertaining to the May 9 incidents.

He said Sheikh Rashid was taken into custody outside the court after his bail was rejected in a case of an attack on the office of an sensitive institution on May 9.

JUI-F cannot run election campaign in KP, claims Hamdullah

PESHAWAR (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazal leader Hafiz Hamdullah on Tuesday claimed that JUI-F is 'barred' from carrying out the election campaign in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ahead of the general election 2024. "Pamphlets are being distributed in KP with warnings not to allow JUI-F corner meetings," Hafiz Hamdullah said while exclusively talking to a news channel.



ISLAMABAD: U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome calling on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff Pakistan Air Force at Air Headquarters in the Federal Capital.

Air Chief, US Envoy for elevating training momentum via enhanced cooperation

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu was called on by US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Blome here on Tuesday and discussed issues of bilateral interests.

The two dignitaries expressed their mutual desire to elevate the training momentum between the two sides through enhanced collaboration in air force to air force mutual exercises, said a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) news release. The Air Chief and envoy also emphasized the importance of fostering a robust exchange of delegations and knowledge sharing to bolster the capabilities of both the PAF and the US Air Force.

The discussion also centered around collaboration in the recently established techno parks, with a focus on leveraging technological advancements for enhancing operational effectiveness and efficiency.

The reorganization of mutual cooperation parameters was also deliberated upon, with an aim to fortify existing ties and explore new avenues for joint ventures and strategic partnerships.

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu accentuated the cordial relations that exist between the two nations while emphasizing his steadfast determination to elevate the existing synergistic partnership between the two key allies.

Countries touch zenith of development by empowering LG system: Murtaza Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that all those countries which had touched the zenith of development had done so by empowering local government.

"Throughout my own experiences and understandings there is no democracy without local government," he said while delivering his speech at a two-day Conference for the Civic Hackathon "Problem Identification". The minister opined that probably lack of a strong local government system was probably one of the major problems in Pakistan's political history. Terming the conference for the civic hackathon problem identification as a very interesting initiative, he said it aimed to bring together experts from the public, private sector and civil society to collectively identify the most pressing civic issues in the country - in order attempt to later develop a digital solution for it.

He said that in Pakistan, there was a lot of potential to focus on develop-



ing innovative local solutions. However, he said that the problems were often identified in isolation by the public sector and in his opinion this more participatory approach of conducting a problem identification conference and later a civic hackathon would provide more sustainable results. Solangi said that the government of Pakistan now recognized the increasing need and advantage of a culture of evidence-based decision-making that is participatory - meaning that it engaged citizens and that was need-based so to ensure the effective allocation of resources. He said that during the 18th Amendment, Article 140 was amended by adding sub article called 140-A reading: "Each province shall by law establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the local government". He said that was the reason many political commentators and some parties had started pressing that the local government laws of the provincial government must be in harmony.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

On your mark

After the Supreme Court's shock verdict depriving the PTI of its election symbol late Saturday, many observers have wryly questioned the need for having elections at all, given how neatly the field now appears to be set up. However, the show must go on.

By now, most of the parties, including the PTI, have issued lists of candidates to whom tickets have been awarded, and these hopefuls have very little time to canvass for votes. They must get going with their campaigns forthwith. The PML-N still seems considerably behind compared to the PPP, which has taken a head start as far as holding workers' meetings and jalsas is concerned.

The PTI, unfortunately, faces new, serious existential challenges after losing the bat. However, the party has displayed grit and determination thus far, and it is hoped, for the sake of Pakistani democracy, that it will manage to make the best of the hand it has been dealt.

The lesson that ought to have been learned in 2018 was that engineering results by interfering in the electoral process invariably has disastrous consequences. Those benefiting from such 'interventions' may reap short-term benefits, but without meaningful public support and the legitimacy conferred by a fair election to strengthen their hand, they cannot expect to survive the pressures that come with executive power.

With this in mind, all political parties should collectively ask non-democratic forces to step away from the ring immediately.

It is well past time for them to assert their space in the country's power configuration and keep dominion over the political sphere — unless they wish to remain at the mercy of non-democratic forces in the years to come as well. The parties seem eager to out-compete each other; it would be a shame if they are not given a fair chance to do so on an equal footing from here on.

Meanwhile, it is deeply concerning that two fresh resolutions have been forwarded to the Senate to seek a delay in elections over weather and security concerns.

The caretaker government and the ECP must ensure that the commitment to holding general elections on Feb 8 is not derailed. These elections are key to restoring the political stability that Pakistan desperately needs.

Unfortunately, major controversies have dogged the polls from the very beginning, and there is now a dark pall over the entire exercise. The institutions responsible, especially the ECP, owe it to the nation to salvage what respectability they can for the exercise by ensuring, from now on, fool-proof security and the freedom to campaign for all candidates cleared to participate in the polls.

No candidate should fear appearing in public and putting their agenda before the people. Much damage has already been done. No more should be allowed.

The missing link



Neda Mulji

Passing the parcel was a favourite game among kids at birthday parties in the bygone days. These days, passing the buck seems to be a running trend among those who like to shy away from accountability. One school owner I met seemed to have a litany of complaints against the teachers employed at her school: excessive absences, lack of classroom management skills and an unprofessional attitude were cited as reasons that land a school into ill-repute.

Meanwhile, teachers point fingers at the school management's inability to provide the necessary resources, training and development, reward and recognition. Whilst these may indeed affect the teachers' motivation, they are not the drivers of performance or the lack thereof. Those who are experts in their subject and professionally astute don't usually rely on external factors to motivate them.

There might be a missing link in this equation — a gap between how the teachers perform and the school management's perception of them. When this gap grows, it becomes a gaping wound, leading to teacher absences, high turnover, lower student retention rates, mediocre academic results and complaints by parents — all resulting in disgruntled school leaders which, in turn, clouds the entire school culture.

Communication and collaboration may help address this missing link between teachers and management. Often, teachers have little agency in contributing to the transformation processes at school. From timetabling and scheduling of classes to the choice of books for their subjects, most decision-making rests with those at the top. When parents complain, teachers get only a filtered version of it. When the teachers underperform, the management cannot necessarily put their finger on the reason for it, and the blame game continues.

Part of the transformational growth at schools requires an inquiry mindset where the management collaborates with teachers and seeks their insight on growth, obstacles and opportunities. Most teachers would welcome more open and frequent communication, as would parents, who desperately want answers regarding their children's experiences at school.

teaching strategies and plan their modules together. In most schools, only the heads conduct supervision rounds, although it could be very useful for junior teachers to shadow the more experienced ones and give constructive feedback as well as learn from seniors. There can be massive professional growth in watching and learning across the board. Besides, the supervision isn't always followed up with feedback, so teachers may not be explicitly aware of the aspects of their teaching that need improvement. Similarly, many school or subject heads ask for weekly or monthly lesson plans but do not add-re--ss the disparity between the plan and what is actually being taught in class. Reflection sheets that can steer teachers towards pinpointing what they do well and where they need support are greatly beneficial for continuous learning.

School management may want to leverage available technology for digital reminders, discussion boards and tracking content taught in class by having teachers enter records each week. Sustainable systems in place can streamline much of the work being done, besides providing opportunities for collaborative work online vis-a-vis shared lesson plans.

Most teachers want to be inspired, as opposed to being managed, and inspiration can lead to dramatic positive change. When the work is shared across the board, the management would be less fearful of lack of productivity and teachers would get a chance to showcase their work and receive timely feedback. The ultimate beneficiaries — students and parents — walk away with greater satisfaction. -- Courtesy Dawn

Social interaction amongst the teachers also has a huge bearing on teacher motivation and well-being. Yet, in most schools, the aim is to minimise social interaction or reserve it for end-of-term school dinners.

Work relationships among colleagues evolve continually, and it would help to provide regular opportunities for teachers to engage with each other during frequent breaks, collaborate on lesson plans and

Corporate purpose



Waleed Ahmed

Who am I? Why are we here? What happens to us when we die? Complex questions which every individual seeks to answer in a lifetime.

According to Colin Mayer's Prosperity, the purpose of the existence of a corporation is rather simple: "producing profitable solutions to problems of people and planet". The current socioeconomic business model creates an overabundance of wealth for businessmen, shareholders and CEOs. The scarcity of natural resources necessitates that the role of corporations goes beyond the stakeholder capitalism prevalent in the environment, social and governance (ESG) policy today.

The reasons behind social disorder, energy crises and corporate bank failures are 'as clear as day', yet perpetually unseen by a few. The world yearns for real, sustainable and permanent change — a change in the way we conduct business, treat the environment and build a better future for coming generations.

Governance can help the corporation become a source of benefit to society and diminish the likelihood of harm caused to citizens. Orthodox shareholder primacy has been rejected across the Atlantic, but the alternatives to solving issues related to prosperity and consumer welfare need further examination. The citizen has become merely a consumer, with no active participation in the decision-making process. The consumer is deprived due to profit maximisation at each stage

of interaction between the individual, state and corporation. Prescriptive mandatory rules and best practices to redefine the corporate purpose of companies in both the Global North and South are required immediately.

Do ESG reporting standards and frameworks solve the problem? ESG addresses a company's performance and risk exposure based on its environmental impact, social responsibility, and how it is governed. The idea is to integrate a broad corporate strategy, addressing stakeholder and regulatory demands.

ESG programmes are driven by investor demand, workforce pressure, enterprise management, and competitive advantage. Institutional investors employ 'sustainability-linked' loan-lending strategies to gain a better understanding of risks of an investee firm.

According to the UN Principle of Responsible Investment estimates, global sustainable lending activity grew from \$6 billion in January 2016 to \$322bn in September 2021. However, sustainable investing approaches differ widely by strategy and products, making it difficult to measure ESG performance. The greatest challenge faced by institutional investors is 'greenwashing' — funds which have branded themselves as 'sustainable' but are not fundamentally different from traditional funds. The UN Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2023 states: "Growing awareness of misleading practices is creating disillusion, threatening the entire market's credibility and leading to an increase in regulatory measures to enhance transparency and accountability."

Realignment of the profit motive and embedding purpose in the corporate legal framework lies at the heart of the issue. How is a buzzword of any use to a shareholder if it

carries no instant return or promotes stakeholder interests at the cost of financial capital? The answer is not straightforward. ESG guidelines nudge private actors at the corporate level. Alternatively, SDG goals and the Paris Agreement's Nationally Determined Contributions prod public actors at the state level. A truly sustainable society is visible through the lens of shareholder governance, but can only be manifested through a paradigm shift towards stakeholder governance.

Pakistan has an ambitious climate change action plan, exhibited recently at the pavilion of COP28 in the UAE. Two things seem quite obvious, first, despite its low greenhouse gas emissions (490 million tons of CO2 equivalent in 2017-18) Pakistan's frequent exposure to natural hazards and significant dependence on monsoon rain and the glacier-fed Indus Basin make it vulnerable to climate change. Second, public-private partnerships are integral to achieving the transformation of 60 per cent of the country's energy production through 'clean and renewable' resources by 2030. It is an inflection point for the Global South, which can either embrace economic growth in a measured sustainable method or follow the path of the Global North's industrial expansion, which is irreversible. Various regulators in the country, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, the Pakistan Stock Exchange and the State Bank have issued ESG-and sustainability-focused regulations, policies and guidelines. However, time is of the essence; the quick remedy lies in embedding corporate purpose in a company's constitutional documents — which is variable on a self-regulatory basis but loosely monitored by the SECP. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

IPO-Pakistan sensitizes SMEs about importance of IPRs to flourish

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Chairman of the Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) of Pakistan, Farukh Amil on Tuesday said that SMEs should get better awareness about the protection and enforcement of patents, copyrights, and trademarks to avoid counterfeiting and piracy of their products and flourish their business at the national and international level.

He said this while addressing an awareness session on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with IPO-

Pakistan for the business community, said a press release issued here by ICICI. Farukh Amil briefed the business community about the role of IPO-Pakistan in nurturing an enabling IP environment through its initiative to promote businesses, creativity, and innovation. He said that the lack of an IP culture and weak IP enforcement are major challenges that need to be overcome and added that IPO-Pakistan is working to place Pakistan on the global IP map as a compliance and responsible country through increased public awareness, practice, and enforcement. He said that

adherence to global standards on IP, through international treaties and societal practices will enhance Pakistan's reputation as a business and investment-friendly country. He said that SMEs should benefit from the services of IPO-Pakistan for better protection of their patents, copyrights, and trademarks. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that SMEs are the backbone of the economy and IPO-Pakistan should further simplify the IP registration

processes and procedures and introduce mobile apps to facilitate SMEs in online registration of their products and services for copyrights and trademarks. He said that in the global competitive business environment, the role of IPO-Pakistan is very important in promoting innovations and startups and ensuring better economic growth of the country through strict enforcement of IPRs. He assured that ICICI would work with IPO-Pakistan to raise more awareness in the business community about the importance of IPRs for better growth of their businesses.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman IPO-Pakistan Farukh Amil addressing the Seminar regarding awareness of IP rights at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce.

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Bakhtawari President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce exchanging views with Farukh Amil Chairman, IPO Pakistan about creating better awareness in the business community about the importance of intellectual property rights during his visit to ICICI.

HCCI VP met Incharge anti-encroachment, urges to remove illegal encroachment

HYDERABAD (INP): The vice president of the Hyderabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (HCCI) Ovais Khan met with the Incharge of the anti-encroachment department of Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (HMC) Rasheeda Bano and emphasized the need to address the growing issue of illegal encroachments.

During the meeting, Incharge anti-encroachment department Rasheeda Bano said that Mayor Kashif Shoro was actively working on the beautification and

improvement plan of the city.

She stated that the increasing encroachments not only disrupt traffic flow but also directly affect the public.

The Mayor is keen on developing a plan in collaboration with the business community to eradicate illegal encroachments in markets and commercial centers.

The flow of traffic is hindered by encroachments in markets and commercial areas, causing difficulties in the movement of school students and also affecting business activities in markets.

CM inaugurates BFC to promote business activities

MULTAN (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) at tehsil office, here on Tuesday.

According to official sources, 22 provincial and two federal government departments would issue different sorts of 124 non-objection certificates within 14 days. The chief minister appreciated the performance of Punjab Information Technology Board's team for excellent performance to provide services.

Gold rates decline by Rs.600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.600 and was sold at Rs.217,300 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.217,900 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.514 to Rs.186,300 from Rs.186,814 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.170,775 from Rs.171,246 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Tanveer chairs 3rd consultative session on Punjab Agriculture Strategic Plan 2024-34

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Agriculture, Industry and Energy SM Tanveer chaired via video link the 3rd consultative session on Punjab Agriculture Strategic Plan 2024-34 here at Agriculture House on Tuesday.

On this occasion, he said that Punjab Agriculture Strategic Plan will prove to be a complete game changer for the agricultural development of the province. This plan has

been prepared on the instructions of Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, which includes proposals for improvement of water resources, reforms for agricultural research and improvement and innovation in the market and industry system related to the agricultural sector.

With consultation of all stakeholders these recommendations will be sent to the Provincial Cabinet for approval.

SECP, UN Women Pakistan to host ESG symposium

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Securities and Exchange of Pakistan (SECP), in partnership with UN Women Pakistan, is all set to host a symposium on "Driving Progress on Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations."

The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Dr. Shamsah Akhtar, will be the chief guest of the symposium, said a press release issued here on Tuesday. Leadership and experts from capital market institutions including Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Pakistan Business Council, Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance, Mutual Fund Association of Pakistan, Asian Development Bank, International Finance Corporation, InfraZamin,

Ambassador says: Exploring new avenues for trade cooperation vital to augment Pak-German ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan in Germany Saqlain Syedah has said that exploring new avenues of cooperation in trade and investment

between Pakistan and Germany would further augment the friendly bilateral relations.

She was addressing as special guest at an event titled "Business Opportunities Pakistan" organised by the Frankfurt Chamber of Commerce (IHK Frankfurt) in collaboration with Commercial Section of Consulate General of Pakistan, Frankfurt and

the German Emirati joint Council for Industry and Commerce, UAE (AHK UAE), according to a press release.

In her keynote address, the ambassador highlighted business opportunities in Pakistan with special reference to Pak-German relations.

She noted that Germany was a significant trading partner for Pakistan for being the fifth largest destination of Pakistani exports.

She said that Pakistan also benefited from German imports like machinery,

chemicals, electric goods etc.

The ambassador emphasised that Pakistan was keen to invite investors especially from the world through the newly formed platform of Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

Johannes Richter, Director Asia Pacific, IHK Frankfurt, welcomed the ambassador and the participants and noted that the event was aimed at exchanging ideas with market experts, diplomatic representatives and textile entrepreneurs.

FESCO staff ordered to prevent theft of transformers

FAISALABAD (APP): Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engr. Muhammad Amir has issued orders to the staff to be on alert at the company's installations in the region, especially for transformers.

Large industry grows 1.59% in November

ISLAMABAD (APP): The production of Large Scale Manufacturing Industries (LSMI) increased by 1.59 percent on Year-on-Year (YoY) basis during the month of November 2024 compared to the output of the same month of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

On Month-on-Month (MoM) basis, the large industry grew by 3.63 percent in November 2024 compared to October 2024, PBS reported.

However, the industry witnessed negative growth of 0.80 percent during the first five months (July-November) of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Naqvi inspects upgradation of LGH, Ganga Ram hospital

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected the upgradation work of Ganga Ram Hospital and Lahore General Hospital (LGH) at late night for 3 hours.

Upon noticing the sewerage line running through the hospital's verandah, the CM called the MD WASA, directing the immediate relocation of the line to an alternative site, said a handout issued here on Tuesday.

Emphasising the importance of fostering a green environment, he insisted on the plantation of samplings and landscaping in the vacant

hospital space. CM Naqvi issued a firm directive to ensure the completion of the upgradation work by Jan 31, without any compromise.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, particularly in the case of LGH emergency services, he stressed that every moment is crucial, and the deadline must be strictly adhered to.

Providing an overview of the ongoing efforts, CM Naqvi highlighted that the upgradation work spans an impressive six lakh square feet. He acknowledged the simultaneous commencement of various

projects aimed at enhancing the overall condition of the hospitals.

Expressing dedication to completing the projects before the stipulated deadline, he underscored the commitment to ensuring public convenience.

The CM affirmed his involvement in monitoring the progress of the undertaken tasks, reinforcing his commitment to the successful completion of the hospital upgradation projects.

Provincial Ministers Dr Javed Akram, Amir Mir, secretary health, secretary C&W, secretary tourism, commissioner and others were present.



MULTAN: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi unveiling the plaque to inaugurate the Revamping of Children Hospital Emergency, OPD & Pathology blocks during his visit.

KP becomes first province imposing ban on sale of e-cigarettes to minors

Independent Report

PESHAWAR: In a landmark development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has imposed section 144 to ban the storage, sale and use of e-cigarettes and vapes to minors and within the vicinity of educational institutions in the province.

"The decision has been taken in wake of the alarming increase in the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and vaping devices particularly among children and youth in the province," reads an official notification issued here on Tuesday by the Home and Tribal Affairs Department

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The concern over increasing use of e-cigarettes and vapes is heightened due to the presence of nicotine in these products which is a highly addictive substance, reads the order.

The use of e-cigarettes and vapes poses significant health risks, especially to children, youth and women (pregnant) as it can lead to addiction and other serious health issues. In response to these concerns and to safeguard the health and well-being of our citizens, especially the younger generation.

2 bandits killed, 4 escaped in alleged police encounter

LAHORE (Online): 2 people died and 4 were escaped in alleged police encounter in Shadbagh.

According to police, with the help of Qasim and Riyaz associates, the dead accused escaped by snatching the official rifle from the police custody.

According to police, while searching for fleeing robbers, 6 people on 2 motorcycles were signaled to stop when the accused opened the fire. During the exchange of fire, the accused were killed by their accomplices while 4 accused were escaped.

Meeting discusses matters relating to PHA Mega city

PESHAWAR (APP): Provincial Caretaker Minister for Relief and Rehabilitation, Justice @ Irshad Qaisar chaired a meeting and discussed matters relating to Pakhtunkhwa Housing Authority (PHA) Mega City.

The meeting was also attended by Caretaker Minister, Dr. Aamir Abdullah, CM's advisor, Ashfaq Khan, Secretary Housing and concerned officials.

The meeting discussed observations

being made during the site visit of PHA Mega City. The meeting was informed that concerned land could be used for housing purposes according to the land revenue laws of KP province.

It was said that 1750 kanal land has been acquired for phase I and allotment of 3434 plots has been done. The meeting was informed that appropriate measures have been taken to prevent flooding and private sector has been involved for investment in the mega housing scheme.



KARACHI: Female police march during the passing-out ceremony at Saeedabad Police Training Centre, in Provincial Capital.

Muslim Hands, AIOU Mirpur hosts capacity building workshop

MIRPUR (AJK (APP): Regional Campus of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) Mirpur here on Tuesday hosted a day-long capacity building workshop, in collaboration with Muslim Hands International (MHI).

According to AIOU official details, MHI UK-based distinguished NGO with established roots in Pakistan and AJK raising awareness among the masses about the significance of plantation for earning and livelihood in this era of rising dearthness and price hikes.

The workshop, led by renowned resource person Dr. Tayyaba Kanwal, provided participants with insights into the cultivation

process, including soil preparation, nurturing, caring, and growth of plants aimed at generating income.

Dr. Tayyaba Kanwal actively engaged participants in hands-on activities, emphasizing the practical aspects of the successful plantation. Discussions included techniques for cultivating Seeds, soil preparation, and the nurturing process crucial for plant growth, aligning with AIOU's commitment to sustainable income sources.

The Chief Guest, Imran Sadiq Malik, commended AIOU Mirpur for its efforts in promoting plantation initiatives in AJK.



LAHORE: Labourers are busy in construction work of Sagian Road with the help of heavy machinery in the Provincial Capital.

10 developmental schemes worth Rs 11.941b approved

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Development Working Party, Punjab, (PDWP) has approved ten developmental schemes of the SHC&ME, RP and literacy sectors with an estimated cost of Rs 11941.6 million.

The schemes were approved in the 42nd PDWP meeting of current financial year, chaired by Planning and Development Board (P&D Board) Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo here Tuesday. The Board Secretary Muzaffar Khan Sial, all the P&D Board members, Provincial secretaries of departments

concerned and other senior representatives attended the meeting. Approved schemes are as follows:

Program for Strategic Transformation / Revamping of old Blocks of Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Hospital Gurjat at the cost of Rs 769.998 million; Program for Strategic Transformation / Revamping of old blocks of ex-DHQS (DHQ Hospital, Sargodha) at the cost of Rs 827.045 million; Program for Strategic Transformation / Revamping of old blocks 351 of ex-DHQS (Rahim Yar Khan, Gujranwala.

Pakistan Army, FC organizes medical camps

PESHAWAR (APP): In response to the onset of winter, the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps North organized free medical camps in various areas including Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Swat, Dir, Buner, and Chitral.

At these free medical camps, doctors and nursing staff conducted over seven thousand free medical examinations, providing essential medications to the patients, said officials here on Tuesday.

Some cases requiring further treatment were referred to relevant district hospitals.

In addition to medical care, healthcare professionals at the camps raised awareness among the residents about seasonal illnesses.

The initiative, led by the Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps, aims to continue providing health facilities to remote areas through free medical camps.

IGP review up-gradation work of Special Initiative Police Station Civil Lines

RAWALPINDI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr Usman Anwar here on Tuesday visited Special Initiative Police Station Civil Lines and reviewed its up-gradation work.

He directed the officers concerned to complete all the projects within the stipulated time frame.

Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi Syed Khuram Ali, City Police

Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

The IGP inspected different parts of the police station and appreciated its up-gradation work in a short span of time. Rawalpindi police officers briefed the IGP regarding ongoing projects. All projects should be completed as soon as possible, the IGP directed the authorities.

International News

UK announces biggest deployment to Nato exercises in decades

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain will send 20,000 armed forces personnel to one of Nato's largest exercises since the Cold War, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps announced on Monday, warning of increasing threats to the Western-led alliance.

The deployment, which Shapps characterised as the UK's biggest to Nato in four decades, is aimed at "providing vital reassurance" over the "menace" posed by Russian President Vladimir Putin following his invasion of Ukraine, Shapps said.

The British personnel — from the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and

Army — will be deployed across Europe and beyond for the military alliance's latest "Exercise Steadfast Defender", alongside personnel from 31 other member countries and Sweden, which is a candidate to join the transatlantic alliance.

"Today's Nato is bigger than ever but the challenges are bigger too," Shapps said in a wide-ranging speech in London, in which he warned "the international rules-based order" was facing rising dangers.

"And that's why the UK has committed... the totality of our air, land and maritime assets to NATO", he went on.

"In 2024 I am deter-

mined to do even more and that's why I can announce today the UK will send in some 20,000 personnel to lead one of Nato's largest deployments since the end of the Cold War."

The UK contingent will include fighter jets and surveillance aircraft, the navy's most advanced warships and submarines, and a full range of army capabilities, including special operations forces.

London will send a so-called Carrier Strike Group — which features its flagship aircraft carrier and F-35B fighter jets and helicopters — to the exercises in the North Atlantic, Norwegian Sea and Baltic Sea.

Big win in Iowa moves Donald Trump closer to Biden re-match

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump romped to a landslide victory on Monday in Iowa's caucuses — the first vote in the US presidential race — cementing his status as the presumptive Republican standard-bearer to challenge US President Joe Biden in November's election.

The former president has led polling for more than a year, but the contest offered the clearest insight yet into his ability to convert that advantage into a stunning White House return.

Major US networks took just half an hour to call the race, with Trump taking 51 per cent of the vote and opening an unprecedented 30-point gap over Ron DeSantis — the Iowa victor for an Iowa challenger in modern history.

The Florida governor and Trump's other main rival — former UN ambassador Nikki Haley — were locked at 21 and 19pc respectively.



Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak delivers a ministerial statement in the House of Commons, in London, Britain.

Yemen's Houthis say they will target US ships

CAIRO (Internews): The Yemeni Houthi movement will expand its targets to include U.S. ships, an official from the Iran-allied group said on Monday.

"The ship doesn't necessarily have to be heading to Israel for us to target it; it is enough for it to be American," Nasruddeen Amer, a spokesperson for the Houthis, told Al Jazeera.

"The United States is on the verge of losing its maritime security," Amer also said British and American ships had become "legitimate targets" due to the strikes launched

by the two countries on Yemen last week.

Attacks on ships since October by the Houthis, who say they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians, have hit commerce and alarmed major powers in a regional escalation of Israel's more than three-month war with Hamas militants in Gaza.

In the latest apparent attack, a U.S.-owned bulk carrier was reportedly struck by a missile near Yemen's port of Aden, causing a fire in a hold but no injuries on board, according to British Maritime Security firm Ambrey.

One dead, 12 injured in rammings; Israel arrests students in West Bank

Monitoring Desk
NABLUS: Apparently coordinated car-rammings in central Israel on Monday, claimed the life of a woman and injured 12 other people, police and medical officials said, as tensions soared over the more than three-month-old Israeli bombing of the Gaza Strip.

Police described the incident in Raanana, north of Tel Aviv, as a terrorist attack and said two suspects were under arrest.

Major storm hits French territory in Indian Ocean

Monitoring Desk
SAINT REUNION: Hundreds of thousands of people on France's Reunion Island were confined to their homes on Monday, as authorities issued the highest alert for a potentially devastating storm.

Cyclone Belal hit the French Indian Ocean island on Monday, moving in from the northwest packing "extreme winds", according to Meteo-France. "The eye of the storm is passing over the Reunion Island, starting from the northern part."

Choe and her delegation departed Pyongyang for Russia the same day, KCNA said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards attack Israel's 'spy HQ' in Iraq

DUBAI/BAGHDAD (Internews): Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they attacked the spy headquarters of Israel in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region, state media reported late on Monday, while the elite force said they also struck in Syria against the Islamic State.

The strikes come amid concerns about the escalation of a conflict that has spread through the Middle East since the war between Israel and Palestinian Islamist group Hamas began on Oct. 7, with Iran's allies also entering the fray from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen.

"In response to the recent atrocities of the Zionist regime, causing the killing of commanders of the Guards and the Axis of Resistance... one of the main Mossad espionage headquarters in Iraq's Kurdistan region was destroyed with ballistic mis-

siles," the Guards said in a statement.

Israeli government officials could not immediately be reached for comment.

In addition to the strikes at northeast of Kurdistan's capital Erbil in a residential area near the U.S. consulate, the Guards said they "fired a number of ballistic missiles in Syria and destroyed the perpetrators of terrorist operations" in Iran, including the Islamic State.

Islamic State claimed responsibility for two explosions in Iran this month that killed nearly 100 people and wounded scores at a memorial for top commander Qassem Soleimani.

"We assure our nation that the Guards' offensive operations will continue until avenging the last drops of martyrs' blood," the Guards' statement said.

Commerzbank merger talk resurfaces as Germany mulls company sales, sources say

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Five years after Deutsche Bank (DBKGN.DE) and Commerzbank (CBKGDE) aborted an attempt to merge, an uncertain outlook for bank profitability and Germany's need to plug a hole in its budget have rekindled speculation about a potential deal.

Germany has said it is looking at all options to raise funds by selling stakes in some of the 100 or more companies it owns.

Though a sale of its remaining 15% holding in Commerzbank is not imminent, Finance Minister Christian Lindner is open to a disposal and ultimately would prefer the government exiting the stake, according to a person familiar with his thinking.

A merger with Commerzbank would allow

Deutsche Bank to further diversify away from volatile investment banking earnings, bolstering its longer-term stability, another factor that could sway the German government, said the person, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Deutsche Bank, which has completed the bulk of a multi-year restructuring plan, has recently stepped up internal discussions on deals, including possible purchases of banks such as Commerzbank and ABN Amro, Bloomberg News reported on Friday, without naming sources.

Deutsche Bank in recent months has come closer to reopening the idea of a merger with Commerzbank, even if there are no live discussions, a second person with knowledge of the situation has told Reuters.



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Head of the Ukrainian President's Office Andriy Yermak arrive for the meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken (not pictured) during the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Saudi Arabia could recognise Israel if Palestinian issue resolved: foreign minister

Monitoring Desk
DAVOS: Saudi Arabia's foreign minister said on Tuesday the kingdom could recognise Israel if a comprehensive agreement were reached that included statehood for the Palestinians.

"We agree that regional peace includes peace for Israel, but that could only happen through peace for the Palestinians through a Palestinian state," Prince Faisal bin

Farhan told a panel at the World Economic Forum in Davos.

Asked if Saudi Arabia would then recognise Israel as part of a wider political agreement, he said: "Certainly," Prince Faisal said securing regional peace through the creation of a Palestinian state was "something we have been indeed working on with the US administration, and it is more relevant in the context of Gaza".

NA Speaker inaugurates office of Pakistan Parliamentary Reporters Association

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Speaker of the National Assembly, Raja Pervez Ashraf on Tuesday inaugurated the office of the Pakistan Parliamentary Reporters Association (PRA) in green surroundings of the Parliament House.

In the opening ceremony attended by PRA representatives, members, and senior journalists from the National Assembly, the Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf congratulated on the establishment of the Parliamentary Reporters Association and the PRA office at the National Assembly Secretariat.

Highlighting the Press Gallery's pivotal role, the Speaker emphasized its indispensability, stating that without it, the Parliament remains incomplete.

Addressing the deep connection between the media and the Parliament, Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf underscored the role of the media in bridging the gap between the public and the Parliament, acknowledging the crucial function of parliamentary reporters in keeping the public informed about legislative activities.

Expressing his commitment to providing a conducive environment and excellent facilities for parliamentary reporters, the Speaker declared it a top priority. The journalists in the press gallery have consistently played a crucial role in bringing public concerns to the attention of the highest echelons of power, stated the Speaker. Declaring the Parliament as an institution representing 25 crore people (250 million

people), the Speaker asserted its status as the source of power and the focal point of all institutions. In a call for national unity, Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf stressed the necessity for all institutions to work collaboratively for the country's development and progress. Urging the overcoming of mutual differences, the Speaker asserted that democracy and the strength of the Parliament are indispensable for the nation's progress. Emphasizing respect for all institutions belonging to Pakistan, the Speaker urged collective efforts to address and solve the challenges being faced by the country.

In a call for political unity, Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf urged all political parties to come together to address the country's issues.

Training workshop held for police investigation officers

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Police have organized a training workshop dedicated to enhancing the skills of Police Investigation officers and fostering a more professional approach to handling investigation cases.

The initiative, driven by the directives of Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCCO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, aimed to implement capacity-building programs for the force's investigation officers, emphasizing the need for a professional approach in dealing with various cases.

The training workshop took place at the Police Lines Headquarters in Islamabad, attracting participation from investigation officers of the Islamabad Capital Police.

SC dismisses appeal in family dispute on gold

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday dismissed an appeal of a woman challenging the verdict of high court pertaining to a family dispute on ten tola gold.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa heard the case filed by a woman against the provision of gold to her ex-daughter in law.

The lawyer informed the court that the conflict was between a mother in law and daughter in law on custody of the gold. On the query of the bench, the lawyer said that woman has been divorced and she has three children.

The court asked that what the problem was in giving ten tola gold to a mother of three kids. The court, subsequently, dismissed the appeal of woman Sabeeha Khanam.

Journalist, author Babar Ayaz passes away at 68

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senior journalist and author Babar Ayaz, breathed his last on Tuesday after a prolonged battle with Parkinson's disease, as confirmed by his grieving family.

At the age of 68, Ayaz succumbed to the effects of Parkinson's disease, a condition he valiantly fought against for an extended period, according to private news channels.

Throughout his illustrious 41-year professional career, Ayaz left an indelible mark on the field of journalism, contributing significantly to various publications and earning respect for his insightful commentary.

During the morning session, an overview of initiatives by the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) was presented, highlighting efforts such as the establishment of schools and the provision of preferential admission and scholarships for the children of overseas Pakistanis. The Bureau of Immigration shared insights into the recruitment pipeline, emphasizing strict



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurating the office of the Parliamentary Reporters Association at Parliament House.

Dr Suleri says: Blockade of waterways due to illegal construction in hill torrent prone areas inflicting heavy losses

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director of Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri on Tuesday said that the blockade of waterways due to illegal construction after flooding in hill torrent prone areas was inflicting heavy losses to infrastructure, livelihoods and human lives.

He was speaking at a one-day roundtable titled: "Climate Resilient Water Governance Approaches for Hill Torrent Management in Pakistan", organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with Pakistan Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), and DAI.

The roundtable aimed to stir result-oriented dialogue among the public, private sector, and civil society stakeholders to mull over hill torrents' floodwater

governance issue. It incorporated community perspectives from representatives, who joined from hill torrent affected areas from D.I. Khan, Rajanpur, Swat apart from Sindh and Balochistan. Dr Suleri said that population explosion, deforestation, and urbanisation are the major causes of fading away of water management systems and infrastructure. The temperature systems of La Nina and El Nino effects and weather change had already increased precipitation to an erratic level, he added.

"SDPI's climate change and water management teams are closely working on these areas, and it's impacts that were above normal on girls, women, children and others," he said.

Mr Ahmed Kamal, Chairman of Federal Flood

Commission (FFC), said Pakistan has been facing the worst flooding due to reverse monsoon activity as monsoon used to start from Tarbella, but in 2022 the low pressure was built up in Sindh province that caused abnormal rains in Sindh and Balochistan.

The sporadic flooding in September 2022 in Swat and Kabul river also caused flooding in the areas, he said, adding that in Koh-e-Suleiman Range, Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan areas hosted 11 hill torrents that caused havoc.

He noted that the total water storage capacity of the country was 3.43 million acres feet that comprised three dams, i.e. Tarbella, Chashma, and Mangla. He underlined that the country's priority was low towards mitigating natural disasters that needs to be addressed.



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Culture, Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, South African High Commissioner to Pakistan M Madikiz.

PPP believes in transparent elections, sanctity of vote: Marri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Shazia Marri Tuesday said that elections are part of democracy and PPP truly believed in the transparency of elections and the sanctity of public votes for the betterment of the country. Talking to a Private news channel, she said that equal opportunities to all political parties and every party had full right to participate in the elections, adding, polls would have no credibility if one party was

kept away from the electoral process in the country. She expressed the hope that the poll organizing authority would conduct general elections on time as promised, adding that a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the general elections will ensure a free, fair and transparent electoral exercise. She also criticized PML-N's ill economic policies in the past and held them responsible for current inflation and other economic woes.

Healthcare activists urge immediate implementation of Tobacco Health Levy in Pakistan



Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Healthcare activists urge immediate implementation of Tobacco Health Levy in Pakistan.

Islamabad, January 16, 2024 - In a press release issued by The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), health activists emphasized the urgent need for the implementation of the Tobacco Health Levy in Pakistan, a measure that has been pending since 2019.

The levy, if executed in a timely manner, could have generated an additional revenue of 250 billion Pa-

kistani Rupees for the national exchequer. This substantial amount could have been utilized to enhance healthcare infrastructure and sustain efforts in tobacco control.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager at SPARC, said that the Tobacco Health Levy, pending since 2019, presents a crucial opportunity for Pakistan to bolster its healthcare infrastructure and fortify the ongoing efforts in tobacco control.

The potential additional revenue of 250 billion Rupees could significantly contribute to the betterment of public health, particularly for our children. It is imperative that the caretaker government takes swift action and moves towards the immediate implementation of this bill. Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Director at Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, stated that the delay in implementing the

Tobacco Health Levy is a missed chance for Pakistan to address critical public health concerns and generate substantial revenue for the national exchequer. With the potential to inject 250 billion Rupees into healthcare and tobacco control efforts, this levy could pave the way for a healthier future.

We urge the caretaker government to seize this opportunity and prioritize the immediate implementation of the Tobacco Health Levy.

He further urged the government to consider the immense benefits that the timely implementation of the Tobacco Health Levy can bring to the nation's health and economy. This will send a much-needed message to the general public that the government remains committed to the protection of children's rights and the improvement of public health in Pakistan.

Senate delegation explores collaborative opportunities during UK visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the Pakistan Senate, led by Senators Khalida Ateeb, Keshoo Bai, Abida Azeem and Additional Secretary Hafeez Sheikh, is undertaking a study tour to the United Kingdom Parliament.

During their visit to Westminster, the delegation received a warm welcome and an in-depth tour of the British Parliament, coupled with a comprehensive briefing on the workings and composition of the UK's parliamentary democracy, said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

In a subsequent meeting at the CPA Headquarters in London, the delegation engaged in fruitful discussions with CPA Secretary-General Stephen Twigg.

Matters of mutual in-

terest were deliberated, with a focus on strengthening collaboration and synergy for parliamentary and democratic enhancement.

The forthcoming General and Senate elections in Pakistan were highlighted, presenting an opportune moment for the CPA to resume its prior initiatives, including post-election seminars and workshops for newly-elected parliamentarians.

The Pakistan Senate delegation underscored the potential for increased cooperation by urging the CPA to establish a regional office in Pakistan. This move is seen as pivotal in expanding collaborative initiatives with both federal and provincial parliaments, aiming to bolster the capacities of elected members, staffers, and officials.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan, Haji Gulbar Khan calls on Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah.

SC issues written order regarding rejection of Justice Naqvi's plea

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a written order regarding rejection of the request of Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi to stay the proceedings of Supreme Judicial Council (SJC) against him. The six-page order regarding the hearing dated January 9, was authored by Justice Amin ud Din Khan.

The order said, "We note that the instant CP was fixed for hearing on 15.12.2023 when learned counsel raised the objection with regard to constitution of the bench and prayed that he wants to file an application to raise this objection so that this bench may consider the same and prayed for fixation of the petitions for 8.1.2024 and on his request the case was

adjourned for the said date.

"When the case was fixed for 8.1.2024, no written application was filed and during the hearing learned counsel stated that he wants to withdraw the objection noted on the last date of hearing. "As the petitioner's counsel was not willing to implead the complainants as respondent in these petitions, then a question was posed to the learned counsel whether without impleading the complainants/informers we can proceed with the matter and on this point some of the arguments were advanced on 8.1.2024 and further Constitution Petition No.43/2023, etc 6 arguments we heard today and passed the order of impleadment as respondent in these petitions.



ISLAMABAD: A worker is busy in the maintenance work of CCTV cameras installed in Federal Capital.

Musadik Malik says: PMLN optimistic for election victory

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PMLN) leader Dr. Musadik Malik on Monday expressed firm confidence in the party's strong position for the upcoming general elections.

Talking to a private news channel, he emphasized that the anticipated victory would be anchored in the exemplary performance of PML-N in the last

four years of government.

Dr. Musadik highlighted the key achievements of PML-N government were the installation of 12,000 to 14,000 Megawatt (MW) of electricity in the system. The establishment of 1.2 billion cubic feet of gas plants, construction of 8 to 9 thousand miles of roads and elevating the GDP to 6 per cent were the key project on PML-N's credit, he said.

Islamabad Police Fire at store of police headquarters timely extinguished

ISLAMABAD (APP): The fire that occurred at the miscellaneous store in the Islamabad Police Line Headquarters on the previous night was successfully extinguished with no significant losses.

According to police, the cooling process was also conducted and teams of Islamabad Police, and district administration participated in the operation. The fire was brought under control by a very tactical approach.

ICCPO Dr Akbar Nasir Khan and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad supervised the entire process while other officials of Islamabad Police and District Administration remained present at the spot,

police said. Meanwhile, the police sources said that the blaze, which started near the anti-riot equipment and uniform warehouses, spread quickly to other parts of Police Lines Headquarters, prompting the evacuation of nearby residential barracks of police personnel.

At least six fire brigade vehicles, one police water cannon and rescue teams reached the spot after being informed and brought the fire under control after a hectic effort.

According to rescue sources, the cause of the fire is not yet known. Rescue sources also informed that no casualty was reported in the incident.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Senate, Mohammad Qasim Samad Khan presenting a shield to Director General (Translation) Senate Secretariat, Muhammad Usman on his retirement from Senate Secretariat at Parliament House.

Senate body addresses challenges faced by workers abroad

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The sub-committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development convened at the Parliament House under the leadership of Senator Engr Rukhsana Zuberi accompanied by Senator Shaheen Khalid Butt and Senator Zeeshan Khanzada. The primary focus of the meeting centered on a comprehensive discussion of the challenges encountered by Overseas Pakistani workers across various countries.

During the morning session, an overview of initiatives by the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) was presented, highlighting efforts such as the establishment of schools and the provision of preferential admission and scholarships for the children of overseas Pakistanis. The Bureau of Immigration shared insights into the recruitment pipeline, emphasizing strict

adherence to immigration rules.

The committee requested a comprehensive five-year data breakdown by country and skill for trend analysis and strategic planning, including insights into Government-to-Government (G2G) agreements within Letters of Intent (LOIs). Information on government initiatives addressing non-issuance of UAE work visas to Pakistanis and a brief understanding of the G2G approval process for international labor agreements were sought for transparency. The committee also formulated recommendations, including the proposal to discontinue the term "export" when referring to overseas Pakistani workers and to replace "Tarkeen-e-Watan" with "Yaran-e-Watan" in government documentation.

The evening session featured briefings from the Ministry of Communication, shedding light on its affiliated Departments.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Engr. Rukhsana Zuberi, Convener Sub-Committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.