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

Federal cabinet gives nod to restructuring, digitisation of FBR

Customs, Inland Revenue DGs to be given full administrative, financial and operational powers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet, in a meeting, on Tuesday approved restructuring and digitization of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on the recommendations of the Revenue Division. The approval was accorded in a meeting chaired by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar. The meeting was apprised of the recommendations of an inter-ministerial committee that held its meeting on 23rd January under the caretaker finance

minister. During its previous meeting, effective amendments were made in the summary after a comprehensive debate which was submitted in the cabinet's meeting today, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Under these reforms, a Federal Tax Policy Board would be constituted in the Revenue Division that would be tasked to formulate tax policy, fixation of revenue targets and work for coordination among the stakeholders. The federal minister for finance would head the Federal Policy Board. Under the new scheme, Customs and Inland Revenue departments would be separated and work under specific director generals in the relevant cadres who would also enjoy complete authority over the administrative, financial and operational matters. Both the officials would ensure digitization of their relevant departments and implementation of globally recognized practices for transparency and addressing complaints. These departments would have separate oversight boards with the federal secretaries of ministries from finance, revenue, trade, chairman NADRA and relevant experts as its members whereas, minister for finance would head them. The prime minister directed that clash of interests should be avoided during the appointment of experts from the private sector.

Imran, Qureshi sentenced to 10 years in jail in cipher case

PTI top brass vehemently rejects verdict; urges supporters to stay calm

RAWALPINDI (INP): A special court established under the Official Secrets Act on Tuesday handed both former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi 10 years in jail in the cipher case. The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document that the Federal Investigation Agency's charge sheet alleges was never returned by Imran. The PTI has long held that the document contained a threat from the United States to oust Imran as prime minister. The short verbal verdict was announced soon after recording the statements of the two accused under Section 342 during the hearing on Tuesday, as the court held a swift hearing

of the matter despite the delaying tactics used by the defence. Earlier, questionnaires were prepared to record their statements as the court resumed the hearing of the cipher case. On the other hand, the PTI had moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday morning to challenge the appointment of state defence counsel for the two accused in the cipher case, requesting it to declare the special court's Jan 26 orders. Earlier on Monday, a lengthy hearing of the cipher case was held by the special court in Adiala jail during which cross-examination of 11 witnesses was completed. Also on Monday, a lengthy hearing of the cipher case was held by the

special court established under the Official Secrets Act in Adiala jail during which cross-examination of 11 witnesses was completed. During the hearing conducted by Abul Hasnat Muhammad Zulqarnain, the special court judge, a total of 25 witnesses were presented before the court. The prominent names among those cross-examined by the two sets of lawyers include former foreign secretary Sohai Mehmood, former principal secretary to the PM Azam Khan, former Interior Secretary Yusuf Naseem Khokhar, interior secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani and former ambassador to the United States Asad Majeed.

Imran statement in cipher case One of my ADCs stole cipher at behest of Gen (Retd) Bajwa

RAWALPINDI (Online): PTI founder Imran Khan has said one of his Aides de Camp (ADC) stole the cipher at behest of former army chief Gen (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa. He said this in his statement recorded under 342 during the hearing of cipher case in Adiala jail Tuesday. While recording his statement Imran Khan said "cipher was in Prime Minister (PM) House. The responsibility of security rests with military secretary, principal secretary and secretary protocol who sees the security of PM house. He further said during my tenure of three and half years this is the only document which went missing from PM house. After cipher went missing I asked military secretary to hold inquiry. That was the only occasion when I got offended with military secretary. He stated one of his ADCs stole cipher at the behest of Gen (Retd) Bajwa. Military secretary told after inquiry that no evidence has been found with reference to cipher.



KARACHI: President Dr. Arif Alvi and the First Lady Begum Samina Arif Alvi in a group photo with organizers and staff at Society for Children in Need Of Special Attention (SCINOSA).

Mass awareness, life skills, vital for integration of special children into society: President

KARACHI (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the significance of mass awareness about special requirements of persons with different abilities and equipping them with education and living skills for their meaningful integration into society. He was speaking during the visit of the Society for Children in Need of Special Assistance (SCINOSA) Day Home - an institute for individuals with Down syndrome and other mental challenges - along with the First Lady Samina Arif Alvi. The president emphasized that children with

different abilities, were part of the society and equipping them with living skills could enable them to lead a meaningful life and perform daily chores at their own. He also stressed the need for creating special employment opportunities for differently-abled persons in accordance with their capabilities and teaching them the specific skills, required for those jobs. "Approach towards children with different abilities has been changing across the globe with the emphasis on their enrollment in routine schools and we in Pakistan as well need

Caretaker PM underlines need for effective criminal justice system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday said that under the constitution, only parliament was mandated to legislate and stressed further reforms in the criminal justice system. Expressing his views on a private TV (Aik) news morning show, he opined that the conviction rate under the contemporary criminal justice system was very low, reflecting deficiencies and efforts to be made to plug the loopholes through effective legislation. To a question about terrorist groups in Balochistan

province, the prime minister said that non-state actors had no right to unleash violence and the State had the responsibility to counter such terrorist acts. About 90,000 people in the country had lost their lives in waves of terrorism, he said, adding whether it was not the onus of political parties and the parliamentarians to improve upon the criminal justice system to expedite the conviction rate? The prime minister maintained that he was speaking about the whole justice system, especially its lower tiers.

"Whose responsibility was to improve it? Carrying out legislative business under the constitution is the onus of parliament," he reiterated. Elaborating his viewpoint, he said that Baloch, Pashtuns and different settlers had been living in Balochistan for decades. There was no political uniform group while one minority armed group was carrying out violent activities, he said, adding that the US State Department, the UK, EU, and all other democratic countries had declared these groups as terrorists, he added. The prime minister said that he did not differentiate between banned TTP and Ahrar and BLA and BLF, as these terrorist outfits had been using violence as a tool to create terror and kill innocent people. In their terrorist attacks, about 1038 people had been martyred since 2018 in the province, he said, and cited incidents of Coastal Highway and an attack on Turbat police station in which innocent people had been killed and burnt alive.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior and Commerce, Dr. Gohar Ejaz meeting with Saudi Ambassador H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Al Malki.

Pak-KSA agree to increase bilateral economic, trade ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday agreed for increasing bilateral economic and trade relations to enhance the business integration between the two countries. Saudi Ambassador Nawaf bin Saeed Al-Malki met with Caretaker Minister for Interior and Commerce Dr. Gohar Ejaz here to negotiate bilateral economic cooperation, said a press release issued here. In the meeting, the interior secretary, commerce secretary and other high officials were also present. In the meeting, it was agreed to further develop Pak-Saudi business-to-business relations and start negotiations for searching new business avenues. Meanwhile on the occasion, Dr. Gohar Ejaz said that Saudi industrialists could get benefit from investment opportunities in the steel and petrochemical industry in Pakistan. He said that the government was taking steps to increase cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the Information Technology (IT) sector. The minister said the northern regions of Pakistan were rich in natural beauty.

PTI founder put national security on the line, alleges Nawaz Sharif

HAROONABAD (INP) - Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz supremo Nawaz Sharif said on Tuesday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder did not shy from going against the interest of the country while seeing his government in peril.



The PML-N leader made this remark while addressing an election rally in Haroonabad. He said he came here for the first time in 1992, adding that the people of this area had always supported his vision, aiding people who gathered at the rally, he said the records of all the previous rallies had been broken. He said the massive crowd showed a sense of elation among people. While counting his past achievements, he said when he was the PM, basic commodities like sugar and flour were available at affordable rates to people. During his rule, sugar was available at Rs35 per kg and now it cost Rs150. At that time, he said, a tractor was worth Rs800,000 today it cost almost Rs4 million. Addressing farmers, he said the urea rate in the last PML-N government stint in power was Rs1,300 a bag and its current price is Rs5,000. He said a dollar was equal to Rs104 and now its equivalent to Rs280.

The former PM said that during his time, petrol was Rs60 per litre and his government had completed the IMF programme. But when the PTI came to power, it again started begging to the world, alleged Sharif. He reiterated that he made Pakistan a nuclear power and then asked why was sent to jail despite doing so much good? He further said he was removed from the Prime Minister's Office for not taking salary from his son. He said he and his family faced oppression as he was

Pak-US sign agreement to protect Pakistan's cultural heritage

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan and the United States signed an agreement here on Tuesday with an aim to protect the cultural heritage of Pakistan. The agreement was signed by Pakistan Secretary of National Heritage and Culture Humaira Ahmed and Ambassador of US to Pakistan Donald Blome, said a press release issued by US embassy. According to details, the agreement establishes import restrictions on certain types of archaeological and ethnological materials originating from Pakistan and entering the United States. The agreement facilitates the return of these cultural objects to the people of Pakistan. The cultural property agreement demonstrates the strong US and Pakistani commitment to disrupt the theft

and trafficking of cultural objects and our shared goal of protecting Pakistan's rich and diverse cultural heritage. The Pak-US agreement commits both parties to work together to counter looting and trafficking of objects, promote a clean market for Pakistani art and antiquities in the United States, and increase opportunities for the US museums and the American public to learn about and experience Pakistan's history and culture. "This agreement protects unique and historically significant artifacts for future generations. It also demonstrates US support for the principles of tolerance and respect for diversity - principles by which the people of this region have lived for centuries," said Ambassador Blome.



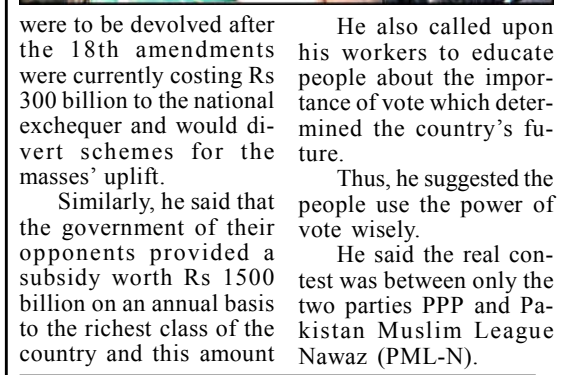
Ambassador Khalil presents his credentials to President Xi Jinping

BEIJING (APP): Ambassador Khalil Hashmi presented his credentials as the 22nd Ambassador of Pakistan to China, to Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday at an elegant ceremony at the Great Hall of People in Beijing. The ceremony also included the presentation of credentials by a group of foreign envoys from other countries. The presentation of credentials was followed by a brief interaction with President Xi. The Chinese president congratulated the envoys on assuming their role as ambassadors to China and underlined China's foreign policy priorities.

Politics of revenge, hatred to be put to end: Bilawal

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday vowed to put an end to politics of revenge. He said 18 or 17 federal departments which could also be utilized for the betterment of the poor. He urged the people to vote for his party to remove their sense of deprivation and change the destiny of KP including Dera Ismail Khan.

He also called upon his workers to educate people about the importance of vote which determined the country's future. Thus, he suggested the people use the power of vote wisely. He said the real contest was between only the two parties PPP and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N).



Four dead, six injured in Sibi bomb explosion

INDEPENDENT REPORT QUETTA: Four people were killed and six others injured-three of them seriously-when a powerful explosion occurred on the main Jinnah road in Sibi city on Tuesday. According to the reports reaching here, the explosive device went off with a big bang, which was planted on the Jinnah road. The reports suggested that the device exploded when rally of a political party just passed through there.

As a result, four persons died while six others were injured, the reports said. Soon after the explosion, police, local administration and rescue teams reached the spot. The bodies of deceased and injured persons were shifted to the district headquarter hospital Sibi where an emergency was already declared. The Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital Sibi Dr Shahid told that all the injured persons are being provided medical treatment.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Mending fences

From exchanging missile strikes two weeks ago to trading compliments, Pakistan and Iran have managed to handle a potentially explosive crisis in a mature fashion.

On Jan 16, Iran had bizarrely launched strikes on Panjgur hitting, what it said, were terrorists affiliated with the Jaish al-Adl outfit. Pakistan said two children died in the incident. Two days later, Pakistan replied to the violation of its sovereignty by striking targets in the Iranian town of Saravan neutralising, as per the state, several Baloch separatists.

But the acrimony seemed a thing of the past as caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani met his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Islamabad on Monday, indicating that the crisis was now behind both states. It is also hoped that as relations improve, the brutal murder of nine Pakistani workers in Saravan on Saturday is fully probed.

Mr Amir-Abdollahian said both countries were "one nation" while observing that "third countries" were aiding militants in the common border area. Meanwhile, Mr Jilani said that a "high-level mechanism" was being established to oversee bilateral cooperation, while adding that liaison officers would be stationed in Turbat and Zahedan.

Indeed, this display of cooperation is a welcome change from the acrimonious exchanges that had threatened to scuttle bilateral ties. Both sides chose to handle the crisis with wisdom, as opposed to jingoistic nationalism. This should serve as a template to manage all future bilateral ties.

While the exchange of pleasantries makes for good optics, both Islamabad and Tehran need to get down to business and address the single biggest irritant that stands in the way of better ties: border security. Both sides have pledged to work for collective security, and these promises should be followed by action to secure their common border.

Whether it is religiously motivated militants working against Iran that allegedly find refuge in Pakistan, or Baloch separatists plotting against Pakistan on Iranian soil, both sides need to address the threats these non-state actors pose through mutual cooperation; under no circumstances should unilateral action be taken, as Iran did a few weeks ago. The crisis was defused this time, but there is no guarantee that similar rational behaviour will prevail in the future. With regard to the killing of Pakistani workers, those involved in this heinous crime need to be identified and brought to justice, while Tehran should ensure security for all Pakistanis living in or visiting Iran. A few weeks from now a new administration will take over in Islamabad, and it will be up to the new rulers to build on the points agreed to during the foreign ministers' meeting. Both sides should also be wary of inimical foreign actors working to destabilise the border areas in the hopes of souring the Pakistan-Iran relationship.

'Climate aid'

Umar Farooq

Post-COP28, it is imperative to examine Pakistan's unique stance in the climate change dialogue. Pakistan now faces a new kind of challenge — one that is environmental in nature but deeply rooted in its sociopolitical fabric.

Pakistan, despite its minimal contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, is at the forefront of climate change impacts. The country's vulnerability to environmental disasters is not solely due to global climatic changes; it is also profoundly exacerbated by local factors. Rapid urbanisation, characterised by subpar housing societies and an obsession with cars and expansive urban highways, along with rampant deforestation and excessive reliance on fossil fuels, have collectively precipitated a series of environmental crises.

These developments, while possibly benefiting the bureaucracy and enabling politicians to exploit taxpayer funds, have led the country towards a situation that is nearly irreparable. These local issues, often eclipsed by the broader narrative of global climate politics, are the actual catalysts for Pakistan's escalating environmental degradation.

At the heart of these challenges lies Pakistan's persistent dependence on inefficient and hazardous fossil fuels. Additionally, environmental protection regulators, run by an ad hoc bureaucracy that is adept at nothing except staging price control photo ops against street vendors, have failed to establish procedures to control emissions effectively.

The problem with

Pakistan's approach to environmental issues is a deeply ingrained dependency mindset. Traditionally, the country has sought external aid to address its problems.

While bureaucracy and NGOs continue to receive aid, these funds often merely suffice to support the lifestyles of a few profiteers, offering negligible benefits to the community or the environment. However, in a world increasingly focused on environmental integrity and sustainable development, this dependent approach poses a significant threat to Pakistan's future.

Triggered by the greenwashing controversy, there is focus on a more stringent approach that prioritises substantial emission reductions before considering the trading of carbon credits. This global trend towards "green conditionalities" poses a new challenge for countries like Pakistan. With the carbon credit market more competitive and stringent, without regulations we are out of the park.

Another emerging dimension in the global environmental paradigm is the focus on natural capital credits. European and UK policymakers are currently developing new codes that place greater emphasis on ecosystem services, such as tokens and credits derived from river catchment areas and the blue economy. For countries like Pakistan, this presents an opportunity and a challenge. The opportunity lies in harnessing its rich biodiversity and aquatic resources for ecological restoration and economic benefit.

The challenge, however, is in developing the necessary frameworks and capabilities to participate effectively in these emerging markets.

The implications of this global shift are profound for nations like Pakistan. Despite promises of famous 'climate aid' cheered by a few toadies, the reality is that funds often fail to materialise. Furthermore, controversies surrounding 'junk' carbon credits have led to a significant focus shift towards high-integrity environmental codes.

The future is likely to see a discouragement of secondary market trading of these credits. Even if Pakistan embarks on extensive reforestation for carbon sequestration, the absence of a robust mechanism to validate and trade these credits renders them virtually valueless in the global market. This scenario mirrors the plight of Pakistan's textile industry, which suffered when the world moved towards more water-efficient textile production methods, rendering Pakistan's traditional, water-intensive methods obsolete.

For Pakistan, a country where human rights issues and displacement concerns are significant and where the human rights index ranks low, the global shift towards environmental justice presents a profound challenge. Future climate aid and environmental investments are likely to come with stringent green conditionalities that demand not just local initiatives but also adherence to the principles of environmental justice.

As Pakistan stands at this environmental crossroads, the message is clear: the time for meaningful action is now. The country must break free from the shackles of dependency and chart a new course towards environmental sustainability. -- Courtesy Dawn

Prioritising youth

Arooj Waheed Dar

For the last decade or so, development economists have been sounding the alarm about Pakistan's youth demographic, saying that if not leveraged as an opportunity, it could turn into a ticking time bomb. Ominously, the ticking time bomb appears set to explode, pumped with ammunition in the form of propaganda and action against, arguably, the only politician in recent times that the youth have resonated with.

Banning the PTI founder's mention on the media, confiscating the party's electoral sign, imprisoning its leadership, and obstructing its election campaign are measures that have turned a major party into a victim in the eyes of a large part of the electorate. Those responsible for these actions perhaps forget the power of sympathy votes. Had the PTI been allowed to complete its term, its poor economic performance would have been enough to keep it from returning to power. But that was not an option for its powerful detractors.

There are concerns that in this situation the party's youth following will have few qualms about resorting to violence, propaganda, or other extreme measures if encouraged in this direction by the politicians they support. This is the rotten fruit that years of not investing in the youth has borne. Unfortunately, the youth demographic has yet to realise the impact of the controversial economic policies implemented by the PTI when it was in power.

To counter the negativity propagated by the PTI government, a well-thought-out strategy is needed. This is not the 20th century where censorship, media

crackdowns, arrests, and other intimidatory tactics are going to silence people. Stifling and suffocating the voice of the youth is only going to make them more rebellious. In fact, it is for this very reason that they have come to see the PTI as a symbol of resistance against injustices and the absence of equal opportunities over the years.

With elections coming up, there is a serious need for policymaking circles to reconsider the direction they want to take the country in, especially with regard to the youth. Addressing the youth at conferences to emphasise the importance of democratic governments simply doesn't cut it. What is needed is a strategic policy to address the issues of growing intolerance in society by focusing on the three E's: education, employment, and entrepreneurship.

Poor educational outcomes and dearth of employment opportunities have adversely impacted the employability of the youth, becoming the root cause of intolerance in society. With youth unemployment on the rise, there is a need to develop vocational training programmes that establish direct connections with employment opportunities within key industries, and abroad in countries that require trained workers. The content of these courses should meet international standards, and must be offered both in person and online to ensure inclusivity.

Schemes that incentivise students to study harder, such as merit-based scholarships, tuition reimbursement programmes, and technology and gadget incentives should be expanded. In this regard,

the laptop scheme was a good initiative which needs to be reintroduced. Educational travel grants should be provided to students who do well in academics. These grants can be offered with a view to facilitating participation in workshops, short courses, and conferences, and thus encouraging an environment that promotes re-search and innovation.

To help create employment opportunities, a series of reforms that facilitate financial inclusion and innovation need to be undertaken to cultivate a conducive atmosphere for the growth of a start-up culture. Viable and innovative business proposals from young minds at the grassroots level should have equal and unrestricted access to capital, enabling them to launch their own entrepreneurial ventures. Programmes and digital applications can be launched to link budding entrepreneurs with potential investors and mentors for guidance and financial assistance.

Most importantly, equitable digitalisation must be ensured so that youth across Pakistan can have access to online education, employment, and e-commerce opportunities. This is a crucial concern that demands the collective effort of the politicians in the country, regardless of the issues that create divisions among them. They must agree on the core concept of the three Es in order to chalk a way forward for the youth of Pakistan. They must realise that channelising the youth's energy in the right direction is both a moral obligation, and a socioeconomic imperative. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

PM for concerted efforts to explore oil & gas reserves

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday, while pointing to the abundant natural resources in the country, underlined the need for concerted efforts to explore onshore and offshore oil and gas reserves.

He was addressing the Petroleum Conference 2024 as the chief guest. Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir was the guest of honour.

The prime minister affirmed the government's readiness to contribute in infrastructure development, logistics, and security to bolster

exploration and production efforts.

He further stated that the conference reflected a collective commitment to fully utilise the immense mineral potential so as to ensure energy self-sufficiency and transform Pakistan into a regional exporter of energy.

He appreciated the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and the Federal Ministry of Energy for fostering an investor-friendly environment by streamlining regulations and procedures.

Country Manager, Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration

Company Ali Taha Al-Temimi appreciated unrelenting efforts of the Government of Pakistan in bringing the stakeholders together for formulating policy recommendations and boosting investment in the petroleum sector.

Provincial chief ministers, minister for energy, secretary petroleum, government representatives, policy makers, foreign and domestic investors from the energy and petroleum (E&P) sector and international delegates also attended the conference.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar addresses the participants of Petroleum Conference.

PTA making collaborative measures for ease of doing business

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Chairman Major General Hafeez ur Rehman on Tuesday said that the PTA was taking many collaborative efforts to promote ease of doing business and attract foreign investment. Talking to a delegation of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) led by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari which called on him, Hafeez said that such collaborations would help address industry challenges and facilitate more favourable business environment.

He said that Pakistan's telecommunications and digital technology sectors were undergoing transformative changes,

driven by the development of comprehensive regulatory frameworks.

"The PTA is working to provide customers with affordable and high quality services and ensure reasonable returns to investors," he said, adding that the mobile phone sector had achieved a remarkable growth of 29% during the last five years due to which mobile services were available to 90% of the country's population while the broadband subscribers had soared to over 130 million.

He assured that the PTA would continue to focus on improving coverage, access and quality of services to promote ease of doing business and attract more investment.



SARGODHA: Vendors displaying orange to attract the customers in front of market.

Fertilizer industry urges nationwide dealers to ensure Urea sales at announced MRPs

LAHORE: In a groundbreaking move, leading fertilizer manufacturing companies in Pakistan, including Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC), Fauji

the fertilizer dealers in a constructive dialogue and formulate immediate strategies aimed at reducing nationwide urea prices to benefit the farmers.

Attended by major fertilizer dealers from

urea and other fertilizers at manufacturer-recommended prices.

Representatives from the fertilizer industry, including Mr. Ather Javed, Group General Manager Marketing, Fauji Fertilizer



Fertilizer Bin-Qasim Limited (FFBL), Engro Fertilizers Limited, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited, and Agritech Limited, jointly hosted a convention with nationwide dealers on January 29, 2024, at Faletts Hotel, Lahore. The primary objective of this convention was to engage

across the country, the convention facilitated a strategic discourse on vital topics such as fertilizer demand and supply situation, urea imports by the Government of Pakistan to fill the demand-supply gap, and the development of effective strategies to ensure the availability of

Company Ltd; Mr. Shakeel Ahmad, Advisor Fauji Fertilizer Bin-Qasim Limited, Ms. Rabel Sadozai, Director Marketing & Sales, Fatima Fertilizer Company Limited; Mr. Atif Muhammad Ali, Vice President Marketing, Engro Fertilizers Limited; Mr. Tanweer Raza.

Adoption of aeroponic technology to ensure virus free seed potato production: Dr. Kausar

ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for the National Food Security and Research Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik Tuesday said that adoption of Aeroponic technology will not only boost potato production but also ensure the availability of virus-free seeds.

The technology will contribute significantly to the agricultural sector's improvement, he said while addressing a ceremony held at National Agriculture Research Center in which

he also highlighted the achievements of Korea-funded Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP), that focusing on seed potato production by using aeroponic technology.

The caretaker minister lauded the remarkable growth in potato cultivation and production during past two decades.

Only 2 percent of potato seed requirement is being fulfilled locally and the country relied on

importing 98% of its seed demand, he said adding that with the implementation of this cutting-edge technology, Pakistan is poised to achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production.

Dr Kausar reiterated the government's commitment to prioritizing the agricultural sector, expressing gratitude to the Korean government for its invaluable support in driving agricultural development initiatives in Pakistan.

Six development schemes approved

LAHORE (APP): The 45th meeting of Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) chaired by Planning and Development Board's (P&D Board) Punjab, Chairman Iftikhar Ali Sahoo here Tuesday, approved six developmental schemes of the SHC&ME (Specialized Health Care and Medical Education) and FW&F (Forest, Wildlife and Fisheries) sector with an estimated cost of Rs 8895.681 million. The approved schemes are as follows: Program for

Strategic Transformation/ Revamping of Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Bahawalpur Victoria Hospital, (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 2005.698 million; Program for Revamping OPD Blocks in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Nawaz Sharif Hospital Yakkhi Gate, Lahore) at the cost of the Rs 632.742 million; Program for Revamping OPD Blocks in Tertiary Care Hospitals in Punjab (Lady Aitchison Hospital, Lahore) (Revised) at the cost of the Rs 510.668.

Shipping Activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Port activities reported at Port Qasim where five ships namely, MSC Mumbai-VIII, Maersk Atlanta, MSC Yukta-X, Encore and Tromso scheduled to load/offload Containers, Rice and Palm oil, berthed at Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal and Liquid Terminal respectively during last 24 hours. Meanwhile a bulk cargo carrier 'Sea Bird' to load 41,900 tonnes of Rice also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during the same period.

SCCI, PHDEC to collaborate for uplift of horticulture sector in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) and Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) on Tuesday agreed to collaborate for development of the horticulture sector in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to details, an important meeting between SCCI president Fuad Ishaq and Manager of Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export

Company (PHDEC) Raheel Abbas held at the Chamber house, in which agreement reached for joint work for development of horticulture sector, enhancing capacity building of stakeholders, launching coaching programs and joint ventures to efficient tap potentials in horticulture sector.

The meeting thoroughly discussed framing of a holistic plan for development and promotion of horticulture sector, technical information.

CM initiates divisional meetings to ensure secure, fair elections

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LAHORE: Initiating a series of divisional meetings, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi chaired a crucial session at the Commissioner's Office in DG Khan, focusing on ensuring fair and free elections within a peaceful environment.

The meeting extensively reviewed the arrangements for the upcoming general elections and the security plan, with the Provincial Election Commission participating via video link, said a handout issued here on Tuesday.

Chief Minister Naqvi, emphasizing the need for foolproof security arrangements across Punjab, affirmed the citizens' right to vote in a

tranquil environment. He called for meticulous planning to ensure the secure delivery of election materials, directing Inspector General of Police Dr. Usman Anwar to promptly finalize comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Underlining the adherence to the Election Commission's code of conduct, Naqvi stated that all political parties and independent candidates have the right to conduct election campaigns. The chief minister stressed the importance of maintaining a conducive atmosphere for political activities.

Chief Secretary, Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan, RPO, Deputy Commissioner, secretaries

concerned, and senior officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday inaugurated 133 bedded DG Khan Institute of Cardiology besides multi-million road projects to facilitate the people of the area.

After inaugurating health facilities, he inspected 'Accident & Emergency' and other wards.

All wards and departments of state-of-the-art hospitals are fully functional for medical facilities.

During a briefing, the caretaker CM was told that Angiography, CTscan and other facilities are being conducted at the hospital.



GILGIT: Provincial Ministers Gilgit-Baltistan addressing a press conference regarding wheat subsidy.

KPCTA arranges "Grand Peace Fair" to promote positive image of province

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in collaboration with Department of International Relations Peshawar University and International Relations Students Association (IRSA) organized a two-day "Grand Peace Fair" on Tuesday to orient youth of the province about peace, harmony and project positive image of the province and merged areas.

Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts (NMDs), Amir Abdullah and Brigadier Tashfeen attended the event as Chief Guests.

Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem, President (IRSA) Ahmad Ali Khan and Incharge (IRSA) Dr. Khurshaid were also present on the occasion.

On the first day, a panel discussion on peace was arranged that was moderated by Dr. Saima Raza. The panel comprised Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts (NMDs) Amir Abdullah, Professor Dr. Hussain Shaheed, Senior Journalist Saleem Safi, Senior Journalist Mushtaq Yousufzai, Dr. Amir Raza, and Senior Journalist Shams Mohammad.

PHC extends interim bail of PTI candidates

PESHAWAR (APP): A single-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of eight candidates of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), including the former provincial law minister, Imtiaz Shahid Qureshi till February 12, 2024.

During the hearing conducted by Justice Sahibzada Asadullah, the defendants' lawyer Sikandar Hayat Shah told the court that former Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Law Minister, Imtiaz Shahid Qureshi, Aftab Alam Advocate, Daud Shah, Naseem Afridi, Abdur Rehman, Shafi Jan, Khurram Zeeshan Advocate and Salman Shinwari.

Governor KP meets with winning team of Lacrosse Championship

PESHAWAR (APP): The winning team of women lacrosse championship and officer bearers of Pakistan Lacrosse Federation called on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali here on Tuesday.

The team and officer bearer of the Federation expressed gratitude to the Governor for his invitation and support to teams during the championship. They also presented a shield to governor as a token of appreciation.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor highlighted the potential of KP youngsters in sports and congratulated the KP team for his extraordinary performance in the championship.

I am proud of these girls who continued studies and proved their mettle in playing field, the Governor said and added that these girls would be provided support and financial assistance.

He said that the caretaker government and concerned authorities would be contacted to facilitate these girls who are gifted with talent and persistence to pursue their passion.



BADIN: Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, the daughter of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto addressing to Party workers rally at DC Chowk during Election Campaign.



KARACHI: Policemen detain activists of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party outside high court who arrived their case hearing in the Provincial Capital.

Canal Road to be closed to traffic on Feb 4-6: WASA

FAISALABAD (APP): Water & Sanitation Agency (WASA) Managing Director (MD) Amir Aziz said that the Canal Road would remain closed for traffic from February 4 to 6 due to canal crossing of water supply pipelines.

During a meeting here on Tuesday, he said that WASA was executing the mega water supply project with the financial assistance of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to facilitate the residents of Faisalabad with potable drinking water in ample quantity.

In this connection, WASA would lay water supply pipelines in the city which would also cross the Rakh Branch Canal near FESCO Headquarters. Hence, the WASA had decided to close the Canal Road for vehicular traffic, he added.

FAISALABAD (APP): Deeply entrenched in caste system, the industrial hub of Pakistan is once again witnessing the old faces contesting 2024 elections embracing more or less the same slogans of economic revival, jobs and ameliorating the lot of people.

Although social media has revolutionized the society in the awareness regime, yet the old doctrine of caste and incentives based politics still persists in most parts of the country and Faisalabad is not an exception.

Known as Manchester of Pakistan -

Faisalabad district is generally dominated by Jutt, Rajpoot, Gujjar, Arain, Ansari, Baloch bradaris with some other clans settled here even prior to the Independence of Pakistan.

Besides having their strong caste base, these candidates also own the tickets of key national political parties like Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Pakistan Peoples' Party with some candidates contesting as independents and claiming to be supported by PTI whose symbol of 'Bat' was suspended by the ECP due to faulty intra party

elections. Daily life interactions, participation in funerals and weddings, disputes resolution at courts and police stations as well as local development work once again surfaces as mainstay in keeping the vote bank intact.

Future promises and hopes like always are also in the heart of election campaign with PML-N ensuring to putting the country on strong economic footing and PPP promising employments, salaries increase, BISP expansion and grassroots development. Electioneering gained

momentum in Faisalabad - the third biggest metropolis of the country with a recent public meeting by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. But, political pundits foresee a major impetus in the campaign after PML-N supreme Muhammad Nawaz Sharif's public gathering on February 02.

With the February 08 elections zeroing in, the candidates from main political parties and the independents are diligently wooing voters by arranging public meetings and serving voters at election camps (Deras) with food, tea and even providing them

logistics for personal use. Housing over eight million populace, 5,297,899 Faisalabad voters including 2,841,085 male and 2,456,814 female - would be voting to elect 10 MNAs and 21 MPs out of 277 and 574 candidates contesting elections respectively for National and Provincial Assembly seats.

Political figures like Rana Sanaulah Khan, Abid Sher Ali, Haji Akram Ansari, Rana Farooq Saeed Khan, Hafiz Mumtaz Ahmad, Hamayun Akhtar Khan, Ali Afzal Sahi, Mina Irfan Mannan, Shahbaz Babar, Arif Gill.

International News

US doesn't want wider war with Iran, says White House

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States does not want a wider war with Iran or the region, the White House said on Monday, adding that the administration believes a single drone strike on its forces in the Middle East since the Gaza war began.

National security spokesman John Kirby also told MSNBC in an interview that talks to release prisoners in Gaza have been constructive and that then US sees a framework for another deal.

Gazans said the renewed violence made a mockery of a ruling by the World Court calling on Israel to do more to help civilians. Health officials say 26,637 Palestinians have been killed in the conflict with thousands more bodies likely under the rubble

of destroyed buildings across the coastal territory.

On the other hand, Israel relaunched an assault overnight on Gaza's main northern city, weeks after retreat, residents said, while Washington considered its response to the first deadly strike on its forces in the Middle East since the Gaza war began.

Three US servicemen were killed and at least 34 wounded in a drone attack in Jordan near the Syrian border for which US Central Command immediately blamed Iran. US President Joe Biden said the attacks were carried out by Iran-backed groups operating in Syria and Iraq.

While Iran has denied any involvement, Biden ordered "retaliatory" attacks on Iranian-backed groups. At the same time, the US president stopped short

of hitting Iran directly for fear of igniting a broader war amid violence that has already hampered global trade through attacks on ships in the Red Sea. "Have no doubt, we will hold all those responsible to account at a time and in a manner of our choosing," Biden said.

Inside Gaza, residents said Israeli air strikes on neighbourhoods across Gaza City killed and wounded many people. While tanks shelled the eastern areas of the city, naval boats fired shells and gun rounds at the beachfront areas in the west, they said.

Among those killed were two Palestinian journalists, Essam El-lulu and Hussein Attalah, along with several members of their families, health officials and the journalist union said.



US National Security Council spokesmans John Kirby speaks during the daily briefing in the Brady Briefing Room of the White House in Washington, DC.

Ukraine hails constructive talks with Hungary

Monitoring Desk
UZHGOROD: Ukraine's foreign minister on Monday thanked Hungary for "constructive" talks, ahead of a European summit where Kyiv hopes Hungary's Viktor Orban will lift a veto on a multi-billion-euro EU aid package.

Relations between the two neighbours have been strained over the past few years and were further aggravated when Prime Minister Orban in December vetoed 50 billion euros (\$54 billion) in EU aid for Kyiv. In an effort to mend ties

and "find solutions" to their differences, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky suggested a direct meeting with Orban. Monday's talks between Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto and Ukraine's top diplomat Dmytro Kuleba around the city of Uzhhorod in western Ukraine were intended to lay the groundwork.

Szjijarto has not visited Ukraine since Russia launched its offensive against Kyiv in February 2022, although he has been to Moscow on several occasions.

Ukraine says two killed in overnight Russian attacks

KYIV (INP): Ukraine said Tuesday that two people had been killed and at least five more wounded in the latest overnight Russian attacks across the country targeting military and energy infrastructure. Moscow's army, meanwhile, said its air defences downed 21 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory and the annexed Crimean peninsula, as Kyiv steps up cross border aerial attacks.

Kyiv said Russian forces had launched two missiles and 35 attack drones across Ukraine and that 20 of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) had bypassed air defence systems. "The enemy directed some of the attack UAVs along front line territories, trying to hit fuel and energy infrastructure, and civilian and military facilities near the front line and the state border with the Russia," the air force said in a statement.

Officials in Kyiv have urged Western allies to bolster its air defence capabilities and said gaining control of the country's air space is a priority for this year.



Hong Kong's Secretary for Justice Paul Lam, Chief Executive John Lee and Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung attend a press conference regarding the legislation of Article 23 national security laws, in Hong Kong.

North Korea fires cruise missiles into sea

SEOUL (INP): North Korea fired multiple unidentified cruise missiles on Tuesday into the sea off its west coast, South Korea's military said, the third time Pyongyang has tested cruise missiles in less than a week. The missiles were launched at around 7 a.m. (2200 GMT on Monday), Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement. South Korean and US intelligence authorities were closely monitoring the situation and analysing the details of the launch, it said.

The launch comes amid a rise in tension on the Korean peninsula and follows a barrage of cruise missiles fired by Pyongyang off its east coast on Sunday. Sunday's launch was a test of the new submarine-launched cruise missiles (SLCM) dubbed "Pulhwasal-3-31" and leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test, North Korean state media KCNA reported on Monday.

Last week's missiles were also Pulhwasal-3-31, KCNA said, adding that they were the "strategic", which typically refers to nuclear-capable weapons.

Israeli troops to 'go into action' soon at Lebanon border, says Israeli minister

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Israeli troops will "very soon go into action" near the country's northern border with Lebanon, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said on Monday, as tensions surge amid the crisis in Gaza.

Gallant told troops near the border with the besieged Gaza Strip that others were being deployed to Israel's north. "They will very soon go into action [...] so the forces in the north are reinforced," Gallant said, according to video released by

Saudi project clears 733 Houthi mines in Yemen in a week

RIYADH (Internews): Project Masam, a Saudi initiative to clear land mines in Yemen, in the last week of January dismantled 733 mines planted by the Iran-backed Houthi militia.

Overseen by the Saudi aid agency KSrelief, the project's special teams destroyed 602 pieces of unexploded ordnance, 126 anti-tank mines, three improvised explosive devices, and two anti-personnel mines.

Saudi Arabia to launch 'Dream of the Desert' train

RIYADH (INP): Saudi Arabia has unveiled the plan to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' train service.

A first-of-its-kind in the Middle East and North Africa region, the 40-cabin luxury train will add extra quality services and options to the kingdom's means of transportation, as per SPA. Saudi Arabia Railways (SAR) partnered with the Italian Arsenale Group, a specialist in administrat-

ing luxurious train trips, to launch the 'Dream of the Desert' service.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh to discuss Gaza ceasefire proposal in Cairo

GAZA (Online): The Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh says the group has received a ceasefire proposal put forward after talks in Paris and that he will visit Cairo to discuss it.

Haniyeh said the group's aim remained to end Israel's military offensive in Gaza and secure a full pull-out of Israeli forces from the territory.

Israel would struggle to accept such terms, but Qatar, the US and Egypt are hoping to see if the two sides can be persuaded to accept a ceasefire lasting at least a month, during which thousands of Palestinian prisoners would be released in return for the release of a large group of hostages.

The proposal, described as a framework, was hammered out between

Egypt, Qatar, the US and Israel on Sunday in talks in Paris. The location of the talks meant that Hamas negotiators could not be present.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, may be willing to accept a drawback in troops in Gaza during a ceasefire or humanitarian pause, but is unlikely to accept any permanent ceasefire that leaves Hamas military forces intact and capable of mounting a further threat to Israel. Previously, he has said he is prepared to accept a lengthy ceasefire, but on the condition there is no requirement to end hostilities.

Haniyeh said: "Our response to the proposal will be on the basis that the priority is stopping the aggression against Gaza and withdrawing the occupation forces from the Strip".

New Hong Kong national security law to add five crimes

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Hong Kong will create its own national security law "as soon as possible", city leader John Lee said on Tuesday, adding insurrection and other crimes not covered by existing legislation imposed by Beijing four years ago.

Massive pro-democracy protests rocked the finance hub in 2019, bringing hundreds of thousands of people to the streets to call for greater freedoms.

In response, Beijing imposed a national security law to punish four major crimes - secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with foreign forces - with sentences ranging up to life in prison.

Officials on Tuesday said Hong Kong's security law - mandated by Article 23 of the city's mini-constitution - will cover five offences: treason, insurrection, espionage, destructive activities endangering national security, and external

interference. "While we society as a whole looks calm and very safe, we still have to watch out for potential sabotage and undercurrents that try to create troubles, particularly some of the independent Hong Kong ideas that are still embedded in some people's minds," Lee told a press conference.

"The threats to national security are real, we have experienced them and suffered from them badly [...] we don't want to go through that painful experience again," he said, adding that "some foreign agents may still be active in Hong Kong".

"I must stress that the Basic Law Article 23 legislation must be done [...] as soon as possible," Lee said, noting the city had waited 26 years to make it a reality.

Lee said the consultation process for the law - which runs until the end of February.



Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi met with a delegation from Punjab Chamber of Education led by its President Mr. Haji Ashfaq Ahmed Warraich in Islamabad.

PCE's role in bridging gap between public and private education sector acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi Tuesday acknowledged the efforts of Pakistan Chamber of Education (PCE) for playing a key role in bridging the gap between the government and the private education sector.

In a meeting with the PCE delegation led by its President, Haji Ashfaq Ahmed Warraich, the federal minister said that PCE had played a key role in bringing down the number of Out of School Children. He acknowledged the

positive feedback from the PCE and said that these suggestions will be forwarded to the provinces in the next IPEMC.

Madad Ali Sindhi was briefed about the problem of unscheduled holidays in the provinces which has led to reduction of the academic days of the schools.

He was told that the academic calendar year needed to be revised in such a way that the effects of climate change were addressed.

The minister was briefed that due to climate change the weather of dif-

ferent areas was affected differently.

For example, the smog hit areas are near the Lahore and Gujranwala districts. Hence, due to fog and smog in these areas, the entire province should not be shut down.

Similarly, Madad Ali was told that it was unfair that different provinces had different academic days annually.

It was suggested that this needed to be in a uniform manner.

PEC also stressed the need for teacher training and offered their services to the government.

PEC said that through public private partnership, the number of Out of School Children can be reduced and PEC can contribute to this cause.

Madad Ali said that these suggestions were positive and the provinces should focus on materialising these.

The minister said that it was important that policies should be made in such a way that all private institutions should be catered for.

He said there should not be a single policy for high end and low end private institutions.

Mushaal says: Tech-savvy workforce essential for country's standing in rapidly evolving global economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussein Mullick has said that the active involvement of youth in innovation, investment and the overall economy was crucial for driving progress of the country.

She was addressing Future-Fest 2024, an innovation Expo in Lahore. The SAPM was accompanied by Focal Person to SAPM Sabien Hussein Mullick and Advisor to SAPM on Communication Waqas Banorie, said a press release issued

here on Tuesday.

At the Expo, a mix of entrepreneurs and exhibitors displayed a wide variety of innovative ideas spanning different industries and services.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick was appraised about Future-Fest achievements of \$200 million direct investment which resulted in 30,000 direct jobs and the organization of innovation road show.

She said that Future-Fest had achieved commendable milestones. She noted that Future-Fest's efforts to secure over \$200 million in direct investment would be

a boost in developing cutting-edge technologies, startups and projects across various industries in the country. She appreciated the innovation road show organized by Future-Fest which brought together entrepreneurs, cutting-edge startups, industry leaders, and technology enthusiasts from 40 cities and 80 universities.

Mushaal Hussein Mullick was also appraised about His Royal Highness, Prince Fahad bin Mansour's extraordinary contribution to the technological landscape of Pakistan.

Consul General vows continued efforts for welfare of Pak in UAE

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's Consul General in Dubai, UAE, Hussain Muhammad on Tuesday vowed to continue all-out efforts for the welfare of the Pakistani community living in the United Arab Emirates. "It is the core objective of the mission to extend all possible facilitation and assistance towards achieving the welfare of Pakistani community," he said during his visit to Pakistan Association Dubai (PAD), according to a press release received here from Dubai

Consulate General of Pakistan.

The consul general visited the PAD on the invitation of Pakistan Journalists Forum (PJF).

Speaking on the occasion, Hussain emphasized that every Pakistani living in UAE was the ambassador of Pakistan and needed to work jointly towards shared goals of national wellbeing.

"It is the responsibility of each one of us to portray positive image of our motherland through our conduct.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed chairs the 3rd meeting of the Policy & Strategy Committee/Oversight Board for Post-Flood Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) at the Planning Ministry.

Meeting reviews Post Flood Recovery activities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday formally inaugurated the 4RF dashboard, oversight meeting to review Post-Flood Recovery activities.

The third meeting of the Policy and Strategy Committee/Oversight Board for Post-Flood Resilient, Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework (4RF) was chaired by the federal minister, said a press release issued here.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Economic Affairs Division (EAD), the Chief Secretary of Gilgit Baltistan, the Country Director of the World Bank, the Country Director of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Country

Director of the European Union Islamabad, the Deputy Resident Director of UNDP and representatives from the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

Speaking at the occasion, the minister said that this dashboard was a milestone achieved in order to ensure transparency and efficiency in executing the flood related projects. The dashboard will provide real time information on the physical and financial progress of the projects.

Besides, it will be accessed by the provincial government, development partners and concerned line ministries, he added.

The minister appreciated the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for their support in establishing this dashboard.

Furthermore, the minister underscored the government's unwavering commitment to support and facilitating flood-affected people throughout the implementation and completion of the vital projects. During this productive meeting, the donor agencies appreciated the Planning Ministry for its diligent oversight and monitoring of 4RF projects and their execution. They expressed their dedication to continuing support for these projects in the future. Earlier, Tassaduq Hussain Khan, Senior Joint Secretary at Planning Ministry gave a detailed briefing over the implementation status of 4RF.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister GB Haji Gulbar Khan in a meeting with caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz at his office.

NCRC drafts legislative bill against child labor

ISLAMABAD (Online): The National Child Rights Commission (NCRC) has drafted a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at preventing child domestic labor.

The consultation on the proposed 'Child Domestic Labour Draft Bill' was held in a local hotel of the federal capital. Esteemed stakeholders, including representatives from UNICEF, ILO, Ministry of Human Rights and various other organizations, gathered to contribute their expertise and insights, said a press release issued by the law ministry. The event was graced by the presence of Ms. Ayesha Raza, the Chairperson of the National Child Rights Commission (NCRC).

The issue is exacerbated by child labor in various sectors such as brick kilns, carpet factories, and

the ominous nexus of narcotic terrorism. Children engaged in domestic labor are subjected to health risks, rights violations, disrupted education, and exposure to violence and brutality. Recognizing the gravity of this issue, the NCRC has taken an admirable initiative by drafting a comprehensive piece of legislation aimed at preventing and regulating child domestic labor, marking it as a non-bailable offense. Furthermore, it seeks to establish a uniform child rights legislation applicable across the entire country of Pakistan.

One of the key provisions emphasizes the urgent need to set a uniform age for children, aligning with the spirit of the Child Rights Convention, i.e., 18 years.

Ahmad Ishaque assumes as DG FIA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir, PSP, PPM, a seasoned and highly esteemed officer hailing from the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), officially assumed the charge as the Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

According to the press release issued here Tuesday, Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir brings a wealth of experience and a distinguished career in law enforcement to his new role, having previously served as the Additional DG in FIA's Cybercrime Wing.

With an illustrious career marked by exemplary service in various capacities across all four provinces of Pakistan, he is widely recognized for his professionalism, honesty, and commitment to upholding the law.

Upon assuming office at the FIA Headquarters in Islamabad, he paid homage to the sacrifices made by the agency's martyrs at the Martyrs' Memorial. Subsequently, he engaged with the ADGs and Directors, expressing his firm determination to enhance the institution's capabilities and better service delivery.

Students can apply for Romanian Government Scholarship 2024-25: HEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Students can apply for the Romanian Government Scholarship 2024-25 for professional degrees in various disciplines by submitting their documents online till the mid of March. According to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Tuesday, Romanian government offers scholarships to foreign citizens in different fields, except medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Each candidate will create an account on the StudinRomania platform fill in the requested data and

upload the required documents till March 16, 2024.

The result of the scholarship will be announced by email around July 15, 2024 to every candidate who applied for the scholarship.

It is the responsibility of the students applying for any professional degree (Medical, Engineering, Nursing, Architecture, Law, Veterinary Medicine, etc.) to first get confirmed its accreditation from the respective Councils i.e. Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC).



QUETTA: Country Manager Reko Diq Mining Company Ltd Ali Ahsan Rind and Tariq Mian of The Hunar Foundation signing a MoU. Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan is also present.

Reko Diq Mining Company signs MoU with THF

QUETTA (APP): Reko Diq Mining Company (RDMC), a subsidiary of Barrick Gold Corporation on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The Hunar Foundation (THF) in Quetta signaling the start of RDMC's first CSR initiative in vocational training and capacity building for local youth in Chagai, its district of operation.

RDMC operates in Pakistan under a Joint Venture agreement with the provincial Government of Balochistan and the federal Government of Pakistan.

According to press release issued here, The Hunar Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2008 to empower and enable the marginalized youth of Pakistan with vocational and technical skills.

THF's objective is to act as a facilitator in the field of education for catalytic action to increase the number of talented young persons engaged in productive work, consequently alleviating poverty and making them contributing members of society.

Citizens to get civic facilities at Fatima Jinnah Park: ICT Spokesman

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Tuesday initiated the provision of convenient basic services to simplify the tedious process of vehicle registration and acquiring essential documents. The citizens hailing from nearby areas of Fatima Jinnah Park Bolan Gate F-9 can get civic facilities through a dedicated van from 03:00 to 05:00 pm today, offering a hassle-free experience for residents seeking to register, transfer, or pay token tax for their vehicles, ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum said.

On the directive of DC, the excise staff will be stationed at the park's parking lot, streamlining the procedures related to vehicles. This initiative aligned with the commitment to make essential services more accessible to the public. He said that adding to the convenience, the 'Facilitation Center Doorstep ICT Vehicle' will also be

ECP continues to impose fine for violation of Election Code of Conduct

ISLAMABAD (Online): The District Monitoring Officers, under the directives of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), have been issuing notices and imposing fines on candidates and other officials concerned in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as well for violation of the Election Code of Conduct.

The District Monitoring Officers, while taking action against candidates, imposed overall a fine of nine hundred sixty-six thousand rupees.

According to details, ninety-five thousand rupees fine was imposed on candidates in Peshawar Division, in Malakand Division three hundred thousand rupees, in Hazara Division one hundred seventy-one thousand rupees, Mardan Division one hundred and five thousand rupees.

SC adjourns case regarding FIA's notices to journalists till March

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Tuesday granted time to journalists till after the general elections to appear before FIA's inquiry in matter pertaining to a malicious campaign against the judiciary on social media.

The court also sought report regarding an incident of attack on Journalist Absar Alam and adjourned the case till first week of March.

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

During the course of proceeding, the chief justice inquired that whether any application was filed to the top court.

The president Press Association adopted the stance that it could not be moved because the FIA yet to provide the list.

The CJ remarked that they were expecting that a written application would be filed.

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Senate body on Aviation convenes

ISLAMABAD: The Subcommittee of Senate Standing Committee on Aviation, chaired by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, convened today at Parliament to discuss the pension issue of Civil Aviation Authority employees, retired between fiscal years 2014 to 2023.

The sub-committee was informed that CAA pensioners are categorized into three groups: those retired before 30th June 2014, those retired between 1st July 2014 to 30th June 2022, and those retired after 30th June 2022.

Officials noted that pensioners retired before 2014 have no grievances. Additionally, pensioners retired between 2014 and 2022 have been receiving all allowances increased by the Federal Government except

for the 2021 and 2022 allowances.

However, pensioners retired after 2022 have not received five allowances as announced by the Federal Government.

Officials mentioned a clear disparity in pension emoluments for several pensioners.

Officials acknowledged anomalies in few CAA regulations, stating that the issue would not be resolved without amending the regulations and obtaining subsequent approval from the Board, but at the same time, they highlighted the issue of excessive payment to a group of pensioners that ought to be recovered.

The Petitioners demanded that interim relief may be granted until relevant rules are amended, and pensioners matter be presented before next CAA board meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Czech Republic Ladislav Steinhubel is take keen interest in a painting during painting exhibition of Irfan Cheema, title "Life and some other beautiful things" at Tanzara Art Gallery in the Federal Capital.

CDA services to go online to facilitate citizens

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) launched its new website to facilitate the general public, says a press release issued here on Tuesday. In this regard, a ceremony was held at the authority's headquarters which was attended by the CDA chairman, members of its Board, representatives of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries and officers of concerned formations.

On this occasion, the chairman said that the use of technology in the authority would improve service delivery.

He said that the launch of new and updated website was an important step towards digitalisation.

He further said that Land and Estate records are

also being digitalised.

CDA was introducing secure paper for issuing allotment and transfer letters to reduce the risk of forgery and tampering of records, he said.

The chairman further added that the initiative would help reduce complaints of corruption, fraudulent transactions and eradication of complaints like alteration in records.

A tree management system has also been introduced as part of the technology based initiatives being taken in the authority. This system will be based on state-of-the-art Digital Trees Inventory software.

Similarly, for the first time all tree and plants data will also be digitized with the help of field force and satellite imagery.

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



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