

Independent

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Assures fairness

No solid reason yet to justify polls delay, says PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that no solid reason had yet come to the fore to justify a delay in the general elections, assuring that the government was committed to holding polls as freely and fairly as possible.

The prime minister, in an interview with a newly launched television channel (Aik News) said the candidates were canvassing and all the rumours would fall to rest by the evening of February 8 - the date for general elections in the country.

Regarding the usual complaints of rigging before or after the elections, he said that learning lessons from the past, the parliament needed to address all the flaws regarding the laws, administration, or the Election Commission.

He said the observers would monitor and local and international media would report on the activity, assuring that as per the standards in the region, the elections would be free and fair.

He observed that the political parties were also involved in the poll rigging by making fake ID cards and casting the votes of deceased persons. He said voting time would be from 9 am to 5 pm on February 8 and everyone should use his constitutional right to vote to ensure a good turnout.

Emphasising the key focus on the improvement of the national economy, he said unfortunately no political party had yet come up with an agenda to boost the country's economic health.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir exchanging views with Amir Abdollahian, Foreign Minister of Iran during meeting held at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

ECP declares 50% of polling stations as sensitive or highly sensitive

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has declared 50% of polling stations as sensitive or highly sensitive across country.

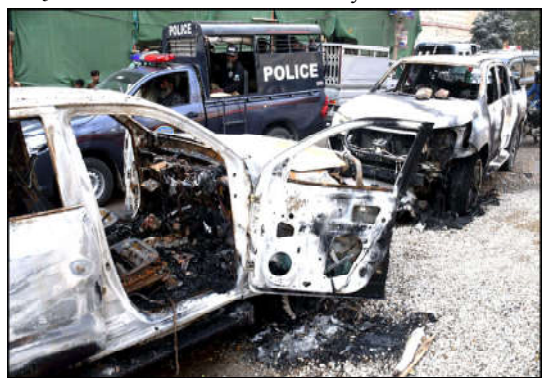
According to EC sources, the total numbers of polling stations which have been declared as sensitive or insensitive are 4665. EC has declared 27628 polling stations as sensitive and 18437 polling stations as highly sensitive.

12580 polling stations have been declared as sensitive in Punjab while 640 as highly sensitive. 32324 polling stations have been declared as normal in Punjab.

6545 polling stations of Sindh have been declared as sensitive and 6524 as highly sensitive while 5937 polling stations of Sindh are normal.

Sources said that 6166 polling stations of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa (KPK) have been declared as sensitive and 4143 as highly sensitive while 5388 have been declared as normal.

Out of 528 polling stations in Baluchistan, only 961 are normal while 2337 polling stations have been declared as sensitive and 1730 as highly sensitive. 90675 polling stations have been established across country.



KARACHI: A view of burnt vehicles after clash between the workers of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) during an election campaign rally at Nazimabad area, in Provincial Capital.

EU to provide additional Eur100m to enhance post-flood resilience

ISLAMABAD (APP): The European Union (EU) will provide an additional EUR 100 million to reinforce Pakistan's resilience in the aftermath of the devastating 2022 floods that severely impacted the nation.

According to press statement issued by Economic Affairs Division, EU Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Riina Kionka and Secretary of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Kazim Niaz signed five new EU grant agreements in this regard.

(equivalent to over PKR 30 billion)," the statement added.

The new EU support package aims to fortify Pakistan's resilience in the aftermath of the floods, bringing the total Team Europe response to the 2022 floods to over EUR 930 million.

The specific focus areas include revitalising the rural economy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and restoring the disrupted livestock value chains in flood-affected Balochistan.

Notably, these activities align with the expansive EU Global Gateway initiative, the largest EU investment program designed to propel the global green transition.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Islamic Republic of Iran Hossein Amir-Abdollahian calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, in the Federal Capital.

General Elections: Federal ministers, govt officers barred from travelling abroad

ISLAMABAD (Online): Foreign visits of Caretaker Federal Ministers and government officials have been canceled in view of holding general elections February 8, 2024.

Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has approved the cancellation of foreign visits of Ministers and officers.

According to sources, all permits of foreign visits of cabinet members, government officers and officials of autonomous bodies have been canceled.

Authorities and government officers will not make any foreign visit until election process is completed and new government is formed.

Sources said that cabinet members, government officers and authorities cannot make private foreign visit either.

PM has also issued orders to cancel the permits issued by Ministers and Federal Secretaries.

SC allows Mengal to contest polls Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Balochistan National Party (BNP), Sardar Akhtar Mengal, has received approval to participate in the upcoming general election scheduled for February 8.

The decision came after a three-member bench, led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, heard an appeal against the acceptance of Akhtar Mengal's nomination papers.

Sanam Javed re-arrested after getting bail from ATC

LAHORE (INP): Police on Monday arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Sanam Javed in another case after getting bail from the Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC). Sanam Javed was granted bail after arrest in a case related to setting the PML-N office on fire by the ATC against surety bonds of Rs200,000. The PTI activist and candidate from NA-119, NA-120, and PP-125, was taken into custody by Shadman police in case no 768, registered against her under terrorism charges.

It is to be noted that Sanam Javed is facing several cases including Zaman Town vandalism, PML-N house fire, Race-course police station case and others after May 9 riots that triggered across Pakistan after the arrest of the former prime minister and PTI founder from Islamabad High Court premises.



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Riina Kionka, European Union Ambassador to Pakistan and Dr. Kazim Niaz, Secretary Ministry of Economic Affairs signed Five New Additional EUR 100 Million Grant Agreements

COAS, Iranian FM reaffirm to remain closely engaged, bar any spoilers to divide brotherly nations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The COAS underscored the centrality of respecting the other state's sovereignty and territorial integrity, calling it sacrosanct, inviolable and the most important cardinal of state-to-state relationship.

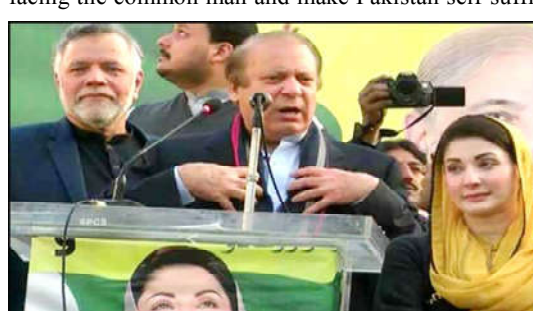
The two sides observed that terrorism was a common threat that needed to be tackled through collaborative efforts, better coordination and intelligence sharing.

The COAS emphasized the need for sustained engagement and utilizing available communication channels to address security concerns.

Both sides agreed to operationalize the mechanism of deployment of military liaison officers in each other's country at an early date to improve coordination and efficiency of response against common threats.

Nawaz reiterates pledge to address common man's issues

LAHORE (INP): Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif reiterated on Monday his promise to alleviate problems facing the common man and make Pakistan self-sufficient.



cient, saying the PML-N would leave no stone unturned to address these challenges upon assuming power in the upcoming general elections.

Speaking at the inauguration of a party election office in NA-130, the PML-N supreme deplored that he was innocent yet made to endure punishment.

Nawaz, in a pointed comment directed at the founder of PTI, stated that the one who served as a watchdog in his legal matters was gone, emphasising the idea that "a guilty conscience requires no accuser". Recalling his disqualification by a bench of the apex court, Nawaz castigated the conspirators saying, "The judges who deposed me are all gone. One by one, they all unveiled their true faces."

ECP warns of nullifying elections over women voter suppression

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has warned that elections might be annulled in constituencies where women face obstacles in voting or disruptions in the election campaign. A spokesperson for the ECP stated that the Election Commission may invoke Section 9 of the Elections Act, potentially leading to the nullification of the entire election process if women are impeded from casting votes.

The ECP took immediate action on reports circulating in certain media outlets on Monday, claiming that a group of scholars in the Kohistan region has purportedly issued a fatwa prohibiting women from participating in election campaigns. ECP spokesman said that the Election Commission sought report from the District Monitoring Officer (DRO), Upper Kohistan, who reported that the aforementioned news is inaccurate and a result of misunderstanding.

Pakistan, Iran resolve to expand ties especially in political & security domains

PM Kakar reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to strengthen bilateral ties with Iran; Both sides have agreed to station liaison officers in Turbat and Zahedan at the earliest date; No doubt militants in Pak-Iran border areas supported by third countries, says Iran FM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Iran on Monday agreed to further expand cooperation in the shared goals of security, regional stability, trade and economy, adopting a collective approach to address the confronted common challenges.

"Pakistan and Iran have agreed to adopt collective and collaborative approaches to confront the terrorism by fully leveraging the robust institutional mechanism which already exists between the two countries," Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas

Jilani said in a joint press stakeout after an extensive meeting with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

He said the two sides recognized that the close bilateral relationship was not only imperative for shared prosperity and development of the people of the two countries but also an important source of stability for the region.

He said during the meeting, both sides agreed to establish a high level consultative mechanism at the level of foreign ministers.

The two foreign ministers would meet alternatively in both Iran and Pakistan on a regular basis to oversee the progress that "is being made in various areas of our cooperation", he added.

Stressing the need to address each other's concerns with regard to terrorism, FM Jilani said in that respect the two sides had agreed to station liaison officers on which an agreement was already in place. The liaison officers would be deployed in Turbat and Zahedan, he added.



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on the role of Masajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues, at Governor House.

President says: Role of mosques, vital for educating out-of-school children, preventing diseases

KARACHI (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday said the mosques might play a vital role in the provision of education to out-of-school children along with imparting religious ethos for bring about socio-economic development of the country. He said the mosques had a central place in Muslim society and could be utilized to educate people about important social issues.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting about the

vital role of Masajid and Madaris in promoting education and creating awareness about health issues.

The meeting was attended by the Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony, Dr Aneeq Ahmed, and religious scholars from various schools of thought.

Addressing the meeting, the President said that educating 26 million out-of-school children was an uphill task in the wake of inadequate educational infrastructure. Building new schools would require tremendous resources as well as time, he added.

He said that utilizing almost 2.5 lacs mosques across the country could be a unique and cost-effective avenue to bring these children back to education.

The President said that mosques could be used as centres of education by incorporating the Government's Accelerated Learning Programme.

President inaugurates 'Sundas Foundation Karachi Centre'

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi inaugurated 'Sundas Foundation Karachi Centre' on Monday. The centre is aimed at providing blood and hematological services to patients.

The President, soon after inaugurating the Centre, visited Blood Transfusion section of the facility and met patients present on the occasion.

Dr. Alvi enquired about the health of the patients and distributed fruit baskets for them.

PPP submits reservations to ECP over election results system

ISLAMABAD (INP): The People's Party has submitted its reservations with regard to the election results system in writing to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

"We are bringing our serious objections to your notice with regard to the new system of election results, the EMS," according to letter. "When the WhatsApp will face problem, the new App would likely to have more problems," the PPP writes.

Mafia controlling govt machinery in Islamabad: Bilawal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman and former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that most of the government machinery of Islamabad is under the control of mafia. Talking to the students, the PPP leader said his party had prepared its manifesto while emphasizing that the document would serve as his agreement with the inflation-stricken masses of country.

He said, "Pakistan is in danger due to economic crisis and climate change so we will work together with the whole world to resolve these issues." The PPP chief stressed that the country has been passing through a serious economic crisis while highlighting subtly that 'his government' would end all the subsidies of the elites. He said that green jobs would be created for the people while highlighting his party's resolve to deal with challenges facing the country.



RAWALPINDI: Chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto talking with media persons along with Chief of Tehreek-e-Nifaz-e-Fiqah Jafariya Allama Agha Syed Hussain Muqaddasi at Ali Masjid in the city.

MQM-P worker killed in clash with PPP in Karachi

KARACHI (Agencies): A political worker of Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) lost his life while a Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) activist sustained injuries during a violent clash between the two parties late Sunday night in Karachi's Nazimabad area, Express News reported.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as 44-year-old Faraz Ahmed Qureshi, son of Ghayoor Ahmed Qureshi. The injured youth is identified as 25-year-old Rao Muhammad Talha, son of Rao Muhammad Salim. Talha was initially rushed to a private hospital after receiving initial medical aid. According to local residents, the clash occurred when a PPP rally was passing by the area.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Partial justice

It is unfortunate that, on Friday, the International Court of Justice did not endorse South Africa's demand for an immediate cessation of hostilities in Gaza as it delivered a preliminary ruling on the genocide case brought against Israel.

While legal intricacies are important, stopping the butchery of Palestinians is a more pressing concern. However, the court has upped the moral pressure on Tel Aviv to end its amoral campaign against defenceless civilians in the besieged Strip, even though the Zionist state has no intention of doing so.

Importantly, the judges felt that South Africa's evidence supporting the genocide case against Israel could not be ruled out "prima facie". Furthermore, the bench ordered Tel Aviv to take all possible measures to prevent acts of genocide, prevent and punish those involved in the incitement of genocide, and ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Israel has been given a month to report back to The Hague with regard to complying with these measures.

In his reaction, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has termed the order "outrageous" and vowed to continue fighting his "just war" in which some 26,000 people have been massacred. Earlier, he had boasted: "Nobody will stop us — not The Hague..."

Meanwhile, the US that has lent its iron-clad support to Tel Aviv, which is responsible for a massacre that will go down in infamy, has said it continues to believe "allegations of genocide are unfounded". Though it may take the ICJ years to determine if, legally, Israel's actions in Gaza constitute genocide, in the popular view the murder of children, the collective punishment and starvation of an entire civilian population, and the ethnic cleansing of Gazans very much fit the definition of genocide. Other states have hailed the ICJ's order.

Where to from here? Most importantly, when will the slaughter of Gaza's people end? While the ICJ's rulings are binding, the court cannot enforce them. And as Israel's arrogant replies have proved, it has no intention of respecting the court's orders. This is a mockery of the very rules-based order the US, UK and other Western states have sworn to uphold.

In the past, these actors have bombed, or threatened to attack states that have, according to them, strayed from the "rules-based order". Will they take a similar line against Israel? Or will they continue to defend the indefensible? Kudos to South Africa for raising a voice for humanity and against barbarism, irrespective of religious and ethnic affiliations. It is hoped that when the court next meets, more concrete measures are proposed to end the bloodbath and that one day, those responsible for shedding the blood of innocents in Gaza are brought to justice, as are those who aided and abetted them.

Lesson plan

Muna Khan

Last year I felt a bit stumped when students in my news media literacy class told me they knew who Altaf Hussain was but didn't really believe the stories about his rule in Karachi in the 1990s. Did he really order the city to shut down on a phone call, that too a rotary dial phone? How did that even work in a mobile-less, internet-less time? Did I 'actually' experience it?

You may be tempted to berate them for not knowing this but pause for a moment and ask: how would they know this if Altaf Hussain has been banned from screens most of their lives and, more importantly, where would they have learned this? A cursory look at how they're taught history makes for a depressing read — it's likely you were taught the same stories about Mohammad bin Qasim landing in Sindh or that Pakistan was made for Muslims, etc. The denial of the country's multi-religious and multicultural past has done irrevocable damage and created so much of the confusion around identity. I don't think it's possible to break the idea that 'Pakistaniyat' — even the one packaged as 'naya' — is firmly tied to one religion.

Instead of beating up young people for not knowing about history pre-internet or social media, or 2018, perhaps those doing the adulating can reflect on their role in creating a youth so disconnected or disinterested in knowing Pakistan before them.

I'll start: as a journalist, I didn't think of young people as my audience and was rarely in positions to fight back when ordered to remove XYZ from mainstream

media. As a journalism instructor, I didn't work hard enough to contextualise and frame events from a historical perspective. I should have used a megaphone to say 'this isn't the first time this is happening', etc.

Maybe, this is why I wasn't so surprised to read the results of a survey Dawn online conducted earlier this month about the elections. The majority of the 5,500 respondents fell under the youth category of 18 to 40 years in age. While 65 per cent said they would vote, they were sceptical of the election process. (You'd be hard pressed to find someone who isn't cynical about these polls.) Meanwhile, 62.69pc "felt their vote won't make a difference" followed by 20.41pc "who feel disenchanted with all candidates". A significant number of respondents said they had little to no faith in elected officials' ability to address issues like unemployment or poverty. This may explain why 64pc want to see the inclusion of 'None of the Above' on the ballot.

It is no surprise to read that the majority of respondents — 67.3pc — support PTI, though opinions about their rule from 2018 to 2022 are mixed with a majority saying it was "neither good or bad".

The part that interests me the most is trust in media, which sadly, is low. Only 7pc have confidence in the media for unbiased coverage; 45.83pc expressed complete distrust; 30pc "only slightly trust" while 16.4pc have moderate trust in the media in providing accurate and unbiased coverage of the elections.

This should be a wake-up call for many in the media who have not been able to connect

with younger audiences, most of whom consume news on platforms that speak to them like TikTok. Instead of berating youngsters for trusting influencers over anchors, perhaps news organisations should be adapting to these changes. And making an effort to connect with younger audiences, including children, who are absorbing the 'news' in their surroundings but don't know who to ask questions from.

Everyone should be taught how the news is created, how to identify disinformation and differentiate bet-we-en fact and opinion. Because once they understand why things happen the way they do, they may want to do something about it. Like vote. Like hold the powerful to account, something journalists commit to doing every day on the job, without bias or judgement but with courage and conviction.

In that same class last semester, one student shared a link of an interview with Altaf Hussain conducted by a YouTuber based abroad three months ago. It had nearly 750,000 views and I scrolled through the near 5,000 comments from viewers saying things like "we didn't know this about MQM".

This is what happens when the media isn't allowed to do its job. Not every journalist can afford to move abroad and/or start their own channel but media owners can afford to take a hard look at ground realities and vow to invest in the principles of journalism.

Technological advancements may change the medium but the message of impartiality will remain the same. -- Courtesy Dawn

Challenging times

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

The year 2024 could not have started on a worse note. First, a humanitarian catastrophe of genocidal proportions has been unfolding in Gaza for over three months, owing to daily attacks by Israel's defence forces. The Houthis are attacking merchant ships in the Red Sea, obliging the US and other countries to mobilise their navies. Israeli attacks on Lebanon and Syria carry the risk of the conflict engulfing the entire region.

Second, the war in Ukraine has devastated the country, once known for its fertile land and grain exports. Millions of Ukrainians have been displaced, with little access to food, water or electricity. Russia, too, has suffered losses, but remains determined to fight on despite economic sanctions and Nato's continued expansion eastward. Finland's inclusion as its 31st member has more than doubled the length of Nato's borders with Russia. Sweden, too, is gearing up to join. The war's end is not in sight.

Third, the US-China strategic competition is intensifying, deepening risk and uncertainty in a world already in disorder. The two countries remain locked in a technology war, with growing rivalry over AI supremacy and the manufacture of advanced semiconductor chips that power AI technologies. The US, which has an edge in semiconductors supply chains, is building up additional pressure on China through export controls and investment curbs. For its part, China retains dominance in supply chains for minerals, particularly cobalt and lithium used for manufacturing EVs, batteries and solar panels. To neutralise these advan-

tages, the US has imposed a high tariff on Chinese cars and other products. The rivalry has created alarm that the world is headed towards camp politics.

Fourth, the international security environment has been vitiated. Major powers are modernising their nuclear arsenals as arms control regimes give way to a nuclear arms race. In November, Russia de-ratified the CTBT, opening the door for further nuclear testing. The Iran nuclear deal remains in a state of stalemate. The US-Russia agreement, New START, which limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads, was suspended by Russia in 2023. The INF treaty, which sought elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces deemed essential for European security, was terminated by the US in 2019.

In the midst of all this, dozens of countries are heading towards elections in 2024. Anxiety surrounds the forthcoming presidential election in the US. Joe Biden, 81, and Donald Trump, 77, are up for a contest the outcome of which would have profound implications for geopolitics, particularly the transatlantic equation. Russian President Vladimir Putin is seeking a fifth term in March. Indonesia and India are going to polls in February and May respectively. The UK will hold elections in the second half of the year. Acrimonious and populist rhetoric is sharpening societal polarisation in countries undergoing electoral transitions. The world economy has picked up pace, and the business use of generative AI has grown manifold. But most developing countries continue to suffer low growth, high inflation and unemployment challenges.

For Pakistan, 2024 is a watershed moment. For years, it has remained in the grip of political instability, economic uncertainty and rising terrorism. The pre-election environment is toxic. The blame game is at its peak. Investors are worried about Pakistan's economic future. The balance-of-payment crisis is not resolved. In this background, the Feb 8 polls are crucial. Pakistan needs a sustained period of political stability, which would ensure continuity in economic policies and help restore growth and industrial development.

In foreign policy, the next elected government has to manage ties with China and the US, despite their growing rivalry. One piece of good news is that the economies of both countries are so inter-dependent that the decoupling from China's economy the US had earlier envisaged is not happening.

That opens up possibilities for Pakistan to maintain ties with both China and the US. In an age of rising unilateralism and declining multilateralism, countries like Pakistan need to engage in multi-alignments to promote their political, economic and security interests. Pakistan also needs to stabilise its frontiers with Afghanistan and Iran, shifting the focus to economic cooperation. The trajectory of Pakistan's ties with India will be determined by the outcome of India's elections. With the scare created in India against Muslim icons, especially historical mosques, and the tendency of Indian intelligence to target opponents on foreign soil — Canada, the US, and now Pakistan — the new government will need much effort and smart diplomacy to restore normal ties with India. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Dr Umar Saif says:

IXP & data center set up to boost reliability of internet connectivity

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif, Monday said that Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) has established its first-ever carrier-neutral Internet Exchange Point (IXP) and Data Center to boost the reliability of internet connectivity in the country.

Addressing at the operational ceremony of 'Pakistan Internet Exchange (PIE) powered by DE-CIX', the first carrier-neutral IX in the

country, Dr. Saif underscored the significance of the telecom and Information Technology industry in Pakistan. He said: "Today is a monumental day for the Pakistan telecom and IT industry."

Three important milestones have been achieved today in collaboration with PTCL, SCO, PTA, DE CIX, PEACE Cable, and China Mobile, he added.

The minister said, we have reached an agreement with China to route its Internet traffic through Pakistan, thereby making Pakistan a regional hub for

connectivity. This strategic move is expected to generate substantial revenue for Internet transit traffic in Pakistan, he added.

Dr. Saif revealed that PTCL would be collaborating with DE CIX, a German data center, and IXP operator, to manage the operation of this new data center.

He emphasized that partnering with a world-class data center operator would enable Pakistan to introduce super-scaling cloud services such as AWS, Google Cloud, and Azure to the country.

Additionally, it

would serve as a local content hub for popular services like YouTube, TikTok, and Netflix.

With these advancements, the minister expressed optimism that Pakistan's internet users could now access services locally, positioning the country to become a hub of regional connectivity.

Over the past few years, he said, we have made significant strides in advancing fiber connectivity. We got two fiber loops from Kashgar to Rawalpindi, further extended to Karachi by PTCL, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif in a group photo on the occasion of Operational Launch of Carrier Neutral Pakistan Internet Exchange & Data Center.



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General International Center for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) called on the Caretaker Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik.

Businessmen honored commendation certificate for meritorious services

PESHAWAR (APP): A noted businessman from Peshawar, Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has been honoured with the awarding of a commendation certificate by the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Amjad Zubair Tawana on the occasion of International Customs Day observed on January 26.

The certificate has been awarded to Zia Sarhadi for his outstanding and meritorious services for the cause of promotion of trade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and at the

regional level between Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asian Republics (CARs).

On the occasion, Zia Sarhadi also received the honourable title of Babae-Customs for his decades-long services in custom clearing, shipping and goods forwarding fields. Zia Sarhadi presently holds the office of Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI) and has vast experience of around five decades in import, export,

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Olympia, Silver Eburna, EceNurBayraktar and Simaisma carrying Containers, Palm oil, Urea and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Grain Terminal and Gas Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile three more ships, MSC Yuktax, MSC Mumbai-VIII and FSM with Container and LPG are also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours. total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Olympia and Silver Eburna are left the port on today morning and two more ships, MookdaNaree and Pacific Merit are expected to sail on same day.

Cargo throughput of 110,836 tonnes, comprising 109,226 tonnes imports cargo and 1,610 tonnes export cargo carried in 609 Containers (521 TEUs are Import and 88 TEUs are export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours. There are 07 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Encore.

Satisfied with SIFC initiatives FPCCI demands to know its incorporation in MQM-P manifesto: Saquib Fayyaz

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has appreciated that Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Convener of MQM Pakistan & Dr. Farooq Sattar, Senior Deputy Convener of MQM Pakistan, have visited the head office of the apex

initiatives being undertaken by Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC); and, wants to know how MQM Pakistan will incorporate those initiatives into their economic manifesto.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon added that the political parties should consult FPCCI before



formulating their economic policies for their manifestos as the business community can provide them with the right grass-root level information and advice.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon stated that Karachi is the fifth most livable city in the world.

SBP decides to maintain interest rate at 22 percent

KARACHI (INP): State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Governor Jameel Ahmed announced that the State Bank Monetary Policy Committee has decided not to change the interest rate and to maintain it at 22 per cent.

SBP Governor Jameel Ahmed and the Monetary Policy Committee members held a joint press conference and informed the media persons about the financial statistics of the country.

He said in an important economic

assessment of the committee, that there has been a significant improvement in the foreign exchange reserves and in the last six months, the foreign exchange reserves have exceeded 8 billion dollars.

He added that the foreign exchange also saw an increase of four billion dollars despite paying the external debt and other payments.

The SBP governor said the current account deficit was 17.50 billion dollars last financial year.

He said the committee also focused on various projections after reviewing the economic statistics.

He said the productivity of the industry is improving now and economic activities have been taken positively by the industry.

SBP Governor Jameel also said that the inflation rate will be between 23 and 25 per cent at the end of this financial year.

Jameel Ahmed said that economic growth is expected to be 2 to 3 per cent this fiscal year.

PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 1,039 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 1,039.34 points, a negative change of 1.63 percent, closing at 62,773.72 points against 63,813.06 points the previous trading day. A total of 317,577,239 shares valuing Rs 10,693 billion were traded during the day as compared to 412,823,322 shares valuing Rs 16.185 billion the last day.

WAPDA organises Road Show in Bangkok to woo contracting firms

LAHORE (APP): Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) on Monday organized a day-long Road Show in Bangkok for the 300 MW-Floating Solar Project - the first of its kind in Pakistan.

According to a WAPDA spokesman here, the Road Show aimed at forging an enhanced

competition amongst the prospective bidders for the project. As many as 58 delegates, hailing from 50 international reputed firms participated in the event. Chairman WAPDA Engr Lt Gen @ Sajjad Ghani, Pakistan's Charge d'Affairs in Thailand Yasir Hussain, World Bank's representatives.

South Punjab's development PML-N's top priority: Shehbaz

RAJANPUR (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured the people of Rajanpur of the revival of development projects after coming into power.

Former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz and other PML-N leaders are carrying out vigorous election campaigns across Punjab ahead of the general elections.

Shehbaz Sharif reached Rajanpur to address a public gathering in connection with the February 8 general

elections on a helicopter. The development of South Punjab remains PML-N's top priority, he added.

The former prime minister thanked the people of Pakistan for their continued support for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Recalling the 2010 super floods, the PML-N president said he reached Rajanpur to oversee the relief work in the region being the then-chief minister.

"Weather was not good so I reached Rajanpur in the vehicle, despite warnings from the authorities," Sharif said.

PML-N government

constructed Danish Schools in South Punjab and Basic Health Units so the people can get health services in the region.

On Saturday, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) launched its much-awaited election manifesto.

The manifesto was unveiled by PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif.

On the other hand, according to Election Commission of Pakistan sources, overall 90,675 polling stations have been set up across the country for the upcoming general elections, slated for Feb 8, 2024.



President Dr. Arif Alvi in a meeting with a delegation of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan, at Governor House, Karachi

KP Governor formally inaugurates Governor's Secretariat website

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Haji Ghulam Ali formally inaugurated the website of the Governor's Secretariat here Monday.

The website was inaugurated during a ceremony held here in the Governor's House.

Besides, Caretaker KP Minister for Education, Dr. Qasim Jan; Secretary IT Board, Mohammad Ali Shah; Vice Chancellors of the University of Peshawar, Khyber Medical University, and Agricultural University Peshawar; Director of

IMS Sciences, Dr. Usman Ghani; and officers of the Governor's Secretariat and IT Board were also present on the occasion.

With the launch of the website <http://governorkp.gov.pk>, the people will have easy access to the Governor's Office and the day-to-day affairs of the Governor's Secretariat.

All affairs of the Governor's Secretariat will now be available online.

Through the website, the employees of the universities could file applications against the administrative decisions of their respective universities, and any order on their online appeal would also be available on it.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Haji Ghulam Ali said, "Today is the era of information technology, so the public should also be provided information on the basis of the requirements of the modern era."

"The website is created for the access of the people to the affairs of the Governor's Secretariat and is the beginning of a journey towards the modern era," he said.

CM ensures full support for peaceful elections

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi held a meeting with Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab Ijaz Anwar Chauhan to discuss the peaceful conduct of the upcoming general elections and review the preparations.

Mohsin Naqvi, in his remarks, assured full support from the Punjab government for the seamless execution of the election process. He emphasized the implementation of the Election Commission's code of conduct, and measures will be taken to ensure compliance.

The chief minister further stated that law enforcement, including the police and other security agencies, will play a pivotal role in upholding the rule of law during the electoral process.

The Provincial Election Commissioner acknowledged the valuable cooperation of the Punjab government in this regard.



LAHORE: Provincial Election Commissioner Ejaz Anwar Chohan meeting with Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

Minister says: Breastfeeding awareness drives safest way of preventing outbreak of 'Pneumonia cases'

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Health Minister Professor Javed Akram Monday expressed that the low rate of breastfeeding is a major cause of the pneumonia deaths among kids.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that lack of breastfeeding can also result in stunted growth in children and so the health department is taking steps to encourage this feeding and nursing of infants in early ages.

To another question, he said that the Punjab has reported around 17,000 pneumonia cases so far this, with a mortality rate of 1.3 percent.

He said media need to run massive awareness campaigns to educate the public about benefits of mother feed and for timely vaccination.

"A majority of victims of pneumonia are malnourished kids with low immunity," he said, adding, mothers must breast-feed their children to boost their immunity against such diseases.

Minister for Health said that malnutrition and promotion of breastfeeding remained a top priority agenda of the current government as relevant ministries and departments have been endlessly engaged in efforts to address the issue of malnutrition and to control Pneumonia cases.



LAHORE: Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar listening to the problems of Police employees and people during open Katchery at Central Police Office.

DCM Schofer visits emperor Jehangir's mausoleum in Lahore

LAHORE (APP): Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) at the U.S. Embassy, Islamabad Andrew Schofer on Monday visited the mausoleum of the Mughal emperor Nuruddin Mohammad Jahangir and hailed the artistic finesse of the 17th century architectural masterpiece.

Din Muhammad Salim, known as Jahangir, (1569-1627) was the fourth Mughal emperor who ruled India from 1605 to 1627. The tomb was decreed to be built at Dilkusha Garden - favourite sojourn of the Mughal emperor in Lahore - by his descendant emperor Shah Jahan. The mausoleum was completed in 1637.

DCM Andrew Schofer was accompanied by US Consul General to Lahore Kristin Hawkins and Public Affairs Officer Karl Rogers. After a warm welcome by the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) officials, Andrew Schofer was shown round the tomb while he also had a bird's eye view of the sprawling gardens and adjacent tomb of Asif Khan from one of the minaret of the tomb. DCM Schofer showed keen interest in the Mughal architecture and briefed on the facade of the mausoleum and was briefed about the red sandstone inlaid with marble motifs which were preserved in original.

CPO directs tight security for general elections

FAISALABAD (APP): City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (Retired) Muhammad Ali Zia has directed the police officers to ensure tight security at all polling stations during General Election 2024.

Chairing a meeting here on Monday, he reviewed security arrangements and said that the district would be divided into sectors, sub-sectors and clusters and their incharges would be bound to provide tight security arrangements in their respective jurisdiction. He said that the police officers should finalize their security plan and make it comprehensive from all aspects.

One killed, another injured in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): A man was killed while another sustained injuries in a road accident, in the limits of Roshanwala police station. Rescue 1122 spokesman said on Monday the accident took place at Khannuana road where a rashly driven car overturned in a bid.

KP Govt to provide over Rs 5bln to govt hospitals for emergency: CM's aide

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to the Chief Minister for Health Riaz Anwar on Monday said that the provincial government has decided to release more than five billion rupees to the health department to address the shortage of medical equipment and emergency and essential medicines at the government hospitals.

He said that in the next few days, mandatory medicines would be purchased for hospitals at the local level, adding that due to shortage of funds, the specific amount for purchase of medicines and medical equipment by the government hospitals could not be released during the current financial year.

He said that the Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ghulam Ali also highlighted the issue and wrote a letter to the interim Chief Minister for release of funds. Riaz said that the approval of the funds required for essential medicines in the hospitals has been taken from the cabinet.

Carrying arms banned in Swat

PESHAWAR (APP): District Magistrate Swat, Dr Muhammad Qasim Ali Khan on Monday under the Section-144 CRPC, imposed a complete ban on carrying firearms including the legal one.

A notification to this effect said a complete ban has been imposed in the jurisdiction of Swat district on exhibition and carrying of all kinds of firearms including the arms having valid license.

It said the violators of this order will face legal action under Section 188 PPC of the law.

International News

ICJ ruling may end up in UN Security Council, say experts

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The International Court of Justice (ICJ) lacks the power to enforce its judgments, but it can seek a UN Security Council vote on its ruling, potentially paving the way for economic sanctions or military action against Israel, legal experts and scholars argue.

Last week, the ICJ issued a resolute order against Israel, emphasising adherence to humanitarian standards. The ruling directs Israel to prevent and penalise any public incitements to commit genocide against Palestinians in Gaza while also mandating the preservation of evidence related to such allegations. Israel is also obliged to ameliorate the humanitarian situation for Palestinian civilians in the enclave.

Commenting on the order, legal experts, think-tank scholars, and the Western media allude to the likelihood of this matter reaching the UN Security Council, where the majority is expected to demand Israel's compliance. They contend that, this time, the United States may face an even greater challenge in defending Israel, and the ICJ ruling may prove difficult for the United States to overlook.

Emphasising the significance of the ruling, former US Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues, Stephen Rapp, noted that Israel's non-compliance may make it difficult for its allies to continue defending the Jewish state.

"The US and all its major allies expect Israel to comply," because "if it defies the orders, the Israeli

government may find itself treated as a pariah," he wrote in an email to The Hill newspaper that covers the US Congress. Human Rights Watch's Israel and Palestine Director Omar Shakir underscored the importance of the ruling, stating, "This is quite a far-reaching order. The court has the opportunity in 30 days to review Israel's compliance or consider other options."

Explaining how this decision could be implemented, Shakir said in interviews to various media outlets that "the UN Security Council could take action to enforce the decision." He acknowledged that the US veto could once again protect Israel in the Security Council but warns that the veto would further weaken the US stance on this issue.



Palestinians carry bags of flour they grabbed from an aid truck near an Israeli checkpoint, as Gaza residents face crisis levels of hunger, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Gaza City.

Houthi claim missile attack on US warship

SANA'A (Online): Houthi militants fired a missile at a US warship in the Gulf of Aden on Sunday, a spokesman for the Yemen-based group has claimed. He described the incident as the latest response to American "aggression" in the region.

The attack, targeting the USS Lewis B. Puller expeditionary mobile base vessel, took place on Sunday evening, Yahya Saree said in a Telegram post in the aftermath of the alleged incident. The spokesman did not specify if the missile had hit the vessel.

The warship in question was providing logistical support to US forces participating in "the aggression" against Yemen, and was targeted as part of Houthi measures to protect the country, Saree stated.

The militant group will continue to strike commercial ships in the region until Israel ends its attacks on Gaza and the blockade of the Palestinian enclave is lifted, the spokesman added.

The US military has yet to officially comment on the alleged attack.

Seven dead in Brazilian small plane crash

SAO PAULO (INP): Seven people were killed Sunday in Brazil's southeast Minas Gerais state when the small plane they were travelling in crashed, authorities said.

After leaving Campinas, in neighboring Sao Paulo state, the single-engine plane apparently broke up mid-air and crashed at around 10:30 am (1330 GMT) in the mining town of Itapeva.

Firefighters "found seven dead victims (who were) on board the aircraft," the department said in updated statement.

Three US troops killed in Jordan, Biden vows reprisal

Iran denies links to Jordan drone strike that killed 3 US troops

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Three US service members were killed and dozens wounded during an unmanned aerial drone attack on US forces stationed in northeastern Jordan near the Syrian border, President Joe Biden and US officials said on Sunday.

Biden blamed Iran-backed groups for the attack, the first deadly strike against US forces since the Israel-Hamas conflict erupted in October, sending shock waves throughout the Middle East.

It is the first time American military personnel have been killed by hostile fire in the Middle East since the start of the Gaza conflict, and the incident will further raise tensions in the region and fuel fears of a broader conflict directly involving Iran.

Hamas said the death of the soldiers shows Washington's backing for Israel could put it at odds with the whole Muslim world if the Gaza conflict continues and that it could lead to a "regional explosion."

Meanwhile: Iran denied US and British accusations that it supported militant groups behind a drone strike in Jordan that killed three US military personnel, Tehran's official IRNA news agency said on Monday.

"These claims are made with specific political goals to reverse the realities of the region," IRNA quoted foreign ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani as saying.

Russia's drones, missiles target Ukraine's critical infrastructure, Ukraine says

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia launched drone and missile attacks targeting civilian and critical infrastructure across wide areas of Ukraine, Kyiv's Air Force said on Sunday.

Preliminary information did not show any casualties in the attacks, the air force said on the Telegram messaging app.

Russia and Ukraine have increased their air attacks on each other's territory in recent months, targeting critical military, energy and transport infrastructure.

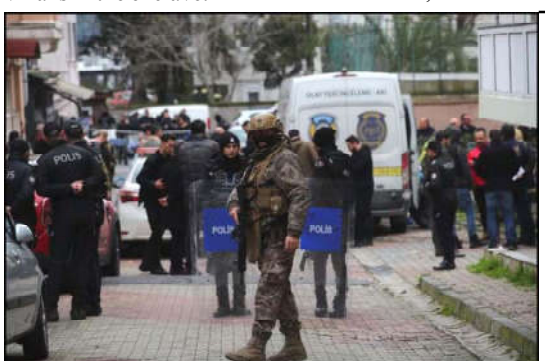
The air force said Russia attacked the central Poltava region with two ballistic missiles fired from the Iskander ballistic missile system, and three surface-to-air missiles over the Donetsk region in the east.

Filip Pronin, governor of Poltava region, wrote on Telegram that the attack struck an industrial site in the city of Kremenchuk, sparking a fire. Pictures posted on social media showed emergency crews battling a blaze.

Further southeast in the Zaporizhzhia region, Governor Yuri Malashko said an infrastructure site had been hit in a drone attack. Emergency crews were at the site, Malashko said, but gave no details of damage or casualties.

Ukraine's air defence systems destroyed four of eight Russia-launched drones overnight, the air force said.

Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Russia.



Turkish police stand guard outside the Italian Santa Maria Catholic Church after two masked gunmen were shooting during service, in Istanbul, Turkey.

China allows Philippines to supply troops at disputed reef

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: The Chinese coastguard said it had made "temporary special arrangements" to allow the Philippines to deliver supplies to troops at a grounded World War Two-era vessel at a disputed reef.

The Chinese coastguard has previously deployed vessels to block missions by the Philippines to supply troops on the transport ship, which has become a military outpost at the Second Thomas Shoal,

US reviewing Venezuelan sanctions policy in wake of court decision

Monitoring Desk
VENEZUELA: The US is reviewing its sanctions policy against Venezuela after a court in that country upheld a ban preventing presidential candidate Maria Corina Machado from holding office, the US State Department said.

The ruling by Venezuela's Supreme Tribunal on Friday means Machado, a 56-year-old industrial engineer, cannot register her candidacy for presidential elections scheduled for the second half of 2024. "The United States is currently reviewing our Venezuela sanctions policy, based on this development and the recent political targeting of democratic opposition candidates and civil society," State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said in a statement. The US eased economically debilitating oil sanctions on the crude-exporting country in October after President Nicolas Maduro's government signed a deal with the opposition.

Several states halt funding to Palestinian refugees

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: While bad weather hit displaced Palestinians seeking refuge further north in the battered enclave, Israel pressed ahead on Saturday with its aggression in Gaza's Khan Younis area after the failure of UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) to call for a ceasefire. Aggravating the crisis for Palestinians, the UK, Australia, Canada, Italy and Finland suspended their funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) despite the Palestinian Authority insistence that the organisation needs "maximum" support.

On the day of ICJ's ruling that Israel must prevent possible acts of genocide, 174 Palestinians were killed during the unabated hostilities. Gaza health authorities said on Saturday some 26,257 Palestinians have been killed and nearly 65,000 wounded so far, including 174 lives lost during the last 24 hours.

The majority of the enclave's 2.3 million population has been displaced. Residents reported heavy aerial and tank fire across Khan Younis, a part of southern Gaza that has become the focus of Israel's ground offensive against Hamas.

Dr. Gohar Ijaz says: Capital police to equip police stations with modern facilities, latest techniques

13 police stations to be modernized in 30 days

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The police stations in Islamabad will be equipped with modern facilities and new technological resources with an aim to ensure effective policing and protect lives and property of citizens.

Initiating efforts towards this goal, Caretaker Minister for Interior Dr. Gohar Ijaz laid the foundation stone of the Golra Police Station building. The decoration and embellishment of 13 police stations of the federal capital have also commenced, and within 30 days, these police stations will be equipped with modern facilities and new technological resources.

This initiative aims to enhance the recognition of Islamabad Capital Police, ensuring the protection of lives, property and the establishment of peace and security.

According to details, a ceremony was held in con-

nection with the construction of the new building of Golra Police Station in Islamabad in which the Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ijaz participated as a chief guest and addressed the ceremony. He mentioned that upon assuming the role of Interior Minister, the ICCPO and Chief Commissioner of Islamabad had informed him about the deteriorating conditions of 13 police stations out of 26 in Islamabad, making it impossible for a visit.

In response, he directed the Interior Secretary and other officials to expedite the immediate decoration and embellishment of these police stations.

The work on decorating and embellishing these stations will commence from today (Monday), and it is intended to complete this task within a record period of 30 days.

Dr. Gohar Ijaz em-

phasized the dedication of police officers and personnel working around the clock in the police stations, acknowledging that the public visits police stations seeking solutions to their issues.

He expressed the commitment to further improve the recognition of the police, ensuring the protection of lives, property, and maintaining peace and security. During the occasion, ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan also addressed the ceremony, acknowledging the limited numbers in the force but highlighting their significant role in maintaining law and order, protecting lives and property, and combating crime.

He thanked the Interior Minister for initiating the decoration and embellishment of police stations, affirming the force's commitment to ensuring safety and providing facilities to the citizens in Islamabad.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ijaz offering dua during ground breaking ceremony of new building of Police Station Golra.

SSDO, NCRC jointly sign MoU in safeguarding children

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) and the National Commission on the Rights of Children (NCRC) have formalized their partnership through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at safeguarding children in the country. The MoU was signed by Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, the Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) and the Executive Director of the Sustainable Social Development Organization Syed Kausar Abbas at the NCRC office, said a news release issued here on Monday.

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, during the signing ceremony, emphasized the

collaborative efforts between NCRC and SSDO, particularly focusing on the formulation of policies and research studies addressing issues such as child trafficking, child domestic labor, and child abuse in Pakistan.

She stressed the importance of working closely with civil society organizations to enhance collaboration and implement impactful interventions at the policy level. Additionally, the collaboration aims to fortify the policy framework concerning transnational organized crimes, involving capacity building for relevant law enforcement agencies, community awareness campaigns, and the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms among

stakeholders to address issues related to violence against children. Syed Kausar Abbas expressed SSDO's commitment in fostering a collaborative approach with various government institutions and policy channels to address issues concerning the protection of children and other vulnerable communities in the country. He acknowledged the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) for its proactive measures, including consultative dialogues, meetings, and capacity-building sessions, which align directly with SSDO's goals. SSDO will extend support to the NCRC by facilitating effective coordination and raising awareness in local communities.

SC bars FIA from taking action against journalists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday barred the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from taking action against specific journalists in an issue pertaining to the malicious campaign against the judiciary on social media.

The court also sought a report from the federal government within two weeks regarding complaints of some journalists. The top court directed the Director General FIA to hold a meeting with journalists concerned and adjourned the case till Tuesday.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali, heard the suo-motu case about the FIA notices to journalists.

In its order, the court said it had been informed that the FIA had issued notices to some journalists for criticism over the judiciary. It said it was a right of ev-

ery citizen and journalist to have criticism, adding actions shouldn't be taken against them just for criticism.

It said that the Attorney General of Pakistan on behalf to government, has also assured that no action would be taken on the basis of criticism.

The court said that it has stopped the FIA to take actions against journalists to whom notices were served. It also directed the DG FIA to hold a meeting with the concern media men. The court inquired from the FIA officials that why the journalists has been summoned.

As per the order, the court sought report from federal government regarding incidents of torture against journalists within two weeks. The further hearing of the case was adjourned till tomorrow. It may be mentioned here that representatives of journalists' organizations also appeared before the court during the hearing.



ISLAMABAD: The Chief Ombudsman of T&A Mr. Azeref Malkoş and the Minister for Law and Justice Mr. Ahmad Irfan Aslam had a meeting today.

Civil Services Academy's probationary officers visit CCP for interactive session

ISLAMABAD (Online): CDA has decided to add more burdens on citizens due to financial crisis. It has been decided to restore toll tax for entry in Islamabad. According to documents, CDA Board has officially approved to restore toll tax.

CDA will build toll collection points on 6 entrances of the city. Toll collection points will be built on Sirinagar Highway, Express Highway, IJP road, Margalla Avenue and Monal Road.

Mr. Saeed Ahmad Nawaz, Member (Office of Fair Trade, MIU), CCP, presided over the session. While speaking on the occasion, he discussed the proactive measures undertaken by the CCP, including the establishment of a Market Intelligence Unit (MIU), to effectively implement the Competition Law.

The syndicate group was led by the faculty in charge, Mr. Rehmat Wali Khan, Deputy Director. The group members, who are currently researching the "Implications of Fifth Industrial Revolution (IR 5.0) on Public Sector Management in Pakistan," asked multiple questions. While responding to the questions,

Mr. Nawaz underscored the significant challenges and opportunities presented by the advent of the Fifth Industrial Revolution.

The syndicate group also benefited from a comprehensive presentation delivered by Mr. Shahzad Hussain, DG (Advocacy)/Registrar of CCP. The presentation explained the substantive provision of Competition Law dealing with Abuse of Dominance, Prohibited Agreements, Deceptive Marketing, and Mergers & Acquisitions. It also traced the historical trajectory of Competition Law, highlighting its pivotal role in fostering a competitive environment conducive to Pakistan's economic progress.

Reflecting on the visit, the syndicate group members expressed gratitude to the CCP for the warm hospitality and offering invaluable perspectives on the challenges and opportunities posed by IR 5.0. They found the engagement beneficial for their research.



ISLAMABAD: People are waiting outside Benazir Bhutto Income Support Program (BISP) office for collecting money as waiting for their turn at sector G-7 in the Federal Capital.

Drivers urged to be careful in hilly areas amid snowy weather

ISLAMABAD (APP): All the tourists visiting the hilly areas to enjoy snowfall have been advised by the concerned authorities to take extra precautionary measures to avoid any untoward situation.

Authorities have advised both residents and tourists to refrain from unnecessary travel in order to navigate through the challenging circumstances, said a report aired by a Private news channel.

It also urged the tourists to ensure safety measures before packing their bags as extremely low temperatures were being recorded in the Northern Areas of the country.

PDMA also directed the local administration to ensure the availability of machinery needed to clear roads of any land sliding effect, rain, and snowfall.

The authority also called for timely updating the tourists so that they could take necessary precautionary measures in this regard, said PDM official.

A tourist said that snowfall is the favourite time of her children and they were very excited about playing in the snow and making snowmen. According to PMD, rain-wind and thunderstorm with snow over hills and isolated hailstorm in various parts of the country are expected during these days. "Pakistan is a very beautiful country with diverse weather and locations to explore," a woman tourist added. Furthermore, the tourists are requested to contact the National Highways & Motorway Police (NH&MP) on their helpline.



ISLAMABAD: PM's aide on aviation Farhat Hussain Khan held a meeting with Ambassador of Iraq to Pak. to discuss various issues of air transportation at his office.

Seminar stresses role of Islamic teachings to tackle intellectual, ethical challenges

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speakers at a thought-provoking one-day seminar titled "Foundations of Contemporary Ethical Crisis" held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU), on Monday emphasized the role of Quranic teachings and Sunnah for tackling intellectual and ethical challenges. The event presided over by Professor Dr. Shah Mohayyudin Hashmi, Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and Professor Dr. Rashid Arshad Kaleem from Punjab University as the guest speaker.

In his lecture, Dr. Rashid Arshad emphasized the imperative role of Quranic teachings and the Sunnah in tackling intellectual and ethical issues. He underscored the need to guide the new generation towards these principles,

stating that adherence could not only resolve ethical crises but also elevate worldly life to a virtuous existence.

Dean, Shah Mohayyudin Hashmi emphasized the importance of addressing intellectual crises within the Muslim Ummah, highlighting the need to focus on internal issues before external challenges.

Stressing guidance from the Quran and Sunnah, he noted that the biography of Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) serves as the most effective guideline for the welfare of humanity.

Celebrating its 50th Golden Jubilee, AIU sees this seminar as part of a series of events.

Prof. Dr. Hashmi highlighted the university's commitment to becoming a hub for intellectual, literary,

Fehmida approaches IHC against non allotment of election symbol to her

ISLAMABAD (Online): Former Speaker National Assembly (NA) Fehmida Mirza has resorted to Islamabad High Court (IHC) against non-allotment of party election symbol to her by Election Commission (EC).

She took the plea in the petition that Sindh High Court (SHC) accepted appeal plea against rejection of her nomination papers by Returning Officer (RO) and Appellate Tribunal (AT). EC gave assurance in SHC that she will be allotted election symbol of GDA.

Party withdrew the party ticket from alternative candidate and allotted it to Fehmida Mirza. She informed EC about party decision in writing and by appearing in person.

Speedy redressal of complaints Separate portal will be established for chamber of commerce: Wafaqi Mohtasib

Federal Ombudsman assures to address issues of business community

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Wafaqi Mohtasib, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has said that the Chamber of Commerce and Industry plays a key role in every society and a separate portal would be established for the chamber to facilitate speedy redressal of the problems being faced by the business community.

He was talking to a representative delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, headed by Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, which called on him in Islamabad today. It included Vice President Engr. Azhar-ul-Islam,

Malik Nadeem Akhter, Ch. Maqsood Tabish, Raja Muhammad Intiaz Abbasi and Col @. Kamran Baig.

"If the complaints appearing on the portal are not resolved by the Agencies concerned within a period of 30 days' these would be automatically transferred to the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat and we would take cognizance of them and initiate action accordingly", he observed.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib went on to say that it was his endeavor to remain in touch with the business and industry people as it employs millions in the country. We are committed to

speedy resolution of their problems. He urged the delegation to setup a Committee, which may apprise this Secretariat of their pressing problems in writing.

He further added that our doors are open for the industry people on 24/7 basis and they may approach us with regard to their complaints pertaining to mal-administration against the federal government agencies. Nearly 200 federal government entities and departments fall under our purview and this office has resolved over 194,000 complaints against them in the outgoing year, 2023 said the Mohtasib.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE posing for a group photograph along with photo journalists during a reception in honor of photo journalists at her residence in the Federal Capital.

Bilal Siddiqi urges to resolve Kashmir issue through dialogue

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jailed APHC leader Bilal Siddiqi has urged international community to fulfill its responsibilities to resolve the Kashmir dispute and stop India from changing the demography of the territory in the larger interest of peace and security in the region. According to Kashmir Media Service, he in a message from Srinagar Central Jail said that in Kashmir issue should be resolved through a sustained dialogue process.

Kashmir is a disputed

territory under UN resolutions and every state subject irrespective of cast, creed, color and gender has equal right to participate in the right to self-determination and it is therefore the duty of every Kashmiri to protect and defend the demographic composition of the disputed territory, he added. He maintained that the people of the disputed territory were well aware of Indian designs and would maintain brotherhood for the cause of freedom at any cost.

Generators lying on footpaths SC seeks report from mayor Karachi within two months

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has sought within two months report from mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab about the generators placed on footpaths in Karachi.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah head of 3-member bench of SC remarked Monday that the impediment on the way should be removed but pollution is big problem.

Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab appeared in the court and told over 500 generators are lying on footpaths in different areas of Karachi. Some gen-

erators are causing pollution due to emission of smoke. These generators are owned by several private institutions, hospitals and banks. Efforts are underway to protect the environment against pollution. All such reasons are being eliminated which are leading to rise in pollution.

Justice Mansoor Ali Shah remarked identify such generators which are causing pollution. If generator is lying on footpath then the pedestrian will move aside a bit.

The court adjourned the hearing of the case for two months.

Tourists advised to use precautionary measures during hilly area's visit

ISLAMABAD (APP): Tourists are advised to use precautionary measures and follow the safety guidelines during thronging to hilly areas to save themselves from miseries and inconvenience to make their journey wonderful, amazing and memorable.

Talking to APP, the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said that despite of cold weather, a large number of tourists are visiting marvellous and popular tourist destinations such as Malam Jabba, Kalam, Naran, Kaghan, Swat, Murree, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He said that numerous people have planned to visit these areas with their families to enjoy the picturesque beauty of hilly areas amid snowfall.

He urged the tourists to wear appropriate outdoor clothing including preferably a wind-resistant coat or jacket, warm clothing, and inner layers of light and waterproof boots. The official said the AJK tourism department has already constituted welcome receptions, helplines and information centres at all entry and exit points to facilitate domestic visitors and foreign tourists.



ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari presenting the shield to Federal Ombudsman Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi during his visit to ICCI.