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World Court orders Israel to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza

International Court of Justice fails to order ceasefire, says it would not throw out the case, as Israel requested; Pakistan welcomes provisional measures by ICJ in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The World Court ordered Israel on Friday to prevent acts of genocide against the Palestinians and do more to help civilians, although it stopped short of ordering a ceasefire as requested by South Africa.

While the ruling denied Palestinian hopes of a binding order to halt the war in Gaza, it also represented a legal setback for Israel, which had hoped to throw out a case brought under the genocide convention established in the ashes of the Holocaust.

The court found that Palestinians were protected under the convention, and that there was a case to be heard about whether their rights were being denied in a war that the court said was causing grievous humanitarian harm. It also called

for Palestinian armed groups to release hostages captured in the Oct. 7 attacks that precipitated the conflict. Palestinian officials largely hailed the decision. The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said it was a welcome reminder "no state is above the law". Sami Abu Zuhri, a senior Hamas official told Reuters the decision would contribute to "isolating the occupation and exposing its crimes in Gaza."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the court had "justly rejected the outrageous demand" to deprive Israel of what he called the "basic right to defend itself", by ordering it to halt fighting.

"But the mere claim that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians is not only false, it's outrageous, and the willingness of

the court to even discuss this is a disgrace that will not be erased for generations."

Israeli Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir mocked the ruling in a two-word social media post with a Yiddish-style putdown: "Hague shmague".

South Africa brought the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) earlier this month, asking it to grant emergency measures to halt the fighting, which has killed more than 26,000 Palestinians and displaced the majority of the population in a more than three-month campaign of intensive bombardment.

APP adds: Pakistan Friday welcomed the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), whereby it had concluded that, prima facie, it had

the jurisdiction to entertain the case against Israel and that South Africa's claims of genocide were "plausible".

The Foreign Office in a statement said that the ICJ had ordered Israel to urgently undertake a series of measures in relation to Palestinians in Gaza to prevent the commission of acts prohibited by the Genocide Convention, including killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Rotary International calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Dr. Alvi for greater cooperation on Islamophobia, science among OIC countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday stressed the need for increasing cooperation among Islamic countries to overcome the issue of Islamophobia in the world. The president, in a meeting with outgoing Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Ismatullo Nasredin, who paid a farewell call on him, emphasized greater cooperation among the OIC member states in the areas of science and technology to meet modern-day challenges.

He said that Pakistan attached great significance to its relations with Tajikistan as it was Pakistan's closest Central Asian neighbour.

He highlighted that there was great potential to increase bilateral trade and

economic cooperation that needed to be fully exploited. He called for exploring new avenues of economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. President Alvi expressed satisfaction over the steadily expanding bilateral relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan in all areas of mutual interest, especially in trade, energy and defence.

Taking about the situation in Gaza, the president said that Pakistan deeply shared the pain of the people in Gaza where Israeli forces had been committing genocide and gross human rights violations.

He regretted that the international community had failed to stop the Israeli atrocities, despite the painful imagery coming out of Gaza.

Feb 8 election to bring political stability, says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar Friday said that the general election on February 8 would bring political stability in the country.

The prime minister, in an interview with a private television channel, said after the elections, the new government would work to achieve political and economic stability.

He said his government successfully achieved most of the targets set by it and a white paper would be issued to enlist those successes.

"The biggest challenges were economic issues," he said, adding the next government would have to work with the International Monetary Fund and bring reforms in the taxation system to take the

economy forward.

He said the government carried forward the process of privatisation of state-owned entities, including Pakistan International Airlines (PIA). The process of privatisation was almost complete, he added.

The prime minister said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) led the effort to sign \$ 25 billion worth of memorandums of understanding with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar. The SIFC was formed by the previous government after enactment of a law in the Parliament, he recalled.

He said the social media would be regulated and some people would have to stop the wrong use of the medium.

The previous governments worked to control

negative aspects of the social media and in future a "national firewall" through use of technology would be created to subdue the negative tendencies, he noted. He said May 9 was an attack on the concept of the State of Pakistan and from the very start he was very critical of the elements involved in the incidents.

However, the whole of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf could not be kept away from Pakistani politics, he said, adding only some specific people of the PTI were involved in the incidents of May 9. He clarified that his government did not target any political party. He remarked that undermining social order created anarchy which was not acceptable in any society.



ISLAMABAD: The outgoing Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan Ismatullo Nasredin called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Caretaker Interior Minister directs to ensure law, order during general elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Interior Minister Dr Gohar Ejaz has directed to ensure providing fool-proof security to foreigners.

During his visit to the National Action Plan Secretariat in Islamabad today, he directed bringing further improvement in the code of conduct of security of foreigners and its

implementation.

Dr Gohar Ejaz said mutual cooperation between law enforcement agencies is very important for protection of all citizens which is the prime responsibility of the state. He said all resources should be utilized to ensure law and order during the elections.

DROs, ROs assigned powers of first grade magistrate

ISLAMABAD (Online): District Returning Officers and returning officers were assigned the powers of first class magistrate.

Election Commission (EC) has issued notification regarding the powers of first class magistrates until the declaration of election results.

According to sources of EC, District returning officers and returning officers will continue to have the powers of first class magistrates until the declaration of election results.

It is said in issued notification that under section 193 of election act 2017, the powers of magistrate have been given.

The powers have been assigned in relation to general elections of National Assembly (NA) and provincial assemblies from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) and Baluchistan. These officers will be authorized to take immediate notice of any action against the rules.

PTI's Senator Saifullah Abro joins PPP

KARACHI (INP): PTI Senator Saifullah Abro called on Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and expressed his trust in his leadership. On the occasion, Senator Saifullah announced to withdraw from the election race in NA-194 constituency and promised to support candidate of Pakistan People's Party. Abro was elected as senator on PTI's technocrat seat from Larkana for March 2022 to March 2027 term.

PTI candidates from Sukkur announced to quit election race to support Pakistan Peoples' Party candidates in the district. PTI nominated candidate from NA 200 Noman Islam Sheikh planned to withdraw election race and support PPP senior leader Khurshid Shah.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz chairing a briefing at National Action Plan Secretariat.

PM told PTA revenue surges to Rs 850b; access to cellular services reaches 90pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) Major General (Retd) Hafeezur Rehman on Friday called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar here.

In the meeting, the PTA chairman presented to the prime minister the annual report 2023 of the Authority.

The prime minister was informed that the PTA's revenue increased by 17 percent to Rs 850

billion comparing the last year while the access to cellular services in the country had reached 90 percent.

The PTA chief said that the number of cellular consumers had touched 192 million and high-speed broadband users reached 130 million during 2023.

The prime minister lauded the services of the PTA chairman and his team in extending mobile phone and Internet services to the common man.

Kashmir Day: Public holiday announced on Feb 5

ISLAMABAD (INP): The federal government has declared February 5 (Monday) a public holiday on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, stated a notification issued on Friday.

The State of Pakistan will observe a one-minute silence at 10am on February 5 (Monday) – public holiday – in a show of solidarity with the people of Kashmir in their struggle for freedom from India, according to the notification.

Ashrafi led Salat al Istisqa to seek relief from drought, diseases



ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative on Religious Affairs and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, on Friday led a special prayer for

rain (Salat al Istisqa). Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council, said Caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar's special directives and appeal resulted in the observance of the rain prayer

across the country.

He emphasized that the prayer was offered nationwide to seek relief from the ongoing drought and diseases.

He led the congregation at Jamia Masjid Bahria Town, where he made special supplication for rainfall and an end to the drought affecting the country.

"Let us pray earnestly today, seeking forgiveness for our sins and mercy from our Lord," stated Ashrafi, urging the community to beseech Allah Almighty for rainfall and forgiveness of their transgressions.

No one can be restrained from contesting election on basis of abscondment: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) while allowing PTI leader Umar Aslam to contest election has remarked no one can be stopped from contesting the election on the basis of being absconder.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah took up the case for hearing Friday.

The counsel said nomination papers of Umar Aslam were rejected being absconder in May 9

Shah remarked tell us where it is written the absconding person cannot contest election. How can any one be deprived of basic rights without law.

Justice Athar Minallah remarked people have to decide the election. Contesting election is fundamental right. People have to decide who will contest election and who will not and not the Election Commission (EC). He further remarked let people of Pakistan decide the petitioner



MULTAN: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addresses to his supporters during public gathering meeting as a part of Election Campaign in connection of the General Election 2024 coming ahead, in Multan.

PPP to bring CM from South Punjab if voted into power: Bilawal

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto on Friday pledged to bring chief minister (CM) from South Punjab if his party came to power in the upcoming general elections 2024 while outlining the party's plans for governance.

Addressing a public gathering in Multan in connection with elections 2024, Bilawal Bhutto – who is contesting from Lahore NA-127 – urged the voters to support his party to end the "politics of hatred and division".

Highlighting the unprecedented levels of inflation and unemployment, the PPP chairman claimed, "At present, no party, except the PPP, has a comprehensive plan to tackle these issues. Other politi-

cal entities are solely focused on elections for their own gains, neglecting the well-being of the people."

"I have personally crafted PPP's economic plan, and our first priority upon assuming power will be their swift implementation to curb inflation and unemployment," he added. Bilawal also lauded the sacrifices made by the military and police to eradicate terrorism but pointed out, "The resurgence of terrorism today is a consequence of the social division sown by old politicians. It's time to bury the politics of hatred."

The former foreign minister also said that 17 federal ministries had become redundant after the 18th Amendment, and would be abolished if his party came to power.

Nawaz pledges massive job & income opportunities to mitigate inflation effects

BUREWALA (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Friday said that there had been great transformation since his ouster from power with massive inflation and price hike disrupting the social fabric of society and pledged to fully mitigate their



effects by ensuring job and income opportunities for all following the mandate on February 8.

Addressing a public meeting in Burewala, the thrice elected prime minister said that "Roti" (bread), which was available for Rs 4 per piece during the last PNL-N government, was now priced at Rs 20, while the electricity bill of Rs 500 had now jumped to Rs 20,000, with no gas supply.

Similarly, vegetables were available at Rs 10 per kilogram during his tenure, he added. Likewise, a urea fertilizer bag was now being sold for Rs 5,000 against Rs 1,200 during his tenure, while the price of a tractor had risen to Rs 3.8 million from Rs 900,000. The situation would not have worsened had he not been expelled from the government for not taking any salary from his son, Nawaz Regrettad.

It was the result of a bunch of people who disrupted the country's social fabric like brutally axing a body, he said in an apparent reference to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf regime. Nawaz said that he loved the younger generation and would take steps for their betterment.

SC allows Sanam Javed, Pervaiz Elahi to contest elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan on Friday allowed five candidates of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), including incarcerated activist Sanam Javed, to contest the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.

Besides Sanam Javed, the top court approved appeals of PTI candidates Umer Aslam, Major (retd) Tahir Sadiq, and Shaukat Mahmood Basra against re-

turning officers' (ROs) decisions to reject their nomination papers from different constituencies. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court also allowed incarcerated party president Pervaiz Elahi to contest the upcoming February 8 elections. A three-member SC bench headed by Justice Mansoor Ali Shah allowed the PTI leader to contest the general election from the PP-32 constituency of Gujarat district.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Historic address of COAS to youth

The Pakistan National Youth Conference held at Jinnah Convention Center, Islamabad recently turned out to be a historic event mainly because of address of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir to the youth there.

Indeed, it was a historic address delivered by the Army Chief. In his key-note address at the National Youth Conference, General Syed Asim Munir spoke passionately about the crucial role of the youth in shaping the future of Pakistan.

During the address, General Syed Asim Munir stated that he was greatly pleased to address the future builders of Pakistan. He further said that the purpose of creating Pakistan was that its religion, culture, and civilization were different from those of the Hindus in all respects, instead of the citizens adopting Western civilization and culture.

In his address, the Army Chief said that youth were the guardians of the bright and sublime traditions of the nation and country, the epitome of Allama Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam's visionary leadership.

Addressing the National Youth Conference, COAS said: "It gives me great pleasure to address the future builders of Pakistan and Shaheen of Iqbal."

The Army Chief said the establishment of Pakistan highlighted the core issue that Islamic culture and civilization were different from Hindus in all respects and Muslims might not adopt Western civilization and culture. The youth, he said should have immense confidence in their country, nation, culture, civilization and themselves. "The youth should be sure that they are scion of a great homeland and nation," he added. He said Pakistan Army could fight against terrorists, but the cooperation of the entire nation was imperative in that regard.

The COAS said that the main objective of social media and propaganda was to spread uncertainty, chaos and despair, whereas social media news verification was critical as without research and positive thinking, society remained chaotic. Citing verses of the Holy Quran on disinformation, he said:

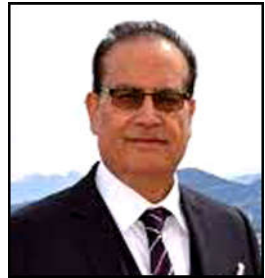
"Allah Almighty says: 'O believers! If a transgressor brings news, you should firstly confirm it.'" The establishment of Pakistan was just like the Tayyaba state (referring to Islamic State of Medina), that were founded under the sublime banner of Kalima-e-Tayyaba, the Army Chief said. "Allah Almighty has blessed Pakistan with abundant natural resources, agriculture and young manpower," he added.

He said that a Muslim always offered gratitude to Allah Almighty for patience in turbulent and good times adding, "Our forces are always ready against any kind of threat and conspiracy. If Pakistan exists, so we do, if there is no Pakistan then we are nothing."

He said that Pakistan would not compromise on its sovereignty. "We need to have full faith in the bright future of Pakistan and maintain the legacy of our ancestors," he added.

He urged the youth for having full faith in the bright future and maintaining the legacy of the ancestors.

During the address of COAS, the students kept on raising slogans of Pakistan Army Zindabad, Pakistan Zindabad and Quaid-e-Azam Zindabad.



Rogue India and Benevolent China

By Qamar Bashir

Press Secretary to the President (Rtd); Former Press Minister at Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC

The inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024, is a highly abhorrent and agonizing event, particularly for the Muslim community in India and globally. The event was a symbol of the neglect of secular principles in the Indian Constitution and a disregard for the religious and communal sentiments of Muslims. The demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992 and the subsequent legal and political developments leading up to the temple's inauguration are a painful and humiliating chapter in the Muslim history. The Ram Temple, for many, will remain a symbol of ongoing agony and a deep sense of injustice, reflecting broader tensions and challenges in the multicultural and multi-religious fabric of Indian society.

Pakistan has raised concerns in international forums such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the United Nations about the agonizing crime of building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, describing the event as a symbol of growing majoritarianism in India. It highlighted the event as an affront to the Muslim community and expressed apprehensions about the safety of mosques, churches and worship places of other religious minorities in India. It called upon international organizations to ensure the protection of Islamic heritage sites and uphold the rights of minorities in India.

But the list of Indian state sponsored crimes are countless not only within

India, in the region and globally. It has reduced Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) into a large prison. It persecutes religious, linguistic and ethnic minorities with impunity. It intimidates neighboring countries, foments border disputes with almost all neighbors. It is suppressing genuine and bonafide separatist movements by use of brute force and has resorted to a global killing spree with total impunity.

India's actions in IIOJ&K particularly following the revocation of the region's special status, have drawn international scrutiny and criticism. Human rights organizations including Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International (AI) have documented a range of serious rights violations in the region. These include arbitrary detentions, a communication blackout, and severe restrictions on freedom of movement and peaceful assembly, alongside the suspension of internet and telecommunication services.

The reports from AI and HRW also highlight a crackdown on media and civil society, with cases of relentless interrogation of journalists, lawyers, and human rights defenders, as well as arbitrary travel bans and detentions. The rampant and arbitrary use of laws like the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), Public Safety Act (PSA), and Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) has led to pre-trial detentions and arrests without judicial review, coupled with unlawful killings lacking accountability. These developments have damaged India's reputation as a state committed to ethical practices and human rights, drawing parallels to historical instances of oppression and leading to significant international outcry.

The story does not

end here, HRW and other international HR organizations have recorded mistreatment of religious minorities under the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s government. They have documented horrendous incidents of communal violence, such as the outbreak in Nuh district in Haryana, where state retaliation against Muslim residents, including illegal property demolitions and detentions, lynching, raping and mob killing. In Manipur, inter-community violence led to deaths, displacement, and destruction of property. There are countless incidents of violence and discrimination against religious minorities, including Muslims and Christians, with some states implementing "anti-conversion" laws and others engaging in actions like property demolitions without legal authorization. The Universal Periodic Review process by the United Nations Human Rights Council has raised serious concerns over regression in human rights under the Modi government, with increased attacks and discrimination against religious minorities and marginalized communities like Dalits and Adivasis.

The state sponsored majoritarianism in India has created wide spread discontentment amongst the populace belonging to minority groups which has given rise to over twenty five separatist and insurgency movements including the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), Mizo National Front (MNF), Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), Hizbul Mujahideen, Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Babbar Khalsa International (BKI), Kamtapur Liberation Organization (KLO), Bodoland People's Front (BPF) and

Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF).

Belligerent and hegemonic India does not enjoy good relations with any country of the region. It has border disputes with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which resulted in increased tensions and military buildups from both sides. The India-Nepal dispute, reignited by India's road construction in a region has become politically charged, fueling nationalist sentiments in Nepal. During Doklam Standoff (2017) Bhutan and India armies came face to face when India started building hydro electric projects to divert water which was a lifeline for Bhutan. India was ward off only when China sided Bhutan. Maldives has been wary of India involvement in its internal affairs specially India's effort to change the Islamic character of Maldives has resulted in downgrading the relations.

Earlier, Indian hegemonic designs were confined to the region, but now emboldened by its economic upsurge and becoming darling of the USA as a counterbalancing force to China, it has enlarged its criminal ambit globally. Several countries are raising allegations about its involvement in extraterritorial activities. Canada has accused India of being involved in the killing of Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar. This was followed by the United States implicating India in the assassination of another Sikh leader, a development significant enough to influence President Joe Biden's decision to cancel a planned visit to India as the chief guest for the Republic Day celebrations. In the aftermath, India invited French President Emmanuel Macron to fill this role, a decision that was soon overshadowed by controversy when India revoked the visa of a long-serving French journalist. Adding to these

diplomatic challenges, Pakistan has recently accused India of being behind the killing of Pakistani citizens on the basis of tangible evidence of India's involvement. These incidents point to a growing concern about India's foreign policy and its actions on the international stage, reflecting a shift from regional to broader global implications. China, as a global power, presents a contrasting approach in its regional and international relations compared to India. With its status as a nuclear power, the world's second-largest economy, significant military capabilities, achievements in space exploration, and industrial prowess, China has adopted a strategy of collaboration and support with its neighbors. The country is heavily investing in infrastructure projects across the region, including the construction of roads, highways, ports, bridges, and airports followed by deeper cooperation in space exploration, research and development, education and health, mining and agriculture and industrialization. This investment is part of a broader strategy to enhance regional connectivity and economic development. Furthermore, China has shown a willingness to provide financial support to neighboring countries in times of need, often extending generous loans and financial aid. These efforts have fostered strong relationships with most of its neighbors. China's approach reflects its ambition to position itself as a benevolent and cooperative regional leader, contrasting with perceptions of India's criminal, unethical, hegemonic and belligerent state sponsored policies.

China's global investment strategy, particularly under its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), encompasses a vast and diverse range of development

projects across various regions. In Pakistan, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) represents a significant commitment with an investment of \$65 billion. The strategic partnership with Iran, valued at approximately \$400 billion over 25 years, spans numerous sectors, reflecting China's deep economic involvement in the Middle East. In Afghanistan, China focuses on infrastructure and mining with an initial investment of \$7 billion. The relationship with the Maldives has been strengthened in 2024 with an investment portfolio of \$1.57 Billion. China's investment in Sri Lanka, including the Hambantota Port development, amounts to \$4.5 billion. In Africa, Chinese investments range from \$126 billion to \$273 billion, emphasizing its substantial economic presence on the continent. The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region sees China's involvement reach \$6.7 billion in investments with a significant trade volume. In Central Asia, Chinese investments lie between \$35 billion and \$60 billion, highlighting strategic interests in this region. Europe experienced a massive range of investments from \$1 trillion to \$3 trillion, covering various economic activities, while Latin America saw investments between \$150 billion and \$250 billion, indicating China's expanding global influence and diverse economic partnerships. These extensive investments reflect China's ambition to enhance global connectivity, create win-win situations, increase the capacity, capability and resource base of its partner and bring about prosperity across the board without bringing regime changes and meddling into the internal affairs of its partners, without having any desired to use its investment to force the partners to take decisions which serve its vested interests.

Commerce News

FBR Chairman praises Customs Dept KP for increasing tax revenue

PESHAWAR (APP): Chairman of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana here Friday highly praised Pakistan Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for increasing tax revenue besides countering illegal trade and contraband goods. Addressing as a chief guest in a function organized by Pakistan Customs Peshawar in connection with International Customs Day, Chairman FBR said the theme of this year of the International Customs Day was "customs engaging traditional and new partners with

purpose". Malik Amjad Tiwana said that the International Day of customs was a testament to the essential role customs plays in fostering global trade, ensuring financial security and upholding legitimate economic trade in the world.

This year's theme highlighted the important role of partnership within the customs community, emphasizing collaborative efforts for the progress of international trade and ensuring enhanced cooperation in the global customs arena. Malik Amjad said

that technological advancement has created extra challenges such as the menace of money laundering and great responsibilities rest on Pakistan Customs officials to utilize technology effectively for countering all kinds of smuggling and illicit trade besides promoting better service delivery and increasing tax revenue for Govt kitty.

He thanked Pakistan Customs Peshawar for organizing an impressive function in connection with International Customs Day. The smartly turned-out contingent presented a

salute to Chairman FBR Malik Amjad Tiwana who also paid a visit to Yagdar Shuhada at Customs House Peshawar where he laid a floral wreath.

Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Saeed Akram said that during the first half year of the current financial year, the KP Customs Department has collected Rs21569 million of customs duty against a collection of Rs13,423 million during the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. "This is 60per cent increase in revenue collection year over year."



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman and others cutting cake on the eve of new Chinese year organized by Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry.



LAHORE: US Consul General Kristin Hawkins in a group photograph during signing ceremony between Jullundur (Pvt) Ltd, Pakistan and Agmor Inc. USA.

Kristin oversees seed technology agreement

LAHORE (APP): The United States Consul General to Lahore Kristin K. Hawkins on Friday oversaw agriculture seed technology distributorship signing ceremony between a Pakistani firm Jullundur and US based Agmor at a local hotel on Friday.

Under the agreement, Agmor Inc. USA will sell organic seeds to Jullundur (pvt) Ltd. Agmor Inc. is a Montana based company which deals in the manufacturing and export of organic fertiliser products with the brand

name 'NEB'. The distribution and First Purchase Agreement was signed between Kyle Robert of Agmor and Usman Bashir of Jullundur (Pvt).

Speaking on the occasion, US Consul General Kristin Hawkins welcomed the agreement, adding that the collaboration is a testament to long-standing commitment of the US government to help Pakistan fight climate change and challenges to food security.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity reported at the Port where four ships namely, Cosco America, MSC Adu-V, Sea Elegant and Nord Anthem carrying Containers, Chemicals and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal and Bulk Cargo Terminal, respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile a Bulk Cargo carrier 'Pacific Merit' is also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim to unload Coal today morning.

Weekly inflation falls by 0.14 pc

ISLAMABAD (APP): The weekly inflation measured by the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), witnessed a decrease of 0.14 per cent for the combined consumption groups during the week ended on January 25, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported on Friday. According to the PBS data, the SPI for the week under review in the above-mentioned group was recorded at 318.55 points as compared to 319.00 points during the past week.

As compared to the corresponding week of last

year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 43.79 per cent. The weekly SPI with the base year 2015-16 =100 covers 17 urban centres and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. The SPI for the lowest consumption group up to Rs. 17,732, decreased by 0.33 per cent and went up to 313.09 points from last week's 314.12 points. The SPI for consumption groups from Rs. 17,732-22,888, Rs. 22,889-29,517, Rs. 29,518-44,175 and above Rs. 44,175.

NESPAK achieves UN 2030 SDGs

LAHORE (APP): NESPAK, a leading global consultancy firm, has taken a significant step towards achieving the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by securing five projects and signing two Long Term Agreements (LTAs) with the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

It was stated by Zargham Eshaq Khan, Managing Director NESPAK, in a press statement issued here on Friday. The LTAs,

awarded to NESPAK, span across the Asia Region and Pacific/Oceania Region, leading to the firm's presence in its 40th country, Papua New Guinea. In a groundbreaking move, NESPAK has actively pursued projects contributing to the UN's SDGs both within Pakistan and globally.

The comprehensive LTAs with UNOPS cover a wide spectrum of initiatives aimed at sustainable development, with a particular focus on infrastructure.

OGRA urged to ensure safety standards as petrol pumps, storage facilities

LAHORE (APP): The Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP) has asked Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) to ensure safety standards and regulations compliance at petrol pumps and storage facilities. In a letter written to OGRA Chairman Masroor Khan, OMAP Chairman Tariq Wazir Ali requested him to treat the matter as a top priority and should implement it across the board as being a matter

of prime concern. He said, "First and foremost, safety is of paramount importance in our industry, and ensuring compliance with rigorous safety standards is crucial to protecting both our employees and the communities in which we operate. We commend OGRA's efforts in establishing and enforcing safety regulations, but we believe there is still room for improvement to further enhance safety measures

across the industry. One area of concern is the safety of petrol pumps, which serve as critical points of interaction between consumers and petroleum products. We urge OGRA to conduct regular inspections of petrol pumps to ensure compliance with safety protocols, including proper maintenance of equipment, adequate fire safety measures, and employee training in handling emergency situations.

Gold rates up by Rs.400

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.400 and was sold at Rs.214,200 on Friday in the local market compared to its rates of Rs.213,800 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat also increased by Rs.342 to Rs.183,642 from Rs.183,300 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat declined to Rs168,338 from Rs.168,024 respectively, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

SECP proposes anti harassment measures for listed companies

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to promote safety and respect in the workplace, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft amendments to the Listed Companies (Code of Corporate Governance) Regulations, 2019 for public consultation. The proposed amendments require the board of directors of listed

companies to implement robust anti-harassment policies that align with the protection against harassment of women at the Workplace Act, 2010, and relevant provincial laws, said a news release issued here on Friday. These policies will uphold the rights and well-being of all employees, fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment.

Communication to foster global understanding: Governor

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that in the realm of media, communication plays a pivotal role in shaping societies and fostering global understanding.

He gave this message at the concluding ceremony of the 2nd International Media and Communication Conference organised by Punjab University Department of Communication and Media Research and University of Management and Technology.

On this occasion, Chairman PHEC Prof Dr. Shahid Munir, PU VC Prof Dr. Khalid Mahmood, Rector UMT Dr. Asif Raza, Leads University VC Dr.

Nadeem Ahmad Bhatti, DG PEMRA Ikram Barkat, Director School of Communication Studies Prof Dr. Nosheena Saleem, Dean School of Media and Communication Studies, UMT Dr. Anjum Zia, researchers, eminent journalists, alumnus, faculty members and a large number of students were present.

Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that intersection of academia and media is crucial for nurturing critical thinking and fostering innovation and he believes the insights gained here will pave the way for a more informed and interconnected world.

He stated that the conference has been a

testament to our commitment to exploring the dynamic landscape of media in the 21st century.

He said the diverse perspectives shared by esteemed speakers from around the world have undoubtedly contributed to a wealth of knowledge that will guide our future endeavors. He said the recommendations and discussions from this conference will serve as a roadmap for enhancing media communication practices, promoting ethical journalism, and addressing the evolving challenges in this digital age.

Dr. Shahid Munir said that the transformative power of technology



PESHAWAR: Group photo after the meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali with the representative delegation of Young Doctors Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa at Governor House.

Governor urges doctors to work with dedication, assure cooperation to solve problems

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali Friday reiterated his commitment to address the problems of young doctors urging them to serve the ailing community with utmost dedication and professionalism.

He was talking to a 15-member delegation of the Young Doctors Association that called on

him at Governor House. The delegation included Dr. Faisal Barakzai, Dr. Adnan, Dr. Karamat and Dr. Mudassar Khan. The delegation apprised the governor about their issues including depriving them of training and inadequate facilities of induction in Post Graduate Medical Institute. The governor listened to their concerns patiently and assured them of cooperation and

assistance. He said that the significance of doctors could not be undermined owing to their profession adding their problems would be addressed promptly with the help of the provincial government.

He also urged doctors to work compassionately to help out ailing community and treat them politely abiding by the principles of their profession.

Jamal chairs Iqbal Academy governing body meeting

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah hoped on Friday that the guidance and recommendations of the Iqbal Academy governing body members would help the academy pursue its mission of promoting Iqbal's works and messages among the young generation.

Presiding over a meeting of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan governing body here at Aiwan-e-Iqbal, he said that it was due to efforts of scholars that the tradition of

understanding of Iqbal's works was progressing in a good way, adding that all concerned want to see Iqbal Academy, a national institution for promotion of Iqbal's thoughts, more strong and active and in this regard it would be provided all kinds of support so that it could play its role in a better way.

The governing body members offered Faheha on the demise of renowned scholar, former member governing body Prof Dr. Rafiuddin Hashmi and paid him tribute over his services regarding Iqbal Studies.



RAWALPINDI: SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik lays foundation stone of new academic block of OPF School.

LHC stops planting of palm trees along highways, motorways

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday stopped planting of palm trees along highways and motorways.

Justice Shahid Karim passed the orders while hearing petitions, filed by Haroon Farooq and others against ineffective measures for controlling smog.

During the proceedings, the Environment Protection Department (EPD) director general appeared before the court and submitted that palm trees were ineffective barriers against pollution, adding that they did not prove successful on Islamabad motorways and highways.

The court questioned the bizarre renovation of

underpasses in the city, criticising the unconventional lighting that malfunctioned on the first day. The court also stressed the urgency for water conservation and observed that there were predictions about water scarcity by 2026-2027, envisioning a future where water tankers become a common sight in Lahore.

The court addressed the provincial law officer and asked what steps had been taken by the Water and Sanitation Agency for installing water meters.

To which, a member of the Judicial Water and Environment Commission stated that a one-year timeline had been given for installing water meters.



LAHORE: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah presiding over the Governing Body meeting of Iqbal Academy Pakistan at Aiwan-e-Iqbal.

Judges not caring how the case is running: Aleema

RAWALPINDI (Online): Aleema Khan sister of PTI founder has said it is worrisome situation that judges are not caring how the case is running.

Judge Dilawar awarded illegal sentence to PTI founder. We say to Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa that our appeal be heard, she said this while talking to media men outside Adiala jail here Friday.

She went on to say that judges are not caring case is running how. It

seems as if they have been given date that they have to announce decision at such and such date. Judge Dilawar awarded sentence to PTI founder illegally. PTI founder was arrested on August 15 illegally. Election Commission has disqualified PTI founder. What punishment was awarded by Judge Dilawar was suspended by high court judge Aamir Farooq.

She went on to say it was also joke that judgment was not suspended.

46 children died of pneumonia in three hospitals in city so far

PESHAWAR (APP): With the increase in the severity of the cold, the infection is becoming viral, and so far, 46 children have died of pneumonia in three major hospitals in the city.

Hospital officials told mediamen here on Friday that pneumonia was affecting children with low immunity, and a total of 46 children died of pneumonia in three hospitals in the city, including 20 patients each in Lady Reading and Khyber Teaching Hospitals and six in Hayatabad Medical Complex.

The hospital's officials said that more than 700 children affected by pneumonia are being brought to OPD on a daily basis, and more than capacity children are being treated at Lady Reading Hospital.

"Most of the affected children belong to adjoining areas," the officials confirmed.

Punjab to introduce first social welfare policy: Minister

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Health and Social Welfare Minister Prof Dr. Javed Akram revealed on Friday that the provincial government would introduce its first social welfare policy.

Addressing a dialogue on the policy draft at LUMS here on Friday, he highlighted the significance of the initiative for enhancing departmental services and performance. The minister, attending as the special guest, emphasised the

policy's potential for welfare of people. Secretary Social Welfare and Baitul-Mal Zahoor Hussain outlined plans for seeking cabinet approval post-consultation. DG Social Welfare and Baitul-Mal Mudassar Riaz Malik underscored the policy's alignment with Pakistan's Constitution, existing laws, and international agreements. Stakeholder, including Amin Bait ul Mal Jubir Ghani, participated in a comprehensive presentation.

Killers get death penalty on two counts

FAISALABAD (APP): A sessions court handed down death penalty on two counts to each of five convicts for killing former president District Bar Association and his driver.

According to the prosecution, five accused including Suleman, Sajjad, Abdullah, Naem and Hasan Ali shot dead former President District Bar Naveed Mukhtar Ghumman and his driver Binyamin over an old enmity on January 10, last year.

Batala Colony police registered a case and submitted challan in the court.

International News

Gaza's Health Ministry blames Israeli troops for deadly shooting as crowd waited for aid

Monitoring Desk
RAFAH: Gaza's Health Ministry and witnesses said Israeli troops opened fire as a crowd of Palestinians gathered for humanitarian aid in Gaza City on Thursday, killing at least 20 and wounding dozens.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the reports. The Associated Press could not independently confirm the details of what happened.

Witnesses and health officials said the shooting took place at a roundabout on Gaza City's southern edge, where a large crowd had gathered for distribution of food. Footage posted online and confirmed to have been taken on the main road near the roundabout showed hundreds of people fleeing,

some carrying boxes of aid, as fire rang out in the background. Men loaded wounded Palestinians onto horse and donkey carts that took off charging down the avenue. At Shifa Hospital, where casualties were treated, Mohammad al-Reafi lay on the floor, his bloodied leg bandaged, as medics worked on other wounded around them. He said Israeli troops fired into the crowd.

"We were going to get flour... young people were martyred and other young people were injured," he said. Health Ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-Qidra said 20 people were killed and 150 others wounded by the shooting.

A number of aid agencies distribute food and

other supplies in Gaza. It was not immediately known which one was operating in the area at the time of the incident. The UN refugee agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, and the UN World Food Program both said they were not involved.

Israeli troops and tanks pushed into Gaza City shortly after the ground invasion began in October and have been battling Palestinian militants there for nearly two months. The military says it has largely dismantled Hamas in northern Gaza but is still facing pockets of resistance, and large swaths of Gaza City and surrounding areas have been reduced to rubble by Israeli bombardment.



Judges at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rule on emergency measures against Israel following accusations by South Africa that the Israeli military operation in Gaza is a state-led genocide, in The Hague, Netherlands.

Ukraine invites China's Xi to 'peace summit'

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine has invited Chinese President Xi Jinping to participate in a planned "peace summit" of world leaders in Switzerland, a top diplomatic adviser to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, as Russia's invasion approaches its second anniversary.

China has close ties with Russia and has refrained from criticising its invasion of Ukraine but has also said the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries must be respected and has offered to help mediate the conflict.

"We are definitely inviting China to participate in the summit, at the highest level, at the level of the President of the People's Republic of China," the adviser, Ihor Zhovkva, told Reuters in an interview this week.

"China's participation will be very important to us. We are working with the Chinese side. We involve our partners in the world so that they convey to the Chinese side how important it is to participate in such a summit."

US assails Israeli attack on UN facility in Gaza

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States has condemned the Israeli assault on a UN facility in Khan Yunis, emphasising the protection of civilians and the need to respect the sanctity of UN facilities.

"You've heard me say it before, you've heard [Secretary of State Antony Blinken] say it before [...] civilians must be protected, and the protected nature of UN facilities must be respected."

Japanese craft makes successful, pin-point Moon landing

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: Japan's "Moon Sniper" craft made a pin-point lunar landing despite three-minute engine problems, the space agency said on Thursday as it released the first images from the mission. A photo taken by a mini-rover showed the boxy yellow lander sitting intact at a slight angle on the rocky grey surface, lunar slopes rising in the distance.

The unmanned Smart Lander for Investigating Moon (SLIM) — dubbed the "Moon Sniper" for its precision technology.

Canada to re-start Turkey arms exports

Monitoring Desk
ISTANBUL: Canada and Turkey have reached a deal to restart Canadian exports of drone parts in exchange for more transparency on where they are used, and it would take effect after Ankara completes its ratification of Sweden's NATO bid, two sources told Reuters.

After 20 months of delay, Turkey moved swiftly this week to endorse Sweden's membership in the Western military alliance, including a parliamentary vote and presidential sign-off, leaving Hungary as the sole ally yet to ratify it.

Turkey is expected to send the final documents to Washington as soon as Friday, which would clear the

way for Canada to immediately lift the export controls that it adopted in 2020, the two sources said, requesting anonymity.

The agreement was reached in early January after months of talks, said one person familiar with the process. A second person familiar with the plan said the sides agreed it would take effect after Sweden's ratification was complete.

Turkey's foreign ministry declined to comment. Canadian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Charlotte MacLeod told Reuters that while the export controls currently remained in place, Ottawa aimed to resolve the issue with Turkey given its status as a NATO ally.



Ecuadorian authorities place drug packages in a container, as part of the more than 20 tons of seized drugs to be destroyed at an undisclosed location, in Ecuador.

Trump opens up lead over Biden in rematch many Americans don't want

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Donald Trump leads Democratic President Joe Biden by six percentage points in a Reuters/Ipsos poll that showed Americans are unhappy about an election rematch that came into sharper focus this week.

The nationwide poll of 1,250 US adults showed Trump leading Biden 40% to 34% with the rest unsure or planning to vote for someone else or no one. The poll had a margin of error of three percentage points.

That represented a gain for Trump after a

Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted earlier this month showed him and Biden tied, though a nationwide survey does not capture the subtleties of the electoral college contest that will be decided this fall in just a handful of competitive states.

As Trump handily beat his sole remaining primary challenger, Nikki Haley in New Hampshire on Tuesday, some 67% of respondents polled Monday through Wednesday said they were "tired of seeing the same candidates in presidential elections and want someone new."



Injured people receive treatment in Gaza City's Al-Shifa hospital, following a reported Israeli strike, that according to Gaza's Health Ministry, killed at least 20 and wounded more than 150 as they waited for humanitarian aid.

China-US talks: Taiwan reports Chinese 'combat patrols'

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's defence ministry said it detected 23 Chinese air force planes operating around Taiwan and carrying out "joint combat readiness patrols" with Chinese warships on Friday, ahead of high-level China-US talks in Thailand.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory, has over the past four years regularly sent warplanes and warships into the skies and waters around the island as

it seeks to assert sovereignty claims that the Taipei government rejects. Taiwan's defence ministry said that starting around 4p.m. (0800 GMT) on Friday it had detected 23 Chinese aircraft including Su-30 fighters and drones operating off northern and central Taiwan and to the island's southwest.

Thirteen of those aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait's median line, or areas close by, working with Chinese warships.

India fetes France's Macron at annual military parade

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: President Emmanuel Macron was guest of honour Thursday for India's pomp-filled annual military parade, in a state visit aimed at bolstering France's strategic ties with the world's fifth-largest economy.

The annual Republic Day event in the heart of New Delhi is a highly choreographed spectacle featuring tank columns, fighter jet fly-pasts, acrobatic motorbike stunts and mounted camel units. This year it coincides with a two-day diplomatic tour that reflects a growing partnership between India and France, after Macron hosted Prime Minister Narendra Modi at last year's Bastille Day celebrations in Paris. Macron has pushed for greater French involvement in the Asia-Pacific at a time when Washington and its Western allies are courting India as a military and economic counterweight to China.

King Charles admitted to London hospital for prostate treatment

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Britain's King Charles went into hospital on Friday to have planned treatment to address an enlarged prostate, Buckingham Palace said, joining his daughter-in-law Kate who is recovering from surgery.

The king was pictured arriving with his wife Queen Camilla at the private London Clinic in west London, where Kate, the Princess of Wales, is also having treatment after undergoing abdominal surgery last week.

A royal source said Charles had visited Kate

ahead of his own treatment.

"The king was this morning admitted to a London hospital for scheduled treatment," Buckingham Palace said in a statement.

"His majesty would like to thank all those who have sent their good wishes over the past week and is delighted to learn that his diagnosis is having a positive impact on public health awareness." Last week the palace that Charles, 75, would undergo a "corrective procedure" for a benign condition which was common among men over 50.

Transformative changes unveiled by NAB to enhance operations, transparency

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has implemented significant reforms in its hierarchy to enhance efficiency, transparency, and address public perceptions surrounding its operations.

Frivolous complaints under these guidelines will be treated as a cognizable offense, and legal action may be taken against such complainants in the Courts of Law.

The new guidelines specify parameters for submitting complaints, requiring comprehensive personal details from the applicant along with an affidavit.

The affidavit should acknowledge the accuracy of the information provided in the complaint, affirming its authenticity and absence of malafide intentions.

Further, the applicant will be liable to legal action under the law, if allegations are not proved. Considering damage of the self-respect and self-esteem of persons against the moral code of ethics, the persons complained against, shall be addressed as "Defendants" in the new guidelines.

The new guidelines have been framed to ensure human rights as enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. Further, identity of the defendant will be kept confidential until guilt is proven.

The new guidelines also establish the priority of complainants. Complaints that are incomplete or submitted anonymously will be dismissed at the initial stage.

The new guidelines will be available on NAB website and disseminated through SMS and other modes of communications, for general public awareness and guidance.

Dedicated Complaint Cells (CC) have been set up at NAB (HQ) and Regional Bureaus, directly overseen by the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of NAB, to commence investigations at the initial stage based on the complaints.

Initially, the process of complaint verification will be ensured completed within a prescribed period of 7 to 15 days. The defendant will not be called during this period.

The specific guidelines have been issued for processing the complaints against elected representatives, bureaucracy and businessmen.

Identity of defendants/Government officials, etc will be kept strictly confidential during complain verification process.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz & Federal Minister for National Health Dr. Nadeem Jan visited PIMS Hospital.

CG COMSTECH says: SESAME can transform entire scientific landscape of Middle East, OIC region

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General of COMSTECH, Prof Dr M Iqbal Choudhary, said on Friday that SESAME has the potential to transform the entire scientific landscape of the Middle East and OIC region for good.

Inaugurating the OIC SESAME Users two-day meeting, Prof Choudhary said that the SESAME (Synchrotron Light for Experimental Science in the Middle East) is the most important and expensive scientific facility available in the entire developing region. He said that SESAME is an elaborate, expensive, and impactful facility in the OIC region. He expressed his thanks to the government of Jordan for hosting this facility.

Prof Choudhary said that by using this huge infrastructure, researchers can perform experiments not only in a much better, more precise, and more efficient manner, but they can also conduct scientific studies that are not possible without such a facility. He said that OIC-COMSTECH is pleased to work with SESAME and its users to facilitate its use in the least developed member states.

Prof Choudhary mentioned that we are discussing the possibility of holding three SESAME user meetings in Nigeria for Anglophone Africa, Senegal for Francophone Africa, and Kazakhstan for Central Asia.

Dr. Gohar offers Jumma prayer in Faisal Mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Friday offered Jumma prayer in the capital's largest and beautiful Faisal Mosque.

The caretaker Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar had instructed to offer Namaz-e-Istisqa across the country for rains across the country, necessary to deal with drought like situation causing serious threats to the health of human lives, especially the children.

After the prayers, the minister said that Faisal Mosque was a national asset of Pakistan and its beautification needed special attention. He directed the Chief Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad to complete the decoration work of the mosque as soon as possible.

Shahera expresses condolence over demise of senior journalist

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Secretary of Information and Broadcasting, Shahera Shahid, expressed grief and sorrow over the death of senior journalist Pervaiz Shaukat on Friday.

The federal secretary of information expressed heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved family over his demise.

Shahera Shahid said, "It is sad to hear that Pervaiz Shaukat's is no more. Indeed, he was a talented and hardworking journalist."

She said the deceased dedicated his entire life to the profession of journalism and the rights of the journalist community.

Much awaited-rain to bring respite to citizens; reduce fog

ISLAMABAD (APP): After the prolonged dry period, the much-awaited rain with snowfall over the hills in upper parts of the country during the coming days, as per weather experts forecast, will weaken dense foggy conditions and provide relief to the citizens by improving air quality.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), rain of light to moderate intensity with snowfall over the hills will lash upper parts of the country with occasional gaps.

The rain will also reduce travel hazards in the fog bearing areas of the country and prove as a sigh of relief for those suffering from viral diseases especially allergy patients.

A westerly wave was likely to enter western parts of the country on January 27 (night), and may persist over upper parts till January 31. Under the influence of this weather system, light to moderate rain with snowfall over the hills is expected in Gilgit-Baltistan including Diamir, Astore, Ghizer, Skardu, Hunza, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar while in Kashmir including Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur from January 27-31.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, light to moderate rain with snowfall over the hills is expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Abbottabad, Mansehra, Haripur, Kohistan, Shangla, Buner, Karak, Peshawar, Charsadda, Nowshera, Swabi, Buner, Bajaur, Kurram, Waziristan.



ISLAMABAD: Governor Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mehdi Shah, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Dr. Amjad Saqib terms BISP's 15 years journey a milestone to serve deserving families

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib Friday said that BISP has achieved numerous milestones during the last 15 years with the support of its International Development Partners, particularly the World Bank. Welcoming the World Bank delegation led by Senior Social Protection Specialist Amjad Zafar Khan, Dr. Amjad Saqib highlighted the critical role of BISP as Pakistan's largest social security program, providing financial assistance to 9.3 million needy families. The WB mission has conducted a comprehensive five-day visit to BISP from January 22-26, 2024. The primary focus of this mission was to deliver insights and recommendations on the implementation of the Crisis Resilient Social Protection (CRISP) program. Emphasizing the strategy of lifting poor households out of poverty through skill development and microfinance programmes, Dr. Amjad Saqib underscored the importance of the BISP Savings Scheme, promoting a saving trend among consumers.

In line with BISP's commitment to economic empowerment while preserving the dignity of needy women, Dr. Amjad Saqib discussed the introduction of a New Banking System to address the challenges faced by needy families.

He credited the National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) for collecting authentic data of deserving households, stating, "If BISP rises, then Pakistan will rise." In the meeting, Senior Social Protection Specialist Amjad Zafar Khan from WB expressed his satisfaction with the performance of all BISP initiatives under CRISP, particularly commending the BISP Savings Scheme.

Kashmiris expressed strong disapproval, resentment towards India; Mushaah

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Mushaah Hussain Mulick stated that Kashmiris across the Line of Control (LoC) marked Indian Republic Day on Friday as a Black Day, expressing their strong disapproval and resentment towards India.

In her special message on Black Day here Friday, she stated that the people in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) along with the rest of the world, marked Indian Republic Day as a Black Day. She criticized the RSS-led Indian government for celebrating the abrogation of the constitution, targeting minorities and undermining the so-called scholarly democracy.

Mushaah further commented that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the idol of Lord Ram at the new temple constructed on the site where the Babri Masjid stood for centuries before being demolished by a Hindutva mob.



ISLAMABAD: Activists of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) holds a banner during protest as they observe Indian Republic Day as Black Day during an anti-Indian protest in front of Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Federal Capital, to show their solidarity with people of Indian-administered Kashmir.

GB governor calls on president; wheat subsidy, other issues discussed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor of Gilgit-Baltistan Syed Mehdi Shah on Friday called on President Dr Arif Alvi and discussed the overall situation in the region including wheat subsidy and other issues.

In the meeting, they also deliberated over the matters related to Baltistan University and Skardu, a President House statement said.

The president told the governor that he had taken up the matter of wheat subsidy with the caretaker prime minister and finance minister and expressed the hope that the problems would be resolved soon.

The elected members of the GB Council had also called on the president on Thursday to discuss the wheat subsidy and other matters.

President Alvi had assured the delegation to take up their issues at the relevant forums.

Siraj seeks electoral support of public for JI's candidates in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Sirajul Haq has urged the people to cast their votes over the election symbol scale (Tarazoo) if they want accountability of the corrupt rulers. Addressing the party's public meeting in Latifabad here on Friday, Haq vowed to change dispensation of government which replicated the Western governance model and to replace it with an Islamic system if JI formed the government.

"We don't accept the monarchy of 2 political families in Pakistan," he said.

He argued that the time of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan Peoples Party and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan was over, adding that his party would form the government after the February 8 polls.

He maintained that PML-N and PPP had ruled Punjab and Sindh, respectively, for 3 decades but their performance had remained dismally poor. Haq also criticized PML-N's chief Mian Nawaz Sharif and PPP's Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for their efforts to become elected as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

"The people of Pakistan are brave but their leadership is in the hands of cowards," he asserted.

Delay in issuance of Passport Wafaqi Mohtasib terms inquiry report as unsatisfactory

ISLAMABAD (APP): Wafaqi Mohtasib Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has expressed his dissatisfaction over the inquiry report submitted by the Passport Office in compliance of his earlier directions in response to a large number of complaints regarding inordinate delay in the issuance of passports, said in a press release issued here on Friday.

Terming the report as unsatisfactory and lacking in substance, he directed the senior officials concerned of the Passport Office to address the issue expeditiously. The people pay for provision of these services directly to the Passport Office but unfortunately, they are not getting what they have expected in return, he observed and added, the exhaustion of lamination paper, ink etc were petty issues and the Passport Office should have foreseen its precise requirements much earlier to cater to the needs of growing number of passport seekers.

It may be recalled that taking suo motto notice of very large number of complaints against delay in issuance of passports, an Inspection Team of the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat had visited the Passport Office, Islamabad on the directions of the Wafaqi Mohtasib to ascertain the causes of the delay and breakdown of efficient delivery of services in the Passport Office.

Headed by the Senior Advisor, the Team discussed in detail the entire process of issuing passports with the officials besides interviewing a large number of people, who had come to collect their passports in the Passport Offices located in the Federal Capital.

The people informed the Inspection Team that they had been visiting the Passport Office for the last couple of months and many of them had complained that their visas expired during the process.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez-ur-Rehman calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Senate body on Parliamentary Affairs convenes

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: A Meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs, chaired by Senator Taj Haider was held today at the Parliament House.

Present at the meeting were Senator Kamran Murtaza, Senator Abida Muhammad Azeem, Senator Walid Iqbal, Murtaza Solangi, Federal Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, and senior officials from the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.

The committee engaged in a detailed discussion on the Public Petition regarding the status of "The Protection of Family Life and Wedlock Bill, 2023." Various aspects of the proposed legislation were thoroughly examined, with committee members actively participating in the deliberations.

The Chairman of the committee emphasized the distress that families face when spouses are posted in different cities, noting that this situation instills fractures in family institutions. Three petitioners pleaded their cases, asserting that they and their families have been adversely affected by deportation for the past 25-30 years. The Committee assured the petitioners that both Houses of Parliament empathized with the issue. He further mentioned that in pursuance of Article 75 of the Constitution, the status of said bill should have been cleared after its passage from both Houses of Parliament. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs also outlined the timeline of the bill, from its passage in the Parliament to its submission to the President wherein it was also stated that the "The Protection of Family Life and Wedlock Bill, 2023" was not assented to and has now been returned by the President to the Parliament for reconsideration under Article 75(1)(b) of the Constitution.

During the meeting, committee members extensively discussed the matter, taking Article 75 of the Constitution, the Rules of Business, 1973, and the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate, 2012 into consideration regarding the procedure currently adopted for forwarding Bills to the President for Assent.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of South Korea Park Ki Jun in a meeting with Chief minister GB Haji Gul Bar Khan at GB House.

Kashmiris observe Indian Republic Day as black day in front of Indian Embassy in Brussels

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Kashmiri diaspora in Belgium observed India's Republic Day as Black Day on Friday by holding a protest demonstration in front of the Indian Embassy in Brussels. According to a press release received here on Friday, the protest march was organized by the Kashmir Council (EU), the European Union, Brussels, and an indigenous NGO representing the people of Kashmir.

The Kashmir Council Europe, with backing from other organizations, organized a demonstration that drew a sizable number of supporters and Kashmiris despite the cold and heavy rain. Slogans supporting Kashmiris and denouncing Indian crimes were written on posters and banners held by the demonstrators.

The demonstrators asked that India halt its crimes against the Kashmiri people and keep its word to provide them the right to self-determination. The large-scale protest rally was headed by a number of people, including EU chief Ali Raza Sye, Khalid Joshi, Rao Mostajab, Sardar Mahmood Iqbal, Nadeem Mahar, Syed Aslam Shah, Zahid Shah, Zaheer Zahid, Shazia Aslam, and many more.

Speaking at the event, Chairman of the Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed urged that in order to resolve the Kashmir dispute amicably and fairly, human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir cease and that Kashmiris be granted their rights. It should be noted that residents of Azad Kashmir, Occupied Kashmir, and Kashmiris residing abroad celebrate Indian Republic Day annually as a black day. According to Ali Raza Syed, in order for Kashmiris to lead peaceful and successful lives, they must be granted their rights, injustices must be stopped, and the Kashmir dispute must be settled amicably as soon as possible. During his speech, Ali Raza Syed stated that India is complicit in grave crimes against Kashmiris and cited notable political, social, and journalistic figures from the region who were wrongfully imprisoned. Because of fabricated accusations made against them under the black laws, a significant number of Kashmiris are imprisoned.



ISLAMABAD: Charge d'Affaires of Indian Embassy to Pakistan Geetika Srivastava, Dean of Diplomatic Crops CARs Ambassador of Turkmenistan Atadjan N Movlamov and others cutting the cake on the occasion of the 75th Republic Day of India, at a local hotel in Federal Capital.