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

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Pakistan fully committed to success of CPEC: PM

Chinese Vice FM calls on COAS, conveys China's satisfaction on CPEC projects' security; Commends Pakistan's peace efforts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Monday said that Pakistan was fully committed to the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and stressed the need for both sides to continue to work closely to ensure timely completion of the ongoing projects.

He was talking to Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong who paid a courtesy call on him.

The prime minister welcomed the Chinese vice foreign minister as well as members of his delegation and said Pakistan deeply valued its all-weather, strategic, co-operative partnership with China.

Recalling his visit to Beijing for the 3rd Belt and Road Forum in October 2023, he said that he was deeply touched by the warm sentiments of President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang towards Pakistan. He also conveyed his best wishes for the Chinese leadership.

In addition to Pakistan-China relations, the regional

situation also came under discussion during the meeting. The Chinese vice foreign minister thanked the prime minister for the courtesy call and briefed him regarding various meetings held during the visit.

He conveyed special greetings of the Chinese leadership to the prime minister. He said China and Pakistan were "iron-brothers". He assured that China would always remain a reliable partner in Pakistan's socio-economic progress.

Meanwhile Vice Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Sun Weidong Monday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir here at General Headquarters and conveyed China's satisfaction on security arrangements for CPEC projects.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, during the meeting matters of mutual interest and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar exchanging views with Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of the Peoples Republic of China during meeting held in Islamabad.



MANSEHRA: Quaid PML (N) Muhammad Nawaz Sharif addressing a public meeting in connection with general elections

Solangi warns of strict action against those targeting SC via social media

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that elements involved in the malicious campaign against the superior judiciary would be taken to task but no group or person would be victimised. He was addressing a press conference

flanked by Director General Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Ahmed Shamim Pirzada and Director General Operations Federal Investigation Agency Waqaruddin. The minister said that

licious campaign against the superior judiciary and judges on social media, he said that character assassination of someone was a serious violation of the law and the Constitution. He underlined the need to discourage the culture of deceit and intolerance from society.

He said a joint investigation team had been formed to probe the anti-judiciary campaign and the relevant institutions including FIA and PTA were investigating the ongoing propaganda. He said that Article 19 of the Constitution defines freedom of expression with certain restrictions. The minister said that the caretaker government was set up under a constitutional process and it was written in the preamble of the Constitution that the masses could comment on them. Condemning the ma-



rior judiciary would be taken to task but no group or person would be victimised. He was addressing a press conference

Special permits issued to foreign media for elections 2024 coverage

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Monday said special permits were issued to the foreign media for the coverage of the general elections 2024 scheduled for February 28.

In the first phase, the government had issued permits to 49 foreign journalists from 13 different countries for election coverage, said a news release.

The foreign journalists were from multiple countries including China, Japan, America, United Kingdom, Canada, Hong Kong, Serbia, Sweden, France, Germany, Australia, Thailand and Singapore.

According to the statement, about 136 foreign journalists have applied for permission to cover the elections to be held on February 8, 2024. Those Foreign journalists, who have not yet been issued permits for coverage, will get the permission passes soon.

Besides, delegations from the European Union, Commonwealth countries will also come to observe the election. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has printed 200,000 accreditation cards.

Five, including children, found dead in Karachi apartment

KARACHI (APP): The bodies of at least five individuals, among them three children, were found on Monday in an apartment situated in the Shahrah-e-Faisal area under the jurisdiction of the Airport police station.

The deceased were identified by the police as Ahsan Raza Rizvi, his wife Nida, and their three children named Jibreel, Mikael, and baby Umme-Hani. Authorities reported that the children, all minors, were allegedly administered poison.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani inaugurating the Wall of Federation, at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Bilawal says he only needs one term 'not four' to turn around Pakistan

SAHIWAL (INP): With the election fever reaching its zenith, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said Monday he did not need four but only a one-time government to change the fate of the crisis-hit country.

The PPP chairman — an aspirant for the prime minister's slot — took the veiled dig at Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif, who is taking a fourth shot at power after being granted relief from the judiciary, during a power show in Sahiwal.

Addressing the public meeting, Bilawal said: "I do not want four but one

chance. If you give me a chance, I will change the fate of the country and solve all the problems [being faced by the country]."

Referring to the skyrocketing inflation, unemployment, and poverty, the PPP leader claimed that his party was the sole solution to these problems.

"Pakistan is going through a default time," Bilawal said, adding that there was a "division" in the society.

The former foreign minister warned that hostile forces could use the "division" to fulfil their nefarious designs. "I am contesting election to bury the politics of hatred and division."

Pak flays Consecration of 'Ram Temple' on Site of demolished Babri Mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan condemns the construction and consecration of the "Ram Temple" on the site of the demolished Babri Mosque in the Indian city of Ayodhya.

The centuries-old mosque was demolished on 6 December 1992 by a mob of extremists. Deplorably, India's superior judiciary not only acquitted the criminals responsible for this despicable act but also allowed the construction of a temple on the site of the demolished mosque.

Developments of the last 31 years, leading to

today's consecration ceremony, are indicative of growing majoritarianism in India. These constitute an important facet of the ongoing efforts for social, economic and political marginalization of the Indian Muslims.

A temple built on the site of a demolished mosque will remain a blot on the face of India's democracy for the times to come. Notably, there is a growing list of mosques, including the Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi and Shahi Eidgah Mosque in Mathura, facing similar threat of desecration and destruction.



SAHIWAL: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing to public gathering during Election Campaign at Hockey Ground.

FM Jilani, Chinese Vice FM discuss bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani Abbas Jilani and Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong on Monday here reaffirmed the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership and held an in-depth discussion on the entire gamut of bilateral relations including CPEC and bilateral economic and financial cooperation.

The Foreign Minister appreciated the contributions of the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister in deep-

ening Pakistan-China friendship and commended China's unflinching support to Pakistan on all issues. Expressing satisfaction at the steady development of CPEC, Foreign Minister Jilani emphasized the significance of CPEC for Pakistan. He said that Pakistan would continue making efforts for the realization of CPEC's full potential for shared benefits. He appreciated China's readiness and support for all CPEC projects in Pakistan.

Entry of youtubers banned in SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Guidelines have been issued for court's reporters in connection with entry into Supreme Court (SC). According to directives issued by SC spokesperson beat reporters from the institutions will be allowed to enter into SC. Cooperation with security staff will be must in connection with search process at the time of their entry. Ban has been imposed on all kind of recording including Youtube program inside SC building. Proper arrangement will be made to show court's proceedings to reporters in court's room who come there in big cases.

Nawaz vows to bring country back on dev. track if voted to power

MANSEHRA (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Nawaz Sharif on Monday vowed that he would bring back the country on the track of development after his party was voted to power on February 8 along with removing the 10 years long sense of deprivation of people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Addressing a big public gathering in connection of 2024 election, Nawaz said the time had come to restart the development works from where the same were left uncompleted in 2017.

He criticized the poor performance of the party that came into power with the slogan of 'change in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa',

which had done nothing for the people of the province during its 10-year rule.

The three times prime minister said putting the country again on the path to progress and prosperity would be a difficult challenge, but the PML-N had the ability to put it on road to progress and development.

Nawaz Sharif said that a network of motorways including Hazara Motorway were built by his government that promoted tourism and opened the entire Hazara Division for investment.

Besides construction of the motorways, he said, load-shedding was eliminated with gas and electricity provided to domestic

and industrial consumers at affordable rates.

He said that a large number of people were provided jobs during the tenure of last PML-N government.

"In Pakistan, there was no price hike during his tenure as prime minister and all essential services and commodities including bread, vegetables and edible items were available to people at reasonable rates," he said.

"Had I not been ousted in 2017 there would have been an international standard airport at Mansehra today, besides train service from Mansehra to Islamabad and Muzafarabad in Azad Kashmir," he added.

Security forces killed seven terrorists in Zhob operation

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Monday killed at least seven terrorists involved in hostile activities against the armed forces and innocent civilians during a fire exchange that took place during an intelligence-based operation in Sambaza Sector area of Zhob District, near the Pakistan-Afghan border.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Army troops effectively surrounded and engaged the fleeing terrorists. The seven killed terrorists remained actively involved in terrorist activities against security forces as well as the killing of innocent civilians. Arms, ammunition, and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists.

Pak-Belarus inter-govt commission on defence meets at MoDP

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Pakistan and Belarus "Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Technical Cooperation", established since 2015, met at the Ministry of Defence Production on Monday.

Three sessions of the Commission have been conducted so far, including the last held in Minsk, Belarus in April, 2021, while the fourth one was being held in Pakistan from January 22-24, a news release said.

Rassalai Viachaslau, Deputy Minister SAMI, is heading the Belarus delegation while the Pakistan side is led by Secretary Defence Production Lt Gen Humayun Aziz.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Asim Munir exchanging views with Sun Weidong, Vice Foreign Minister of the Peoples Republic of China during meeting held at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

Security, law & order situation in Islamabad under control: ICCPO

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr Akbar Nasir Khan on Monday said that security and law and order situation in the Federal Capital was firmly under control.

The ICCPO, in a video message, said that there was nothing to worry about the Capital's security situation. Everything was under control and the people should not disrupt their daily routine lives.

Dr Akbar, in the mes-

sage issued in the wake of closure of numerous educational institutions in Islamabad on the pretext of security concerns, said maintenance of security was a two-way process requiring the active cooperation of the masses.

Encouraging the residents of Capital to remain vigilant, he urged them to stay connected with the social media handles of Islamabad Police for timely updates. He cautioned against giving credence to rumours.

Security concerns Bahria, Air, National Defense universities close for an indefinite period

ISLAMABAD (Online): Three universities of Islamabad have been closed for an indefinite period due to security concerns.

According to sources, the directives to close Bahria, Air and National Defense universities have been issued on Monday. Final examinations of students have also effected due to closure of universities.

Several educational institutions have also been closed in areas of these universities in Islamabad. Sources of university administration said that students were notified late night about the indefinite closure of universities.



A Belarus delegation headed by Mr. Rassalai Viachaslau, Deputy Minister SAMI, held a meeting in Ministry of Defence Production with Pakistan delegation headed by Secretary Defence Production, Lt Gen (Redt) humayun Aziz HI(M).

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Subdued polls

The extent of the damage that has been wrought on the credibility of the upcoming polls is evident in how muted electoral activities have been.

Barely three weeks before the day millions of Pakistanis are expected to head to polling stations to cast votes for parties of their choice, one still cannot tell that a general election is about to take place.

Two of the three major contenders, the PML-N and PPP, have been out canvassing in recent days, yet it seems as if their campaigns are travelling roadshows that pack up and leave with their leaders once the speeches are done and the loudspeakers fall silent.

Among the key leaders, Nawaz Sharif has appeared only briefly before the public for a short address, while Imran Khan remains confined away from the public's eye. Only Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has been travelling from city to city to shore up votes for the PPP.

It is a shame that a nation of 240m seems tuned out of the democratic process. Elections in Pakistan have traditionally been a riot of party colours and blaring anthems, raucous rallies and jumbo jalsas. Despite all the unpleasantness so far, one had still hoped that we would see a celebration of the country's rich social and political diversity as election day neared.

Instead, with the state constantly spoiling the mood with its ongoing, violent crackdown on one of the country's most popular parties, the citizenry is withdrawing from the process and appears comparably less enthusiastic than in previous years.

It also bears mentioning that the youth, who are at the forefront of ground-level campaigns run by parties, appear to be missing from the picture. Many likely do not want to risk the state's wrath, and their rivals have no real competition to fight against.

The weeks leading to elections are usually a busy time for printing presses, which produce the posters, pamphlets, flags, banners and all manner of related election paraphernalia that make Pakistani elections such a colourful affair.

Event management companies and smaller enterprises that rent out tents, chairs and sound systems also see a boost in business as political activities pick up and parties start rallying their supporters. However, anecdotal accounts and media reports corroborate that these industries are experiencing much less than expected demand. Meanwhile, many are turning to outlets that still offer them an opportunity to express themselves creatively and without restrictions. Social media platforms like X and TikTok have become new fronts in the war of political narratives. Given the trend, there are now fears that they, too, may be restricted closer to the polls.

All in all, it is a rather depressing state of affairs, attributable to the ECP's failure to discharge its duties according to their intended spirit.

'Managing' polls
Huma Yusuf

The year 2024 is the year of elections. That means it's also the year of corruption. Around the world, corruption and elections go hand in hand, with research showing that corruption soars in the run-up to polls. In Pakistan, electoral corruption is perceived as necessary to maintaining a perverse form of political stability; a way of 'managing' democracy to ensure that the institutional status quo is not upended. Despite the orchestration of this year's election, there are signs this tactic may be fraying.

Narratives of corruption are inevitably tied up with Pakistan's electoral process. One candidate is cleared of corruption charges, seemingly to come to power, another faces corruption charges to quash his political potential. Ironically, the perversion of justice, intimidation and censorship required to manage the corruption status of political actors are themselves a form of corruption, executed in the name of eradicating that very evil.

In fragile states like ours, corruption is not only the means to an end, but is also believed to contribute to some modicum of ongoing stability. Back-channel corruption in the run-up to elections is a form of consensus-building around one candidate, and is widespread to ensure there are no challenges to the carefully brokered power equation extending across law enforcement, the judiciary, bureaucracy, 'electables', the business community, etc.

To be clear, corruption does not take the form of bribery only, though our electoral history is littered with suitcases stuffed with cash. As Transparency Inter-

national puts it, corruption also includes the abuse or manipulation of state resources, which includes court rulings and electoral policies that favour certain candidates, gerrymandering, vote-buying in the context of patronage politics, media gagging, strategic deployment of security forces on election day, and so on.

It is a familiar story. But it is helpful to go further and recast electoral corruption in the context of 'buying the peace'. Peace buying typically occurs in post-conflict situations; for example, after civil wars. In these contexts, peace builders (global institutions and NGOs) buy off violent actors (ethnic militias, organised criminal groups) in exchange for ending the conflict. This can be through outright payment or through soft agreements about which groups can control certain resources (think of ministries being handed to different factions in a post-conflict scenario). This tactic was used by the US in Afghanistan, with that country's ethno-linguistic groups plundering different state coffers and diverting development aid while Washington turned a blind eye.

For earnest peace builders, a bought peace is at best a short-term arrangement during a transition period, with hopes of ultimately shifting incentives and normalising democratic practice. The tactic fails when stakeholders perceive they are not benefiting equally. Those grievances descend into conflict because the affected group has lost the incentive to remain non-violent. Applying this frame to Pakistan's poll landscape is helpful. For decades, electoral corruption has worked because all elite stakeholders have benefited from the system. Even those who

lose out in one election bide their time knowing they will enjoy favours the next time polling occurs.

But one key stakeholder has historically been sidelined in these negotiations: the public. At most, they are seen as recipients of patronage — transactional service delivery in exchange for complicity — doled out in the form of subsidies, patchy infrastructure development, tolerance for tax evasion. However, in times of economic and climate crises, resources for distribution through patronage are increasingly scarce. Corruption is breeding competition, not consensus; grievances are mounting.

We can see this in protests across the country: Baloch women demanding the return of their disappeared loved ones, hundreds demanding wheat subsidies in Gilgit-Baltistan, traders protesting in Chaman, fisherfolk rising against Chinese trawlers along the coastline, farmers unionising in Okara, city dwellers burning soaring electricity bills on the streets. It is getting harder to buy the peace now that the public is demanding its share.

It is only by recognising that old tactics cannot work and genuinely transitioning to inclusive democracy that Pakistan can move forward. It seems elections will take place this year, and all is likely to go to plan. A 2016 study by Stefan Dahlberg and Maria Solevid found that voter turnout is not materially affected by perceptions of corruption, particularly where vote-buying is rampant. The day after polls, it may seem as if all is in control, the status quo well preserved. But we should all beware what comes after. -- Courtesy Dawn

Al Shabaab threat
Mohammad Ali Babakhel

Al Shabaab ('the youth') is Al Qaeda's subsidiary in East Africa. It is active in much of southern Somalia and a few pockets in Kenya and Ethiopia. Since 2007, Al Shabaab has been fighting the Somali government and the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia. It is believed to be responsible for a surge in attacks since the 2022 re-election of Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who has declared an "all-out war" on Al-Shabaab.

Al-Itihad al-Islami, Al-Shabaab's predecessor, was the incubator for many of its leaders. A younger, hard-line group later split from the elder AIAl, wanting to establish a 'Greater Somalia' ruled under the Sharia. This younger group joined forces with the Islamic Courts Union. In 2006, US-backed Ethiopian forces invaded Somalia and pushed the ICU out of the capital. The majority of ICU fighters fled to neighbouring countries, but others retreated southwards, re-emerging later as a guerrilla group against the Ethiopian forces and seizing territory in central and southern Somalia. By 2008, Al Shabaab had grown from a small-sized group to an organisation of about 9,000.

Al Shabaab developed ties with Al Qaeda in 2008, but formally pledged allegiance in 2012. Onwards, it carried out a few high-profile violent attacks in Somalia's neighbouring countries, including the September 2013 Westgate Mall attacks in Nairobi, in which 68 people were killed, and the Garissa University attack in April 2015, resulting in 148 deaths. In October 2017, Al

Shabaab carried out another deadly truck attack on the busiest intersection of Mogadishu, resulting in 587 deaths. Owing to its capability for lethal attacks, it has been described by the media as the deadliest terror group in Africa.

Al Shabaab dreams of a fundamentalist Islamic state which would include Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia. According to its narrative, democracy is a religion for non-Muslims, hence it must be opposed and rejected. It recruits online and attracts youth from Somalia and Kenya. In 2017, the UN secretary general stated that over half of Al Shabaab's fighters may be children, reflecting the group's strategy to replace ageing fighters with younger 'talent'. It is to Al Shabaab's benefit that the majority of fighters are ethnic Somali and from the Sunni sect, which lets it take advantage of both Somalia's nationalism and religion.

Its pledge of allegiance brought Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and Al Shabaab closer. The US became their common enemy. Proximity to Al Qaeda provided an opportunity for Al Shabaab to be trained in Afghanistan. Some master trainers moved to Somalia and trained Al Shabaab fighters. Both collaborated on matters ranging from indoctrination and basic infantry skills, to making IEDs, conducting suicide bombings, taking hostages, and assassinations. During this partnership, Al Shabaab also developed skills to use laptop explosives and car bombs.

The group collects tax on transport vehicles and constructs dispensaries in areas under its control. To prove it is environment-friendly, plastic bags have been banned. It encourages feedback from citizens

by placing complaint boxes outside offices to improve administration within its controlled areas. By distributing food, banning drugs, and reducing crime, the group tries to project itself as a welfare organisation to win public trust. Listening to music or shaving beards is also prohibited in areas under its control.

Since its inception, Al Shabaab has been dependent on multiple sources of funding, which includes support from the Somali diaspora. After seizing the port city of Kismayo in 2008, the group earned a hefty amount from exports of charcoal. To dry up this source of income, the UN banned charcoal exports from Somalia in 2012. Reportedly, Al Shabaab also made its expenditure from investments in gold. According to the UN, Al Shabaab has generated up to \$100 million a year from different sources, including fees levied at ports of entry, taxes on goods, checkpoint fees, and extortion.

According to the Global Terrorism Index 2022, 315 attacks that resulted in 784 deaths made Al Shabaab the second-deadliest group in the world.

The deaths attributed to it in Somalia increased by 23 per cent, and the highest proportion of its attacks were directed against the military, followed by civilians. Al Shabaab was held responsible for 97pc (733 deaths) of all terror-related deaths in 2022.

The war against Al Shabaab has dragged on for 17 years. History and ground realities suggest that it cannot be defeated with kinetic options alone. The Somali government needs to explore peaceful options, including negotiations; but the real question is whether Al Shabaab is interested in talks. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News
Shamshad Akhtar, WB Country Director discuss financing operations in Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar and Country Director World Bank (WB) for Pakistan, Najib Bin Hassine on Monday met to discuss, review and finalize the financing for two World Bank-funded operations in Pakistan. The operations include additional financing of US\$250.0 million for an ongoing World Bank-funded programme titled "Crisis-Resilient Social Protection Programme (CRISP)", being implemented by Benazir

Income Support Programme (BISP), said a news release here. The program aims to support the development of a more adaptive social protection system that will contribute to any future crisis resilience among poor and vulnerable households. The second WB-funded operation includes Pakistan's "Resilient and Accessible Microfinance (RAM) Program" worth US\$175.0 million to help enhance access to microcredit and support the resilience of the microfinance sector and its borrowers.

Considering the importance of interventions planned under the CRISP program, Dr Shamshad Akhtar gave go-ahead signal to engage the World Bank additional financing of US\$250 million for the program in principle. She, however, desired to convene another meeting next week to formalize the program contours. She also desired to invite the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and Security and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in the next meeting to finalize the program modalities.

A total of 298,699,061 shares valuing Rs.12,515 billion were traded during the day as compared to 287,310,860 shares valuing Rs.9,320 billion the last day.

Some 335 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 140 of them recorded gains and 171 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 24 remained unchanged. The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Ltd with 97,700,790 shares at Rs.5.57 per share, Pak Petroleum with 23,338,496 shares at Rs.131.01 per share and PIAC(A) with 21,105,500 shares at Rs.12.07 per share. Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.70.00 per share price, closing at Rs.8,270.00, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with its per share price to Rs.2,428.65.



FAISALABAD: Farmers are busy harvesting radish crop at their field.

Trade and Investment Officers' delegation visits FPCCI

LAHORE: A 40-member delegation of newly appointed Trade and Investment Officers (TIOs) visited Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Office here Monday. Sharing his views regarding the ways and means to enhance country's exports with the TIOs, the FPCCI Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Ejaz said that in order to increase Pakistan's exports, the Trade and Investment Officers should play their role in organizing joint ventures, business-to-business meetings, exchange of trade delegations and single country exhibitions between the Pakistani business community and other countries, besides ensuring timely sharing of information on required certification and value addition with the respective exporters. He suggested that TIOs should also provide quarterly trade data including Pakistan's imports/exports with other countries of the world, arguing that it would enable the Pakistani business community to take advantage of the available trade opportunities by introducing new products and technologies there. Zaki Ejaz added that business community,



DOHA: SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik signs agreements with Qatar's top companies.

Pak-Qatar agreements to boost job prospects, SAPM meets separately with Qatari Ministers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (SAPM OP&HRD), Jawad Sohrab Malik, led a successful official visit to Qatar, culminating in the signing of several Agreements & Letter's of Intent (LOIs) with top Qatari companies intended to significantly enhance employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce in Qatar. The signing of these agreements with renowned Qatari firms, including

Qatari Diyar-Saudi Bin Laden Group Construction (QD-SBG), Hamad Bin Khaled Contracting Company W.L.L (HBK), Ali Bin Ali Holding W.L.L., Sheikh Jabor Bin Mansour Bin Jabor Bin Jassim Al Thani (JM) Holding, Tabeeb Care Medical Services, and Al Rawnaq International Commercial Projects, marks a crucial step in strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Qatar in the field of human resource development, a news release said.

In addition to these agreements, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Jawad Sohrab Malik held a significant meeting with Hamad Saleh Al Qamra, Chairman of Al Qamra Holding, focusing on the recruitment of Pakistani manpower for various company projects. The visit also included a tour of the View Hospital, a part of Elegancia Health Care, where the recruitment of Pakistani health professionals is underway following a recent MoU between Elegancia Health Care and the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) of Pakistan.

Exports increase by 35.33% to Rs 4.3 trillion in 1st half

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country in the rupee term witnessed an increase of 35.33 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

Exports during July-December (2023-24) were recorded at Rs.4,300,752 million as against Rs.3,177,893 million during the corresponding period of last year, showing an increase of 35.33 per cent, according to the provisional data released by PBS.

On a year-on-year basis, the exports during December 2023 increased by 54.59 per cent and were recorded at Rs.799,588 million compared to the exports of Rs.517,240 million in October 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 8.86 per cent when compared to the exports of Rs. 734,541 million in November 2023. The main commodities of exports during December, 2023 were rice other than Basmati (Rs.124,040 million), knitwear (Rs. 103,898 million), readymade garments (Rs. 84,569 million), bed wear (Rs. 64,119 million).

Wheat cultivation grew by 7 % during current Rabi season

ISLAMABAD (INP): Owing to the incentives introduced by the government, wheat sowing in the country during the current season (Rabi 2023-24) increased by 7.5 per cent as compared to the crop sowing of the corresponding period of the last year.

During the period under review, wheat sowing had been completed over 23.69 million acres as against the set targets of 22.22 million acres, said Food Security Commissioner In the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Imitiaz Ali Gopang.



SARGODHA: Vendors displaying old shoes to attract the customers at his roadside setup.

SCCI chief demands compensation for affected traders' of Saddar fire

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president, Fuad Ishaq was highly saddened over the horrific fire that broke out at Peshawar's Time Centre and demanded that the provincial government immediately announce compensation for the affected traders' community.

In a joint statement issued here on Monday, Fuad Ishaq, president, Sanallah Khan, senior vice president and Ijaz Khan Afridi, vice president of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and members of the chamber's executive committee said that this

horrific fire in Time Centre Peshawar quickly engulfed 200 shops and small counters of mobiles, accessories and batteries, which completely gutted. They expressed high grief and sorrow over monetary loss, worth millions of rupees to the trader's community and asked the present interim provincial government to immediately announce special financial assistance.

The SCCCI chief Fuad Ishaq and members of his cabinet praised the efforts of rescue teams of Pak-Army, Air Force, Cantonment Board and Rescue 1122 in timely conducting operations.

Govt committed to support pharma sector: Nadeem Jan

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan has emphasized the government's proactive efforts to enhance support for the pharmaceutical industry, marking the commencement of a new phase with the establishment of a Pharma Park in Pakistan.

Dr. Nadeem Jan highlighted the initiation of a new era with the Pharma Park in Pakistan, emphasizing that these units are set to commence Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) production within the next six months. He articulated that these initiatives aim to bolster local production, ensuring a steady supply of essential ingredients for pharmaceuticals within the country.

The minister emphasized that local production is poised to not only fulfill the country's needs but also drive exports, anticipating a reduction in medicine prices. He highlighted the government's comprehensive strategy to enhance the permanent supply of medicines, emphasizing the imperative to boost the productive efficiency of pharmaceutical units through the adoption of modern technologies.

Traders announce to support JUI-F candidate in elections on PK-113

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): A traders union has announced support for Jamiat Ulema Islam Fazl-u-rehman (JUI-F) candidate for provincial assembly seat PK-113 in the upcoming general elections scheduled to be held on February 08, 2024.

The Markazi Anjuman Tajran made this announcement during a public meeting held here at a local hotel and vowed to support the JUI-F candidate for PK-113 Kafeel Ahmad Nizami besides running door to door campaign for him.

LDA demolishes illegal constructions

LAHORE (APP): On directions of Commissioner Lahore and DG LDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, LDA teams demolished and sealed more than a dozen illegal constructions and commercial buildings in Johar Town, BOR Society, Wapda Town, Lahore Avenue and OPF Housing schemes on Monday.



LARKANA: Regional Director Colleges Larkana Region, Professor Bashir Ahmed Rajpar presides over the meeting regarding 6th Sindh College Games 2024, at his office in Larkana.



PESHAWAR: Chairperson, National Commission on Status of Women presenting shield to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam during a function organized by the National Commission on Status of Women.

Women's socioeconomic development guarantee for country progress: Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here Monday said that the share of women in Pakistan was about 52 percent in the country's population and their socioeconomic development was guaranteed for speedy progress and prosperity of the nation.

Addressing a function organized by the National Commission on Status of Women held at a local hotel here as a chief guest, the Governor said the increase of girls students compared to boys students in educational institutions of KP was a solid proof of women's education development.

The Governor said the status of women in Islam was very high, adding our religion has given the right of property to them and nobody could change it.

Haji Ghulam Ali said that women were given highest respect by our society being a mother, sister, wife and daughter and it was the responsibility of the government to ensure provision of all rights to them.

He said close liaison with politicians for enactment of legislation for protection of rights of women was imperative for safeguarding their rights legally and constitutionally.

The governor assured full support to the national commission on status of women for progress, autonomy and development of women besides other organizations in this regard.

Kristin Hawkins praises Naqvi's work ethics

LAHORE (APP): The United States (US) Consul General to Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins has praised work ethics, hard work and dynamism of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi. In a meeting with the Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at the latter's office here on Monday, Ms. Hawkins lauded the people friendly initiatives of Mohsin Naqvi, adding that Mohsin Naqvi's omnipresence is felt everywhere and all are awed by his work and dedication to service.

Hailing the caretaker provincial cabinet, she said the caretaker government under the dynamic leadership of Mohsin Naqvi has set new standards of public service, adding that he is seen working round the clock. Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi, speaking on the occasion, said that the Punjab government wishes to benefit from the expertise of the Americans in the agriculture sector especially in the methods to get more wheat yield.

5420 Itr illegal Diesel seized in DI Khan

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): The district police have recovered 5420 litres of Diesel during the ongoing crackdown against illegal fuel agencies across the district, said a police spokesman on Monday.

Sindh wins title of 2nd Essa lab Sindh-Balochistan bilateral men softball series in style

KARACHI (APP): The Sindh men's softball team won the title of the 2nd Essa Laboratories Sindh Balochistan bilateral softball series in style.

In the third and decisive match of the series played at the KMC Sports Complex Kashmir Road, Sindh scored 10 runs in their allotted 5 innings. Faraz Ajaz, Samir Zulfiqar and Arbaza Ijaz scored 2 runs each. Balochistan team managed to score 5 runs in five innings. Captain Ahmed Yar Khan and Osama bin Shuja scored 2 runs.

During different operations conducted in this regard, the police recovered 5420 liters of illegal Diesel.

Sindh won the series 2-1 in style. In the prize distribution ceremony, chief guest Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Saleem Rajput along with Sindh Softball Association President Dr. Farhan Essa and Secretary General of Softball Federation of Pakistan Asif Azeem distributed trophies, awards and certificates to the players of both teams.

Shiraz Asif was the best catcher of the series, Osama bin Shuja, was the best batter, Faraz Ijaz, the pitcher and Osama bin Shuja scored 2 runs.

International News

Israeli plan to destroy Hamas not working, peace talks needed - EU's Borrell

BRUSSELS (Internews): Israel's plan to destroy Islamist Palestinian group Hamas in Gaza is not working and the European Union must pursue efforts to create a "two-state solution" despite Israeli opposition, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said on Monday.

Israeli Prime Minister had on Sunday reaffirmed a hard line against any Palestinian state as it would pose "an existential danger" to Israel. He said Israel would keep insisting on full security control over all territory west of the Jordan River, which would include Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Borrell said he wanted to press ahead with international efforts to create a process that would lead to a Palestinian state co-existing alongside Israel. The last talks to that end collapsed a decade ago amid mutual mistrust and intransigence.

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Alluding to Israel's stated objective of annihilating Hamas in its devastating three-month-old war in the Gaza Strip, Borrell told reporters: "What are the other solutions they have in mind. Make all the Palestinians leave? Kill all of them? The way they are destroying Hamas is not the way to do it. They are sealing the hate for generations."

Israel has said the war could go on for "many months" and it would not rest until Hamas was eradicated, all Israeli hostages freed and the Gaza Strip posed no more security threat.



Displaced Palestinians use a donkey cart for transportation at a camp in Rafah near the border with Egypt in the southern Gaza Strip.

Protesters call for change to Netanyahu government

TEL AVIV: Thousands of Israelis gathered in Tel Aviv to protest against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, accusing the veteran leader of mishandling the nation's security and calling for a new election.



Liberia's president-elect Joseph Boakai, who defeated President George Weah in a runoff election gives a speech after he was sworn in as president during the inauguration ceremony in Monrovia, Liberia.

Gaza deaths top 25,000 as Israel pushes offensive

GAZA STRIP: Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry on Sunday said the death toll in the war-torn Palestinian territory breached 25,000 as Israel pushed its southward offensive and renewed bombardment in the north. Israel is pressing its push against Hamas in southern Gaza as it seeks to destroy the group responsible for the deadliest attack in the country's history. In early January, Israel's military said the Hamas command structure in northern Gaza had been dismantled, leaving only isolated fighters.

But witnesses told AFP that Israeli boats were bombarding Gaza City and other areas in the north early Sunday. Hamas has also reported heavy combat in the north. "Dozens are still under the rubble," the Hamas government's media office said, adding that the dead and injured "could not be transferred to hospitals due to the continued artillery shelling on."

US Navy declares two SEALs missing in Gulf of Aden as deceased

FLORIDA (INP): Two U.S. Navy SEALs who went missing in the Gulf of Aden earlier this month during a raid on a boat carrying Iranian weapons have not been located following an exhaustive search and their status has been changed to deceased, military officials said on Sunday.

Strike on busy market kills 25 in eastern Ukraine

MOSCOW: A strike on a crowded market in the Russian-occupied city of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine left at least 25 people dead and 20 wounded on Sunday, Moscow-backed officials said.

Both Moscow and Kyiv have accused each other of a sharp escalation in attacks on civilian areas in the past two months. Shattered storefronts and broken glass could be seen in videos shared by Russian state media, along with what appeared to be bodies lying on the ground nearby.

"At the moment, information about 25 dead has been confirmed. At least 20 more people have been injured," said Denis Pushilin, head of the region's Russian-controlled administration.

He blamed Ukraine for the strike, calling it a "horrific" attack on a civilian area. Ukraine did not immediately comment. Officials said the strike hit a southwestern suburb of the city, less than 15 kilometres from the eastern front. Local resident Tatiana said she heard an incoming projectile overhead, and hid under her market stall.

Germans protest against 'mass deportation' plan of far right

MUNICH: Tens of thousands gathered across Germany again on Sunday to protest the far-right AfD, after it emerged that party members discussed mass deportation plans at a meeting of extremists.

The influx of demonstrators was so large in Munich that organisers were forced to cancel a planned march and ask people to disperse for safety reasons. Organisers said some 50,000 people had turned up to the demonstration, twice as many as were registered for the event. An earlier estimate announced to the crowd had put the figure at 200,000, according to a journalist. Police estimated a figure somewhere in the middle, around 100,000, according to the German daily Sueddeutsche Zeitung.

Those who made it to the site of the planned protest carried signs saying "Nazis out" and "never again is now".

Some 250,000 people had already gathered in cities across the country on Saturday, according to AfD estimates. Demonstrations were called in some 100 locations across Germany from Friday through the weekend, including in Munich, Berlin and cities in the east of the country where the AfD has its strongholds.

Dozens buried, 8 killed in southwest China landslide

BEIJING: Dozens of people were buried and eight confirmed killed when a landslide struck a remote and mountainous part of southwestern China on Monday.

The pre-dawn landslide buried 18 homes and sparked the evacuation of more than 200 people when it struck in Zhenxiang County, Yunnan province, state media said.

Anti-government protests that shook the nation for much of 2023 ceased after the attacks by Hamas in southern Israel on Oct 7. Political rifts were set aside as Israelis rallied behind the military and the families of those killed or taken hostage.

Zelenskiy counts on more Western defense aid for Ukraine in next two months

KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Saturday that he expected a number of new Western defence packages for Ukraine to be signed this and next month.

"We are preparing new agreements with partners - strong bilateral agreements," Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address. "January and February should bring corresponding results. There are already specific dates when new and strong documents can be expected."

UK taking election threats 'very seriously'

LONDON: The UK is taking threats of foreign interference elections expected later this year "very seriously", the defence minister said on Sunday, after a warning from a counter-terrorism official. "Obviously, that's something that we take very seriously," Shapps told the Sky News channel.

Counter-terrorism bodies and other institutions would "be looking very carefully at that", he said.



President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with the recipients of the Pakistan Engineering Council Engineers' Excellence Awards 2022, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Engineers playing key role in country's development: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday stressing the significance of engineering expertise in every sector of life, underscored the need for continued support and recognition of the engineering community to propel the nation towards sustainable growth and prosperity. Addressing an event titled "PEC Engineers' Excellence Award 2022" held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, the president said the Pakistani engineers had, in the past, played key role in the development of the gulf coun-

tries. He said Pakistan needed more engineers in various sectors to ensure sustainable development. He said Pakistan produced only 25000 engineers annually which was not enough for the country's need. Out of these, a sizeable portion seeks immigration and goes abroad after graduation. In comparison, the president said that India produced over 1.5 million engineers per year. President Alvi said human resources had been a big challenge for the country as in other sectors like

health, the country needed more human resources. "There are only 150,000 working nurses against the total demand of 0.9 million nurses in the country." Similarly, he regretted that an alarming number of around 26 million children were currently out of school in the country and would become a big burden in future for the society. He said despite challenges, the Information Technology sector of the country was showing good performance which was evident from the fact that

over 2.2 million freelancers were earning their bread and butter along with foreign exchange for the country. He said to increase the number of engineers and to educate the out-of-school children the government needed huge resources. The resources, he said could be managed by bringing reforms in the taxation system. However, he said decades had passed since various financial institutions including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and others had been recommending Pakistan to tax wealthy people.

Assumptions, rumours about elections have died: Solangi

PIDE issues radical 'reform manifesto' to revitalize national economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that all assumptions and rumours regarding the general elections had died. Delivering his speech at a function organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) here, he said that elections will be held on Thursday, February 8, 2024 and the people of Pakistan will exercise their right to vote. The minister said it was the responsibility of the caretaker government to provide support to the Election Commission of

Pakistan (ECP) and it will fulfill its responsibility. Being a parliamentary democracy, he said, the elected representatives had the rightful mandate to run the system in line with the country's Constitution. Urging the national media for responsible reporting on elections, Murtaza Solangi said, "The responsibility of the media had increased a lot with regard to general elections". Important issues including the economy, foreign policy, education, and health were used to be part of the manifestoes of political parties. Murtaza Solangi maintained. He said that basic is-

suces should be discussed and awareness among the people on national issues should be increased. "Today we are facing problems like population growth," Murtaza Solangi said that it should be controlled. He said it was the obligation of the political parties to fulfill promises made to the electorate. He opined that increasing awareness about national issues was the need of the hour. The minister said that under the 18th Amendment, provinces had been empowered. He also stressed for promotion of democratic attitudes within political parties.

PM for constitution of Federal Commission to review I'abad Master Plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday stressed upon constitution of a Federal Commission to review Islamabad Master Plan and said that review of this plan was among the top priorities of the federal government. The prime minister also termed the bicycle lanes project as "an environmental friendly" and asked for its completion in the earlier. The caretaker prime minister chaired an important meeting on different matters of Capital Development Authority (CDA). The meeting was attended by Secretary Ministry of Interior Aftab Akbar Durrani, Chairman CDA Capt (retd) Anwar-ul-Haq

and other senior officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He was given a briefing over the bicycle lanes project in Islamabad and federal capital master plan. Under the bicycle lanes project, a total of 374km lanes and 150 parking stations would be constructed, it was told. The prime minister also emphasized upon the need of vertical construction in the new residential projects in Islamabad, and directed the relevant authorities to formulate an effective strategy to woo investors for the business purposes with construction of high-rise buildings. He also directed the authorities to resolve the water issue of the capital city immediately by ensuring its smooth supply.



Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Capital Development Authority in Islamabad

CDA to build two electric bus depots

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has taken a delayed decision for the construction of two electric bus depots in Islamabad. The first batch of 30 out of 160 China-made buses arrived in Islamabad in the first week of the current month but the construction of two bus depots, which would take another six months, has been taken now. The second batch of buses would arrive by the end of next month. One of bus stations costing Rs632.06 million would be constructed at Tramari Chowk, while the second station costing Rs604.4 million would be constructed between sectors I-9 and H-9, said a CDA official. He said the bus depots would be equipped with the necessary facilities like the charging stations, drivers' rest area, maintenance shed and washing area. The Authority has invited bids from the registered construction firms by January 24.

Delegation from US Bureau of Diplomatic Security visits Safe City Islamabad

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The US Secretary Bureau of Diplomatic Security along with his delegation visited Safe City Islamabad, a public relations officer said. He said that the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan gave an overview of the Safe City Islamabad operational duties to the delegation. At this occasion senior police officers of Islamabad Capital Police were also present. The delegation visited the command and control center, data hub unit, modern technology-equipped cameras, and the Police operations center hall. They were fully briefed about the procedures and its effectiveness. Furthermore, the delegation was also briefed that Safe City Islamabad is playing a significant role in various sectors through modern techniques, including the Police Operations Center, Emergency Control Center, Data Hub, Dispatch Control Center, E-Challan System, and the "Pukar-15" helpline. Face recognition cameras have been installed at the entry and exit points of the city which are playing an important role in identifying suspicious elements.



The delegation was also apprised of the functionality and benefits of the Safe City cameras in the city and its crucial role in ensuring the safety of the city, preventing crimes and safeguarding the lives and property of citizens. The delegation acknowledged the modern technical system of the Islamabad Capital Police and its benefits. The delegation expressed special gratitude to Islamabad Capital City Police Officer Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan and his team for this successful visit.

PTA conduct raids against VOIP grey setup involved in using illegal SIMs

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) zonal office Lahore, in close collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime circle, had conducted raid against VOIP grey setup in Shahdara, Lahore. During operation, the VOIP setup was found involved in the termination of international calls by using illegally activated SIMs, said a news release issued here on Monday. The team had recovered some 796 active SIMs, 2 gateway exchanges (32 ports), 11 gateway exchanges (16 ports), 3 routers, and 4 network switches and apprehended an individual for further investigation. The FIA team also confiscated active SIMs along with all devices as evidence, the news release added. The PTA had lodged a complaint with FIA, prompting the action based on information about the illegal termination of international traffic bypassing legal gateway exchanges. These raids are part of PTA's ongoing efforts to curb the circumvention of the Multi-Finger Biometric Verification System (MBVS).

Fawad Ch. announces to boycott poll

ISLAMABAD (Online): In a letter addressed to Election Commission (EC), former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry has announced to boycott the election along with his group. In the letter written to EC Fawad Chaudhry said he was arrested so that he may withdraw from election. Our workers were intimidated and threatened. Our nomination papers were rejected without any justification. Fawad Chaudhry wrote in his letter nomination papers of his brother were rejected but NAB made him co-accused with him. He further said in the letter that EC has failed in discharging its obligations. Demanding resignation from EC is wastage of time. I am ready to face all tribunations but it is not proper to make my voters, friends and family members suffer more difficulties.

Media strong platform for educating public about uploading any unlawful content on social media: DG PTA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director General of the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Ahmed Shamim Pirzada on Monday said that media is a strong platform for creating awareness and educating the public about uploading or sharing any unlawful content on internet and social media. Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi and DG FIA, he said, "Media is a strong platform that can help to create public awareness about what kind of content can be shared, and what repercussions shared content may have for the nation." Pirzada said that, sometimes, individuals, including youngsters, inadvertently share content that can be harmful to the country and the public on social media. The DG said that the PTA has taken several steps to educate the general

public, including writing articles and running media campaigns for awareness. Additionally, the authority holds regular meetings with social media companies every three to six months to address concerns and collaborate on solutions. In response to a question, Pirzada said that occasional technical glitches may occur in the system due to system upgrades, and such issues may be experienced in the next two to three months. He explained that the PTA operates under Section 37 of the Prevention of Electronic Crime Act (PECA), empowering the authority to remove or block unlawful online content in the interest of defence, glory of Islam, contempt of court, decency and morality, defamation, child pornography, the modesty of natural persons, the dignity of natural persons, public order, hate speech, incitement to an offence, etc.



Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a ceremony organized by PIDE to unveil 'PIDE Reform Manifesto: Transforming Economy & Society in Islamabad'.

Speakers term Education Statistics Report data bank for policy-making organizations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers on Monday termed the Educational Statistics Report 2021-22 of Pakistan Institute of Education a data bank for policy-making organizations to take effective measures in improving educational facilities for out-of-school children. Speaking as a special guest at the report's launching ceremony, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani emphasized the need to address poverty, health issues, social, and societal problems to bring out-of-school children back into the education system. Wani highlighted the crucial role of the education sector in controlling the population and advocated for conditional financial assistance from the Pakistan Bai-ul-Mal and the Ehsaas Income Support Programme to enroll children in schools.

Commenting on the report, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani mentioned that the teaching ratio in Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir was commendable, but efforts were required in other provinces as well. He stressed the need to work on educational matters at the provincial level, as provinces were more aware of educational affairs in their regions. He highlighted the concept of home schools introduced in Gilgit-Baltistan, emphasizing its benefits in bringing out-of-school children into the education system. Wani stated that collaboration between the ministries of education, health, information technology, and population, along with individual efforts, was necessary to enhance educational practices at the grassroots level. He compared it to diagnosing a disease, stating that with the diagnosis in hand, the report provided insights into the problem.

Solangi condoles with DG Radio Pak over demise of his mother

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday visited Radio Pakistan to offer condolences with its Director General Saeed Ahmed Sheikh over the demise of his mother. On the occasion, the minister offered prayers for the departed soul and sympathized with Saeed Ahmed Sheikh over the tragedy. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family including Saeed Ahmed to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

Daniyal resorts to IHC for protective bail

ISLAMABAD (Online): Daniyal Aziz has resorted to Islamabad High Court (IHC) for protective bail for fear of his arrest. Daniyal Aziz has taken plea in the petition Punjab police are subjecting him to political victimization. Baseless case has been registered against him in Narowal. He fears on the basis of this case he can be arrested. It has been further said in the petition he is taking part in the general election as independent candidate and his rivals are making propaganda against him and false FIRs are being registered. It is requested to court his protective bail be approved.

Body of youth found hanging with bridge in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Body of a youth has been found hanging with a bridge on Faisal Avenue in Islamabad. Traffic continued during this time under the bridge. The body has been shifted to hospital for post-mortem. According to police the youth Umar Shaham has either committed suicide or he has been murdered. Investigations are underway in this regard.



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

Contempt of court IHC decides to hear case against DC SSP on day to day basis

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has decided to conduct hearing of contempt of court case against Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad and SSP operations on day to day basis. The contempt of court case against DC and SSP operations on arresting Shehr Yar Afridi despite court's order came up for hearing Monday. DC Islamabad, SSP Jamil Zafar and advocate Shah Khawar appeared in the court. Advocate Shah Khawar requested the court to adjourn the hearing of the case till second week of

February. Justice Babar Sattar remarked we want to hold hearing of this case on day to day basis. We will hear this case during this week. This entire case is of documents case. You should make preparations as much as you want. We will complete this case this week. Nonailable arrest warrants of record keeper Adiala jail and record keeper DC Rawalpindi were also issued. The court also issued notice to DC Rawalpindi and Superintendent Adiala. Justice Babar Sattar remarked I know law and legal procedure.



ISLAMABAD: Police officials busy searching vehicles during routine security check in the Federal Capital.

Faizabad Dharna case: SC seeks report from inquiry commission within a month

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has given one month more time to Inquiry Commission (IC) in Faizabad Dharna implementation contempt of court case. It was said in the order of SC that Election Commission (EC) has presented detailed implementation report. The order said EC filed report on court's order. The EC report has not been reviewed so far. EC report will be reviewed. If necessary order on EC report will be issued on next hearing. Proper order will

be issued after reviewing EC report. Faizabad Dharna Inquiry Commission proceedings could not be completed within two months. SC sought its report from Faizabad Dharna Commission within one month. A 3-member bench of SC presided over by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Monday. Attorney General (AG) appeared in the court and told he has filed two miscellaneous petitions.



Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizenjo, Chairman Senate Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges presiding over a meeting of the Committee at Parliament House Islamabad