

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 05. No. 357 Jamadi-us-Sani 25, 1445 AH Monday January 08, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Not aware if it has been decided to bring PML-N into power: PM Kakar

Action should be taken against those responsible for May 9 riots; Clarifies govt didn't have any personal issues with any political party: PM

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: With general elections almost a month away, caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that he is unaware if it has been decided to bring the Nawaz Sharif-led Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) into power. His remarks came amid allegations of "preferential treatment" to the PML-N in the run-up to the February 8 general elections by the mainstream political parties.

Major parties, including the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), have been repeatedly accusing that efforts are underway to make the PML-N supreme prime minister for the fourth time.

PM Kakar, while speaking on Geo News programme "Aik Din Geo Kay Sath" on Sunday, said: "Political behaviour requires wisdom, which seems to be lacking."

When asked if there had been any move to bring the PML-N into power, the premier replied: "To my knowledge, there is no such thing."

He went on to say that the people would have known about the "decision" by the morning of February 9 — the next day of the general election. At the same time, the interim prime minister expressed hope that the election results would end the "uncertainty". Stressing the need to hold masterminds of the May 9 riots accountable, he

said that the entire Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should not be punished for the incident.

The day when violence was triggered almost across the country soon after deposed prime minister Imran Khan's arrest in the ₹190 million settlement case. Hundreds of PTI workers and senior leaders were put behind bars for their involvement in violence and attacks on military installations.

During the protests, the miscreants targeted the civil and military installations including — Jinnah House and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi. The military termed May 9 "Black Day" and decided to try the protesters under the Army Act.



KARACHI: Holland Honorary Consul General Tarek Moinuddin Khan meeting with Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at governor house.

Pakistan Navy deploys warships in Arabian Sea following 'recent incidents of maritime security'

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Navy, after recent incidents of breach of maritime security in the Arabian Sea, have deployed their warships.

According to the spokesman for the Pakistan Navy, these ships are constantly patrolling in order to ensure the protection of Pakistan's trade routes.

He has informed that the navy is also conducting aerial surveillance of these routes. "The purpose of patrolling is not only to ensure the safety of Pakistani ships but also those belonging to other countries," the spokesman has elaborated.

Last month, Yemen-based Houthi rebels had also claimed an attack on a Pakistan-bound ship from Saudi Arabia in the Red Sea.

"Pakistan Navy is well aware of its national responsibility in maintain-

ing maritime peace and order in the region," the statement noted.

Last week India announced it had deployed three warships in the Arabian Sea after a drone hit an "Israel-affiliated" merchant vessel about 200 nautical miles (370km) off the coast of the western state of Gujarat. No casualties were, however, reported in the attack, which the US blamed on Iran, which the latter dismissed.

Exporters from around the world are in trouble these days because of a spate of attacks on commercial vessels by Houthi rebels in the Red Sea.

The rebels who have vowed to avenge the massacre of Palestinians at the hands of Israeli forces, have said they will target any ship passing through the Red Sea that are bound for the Jewish state.

PayPal to launch services in Pakistan soon: IT Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information Technology and Communication Dr. Umar Saif says the government has given green signal to long-standing demand of freelancers to receive remittances in Pakistan through PayPal. In a video statement, the Minister said an international company PayPal will provide facility to freelancers for receiving of remittances in their accounts through digital communication. The minister clarified, "While PayPal itself is not coming to Pakistan, an agreement has been reached where remittances would be channeled through PayPal via a third party."

"Under the newly devised program, freelancers will not need to open a PayPal account. Instead, individuals outside the country will make payments from their PayPal accounts, and the funds will be promptly deposited into the freelancers' accounts."

Chairman Bilawal urges Lahore people to vote for PPP

Says Lahore belongs not to any businessman or sportsperson, but to ZAB

LAHORE (INP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing corner meetings in constituency NA-127 in Lahore at Peco road Kot Lakhpat, Township and General Hospital Metro Chowk on Sunday said that he is delighted to be among the jiyalas.

"You are my representative and ambassador in this constituency and you will deliver my message, PPP's message to every house in the area" Chairman Bilawal said to the jiyalas.

He said that this city of Lahore does not belong to a businessman or trader or a sportsman. This city

belongs to Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. These people think that by martyring Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and their jiyalas, they can frighten us but this is their misperception. Ha has come to his own city from where Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto contested the elections and now he is contesting election from this city.

Chairman PPP said that they ask us that why we have come to Lahore. We asked them why they had come here.



LAHORE: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing workers convention at NA-127.

Will take solid measures to develop Pakistani art, culture: Governor Sindh

KARACHI (INP): Governor Sindh Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori has reiterated for taking solid measures for development of art and culture.

He said, "The art and culture of Pakistan is unique and prominent throughout the world." The Governor Sindh was talking to Chairman Crescent Art Gallery, Nasir Javed and CEO Sameer Nasir who called on him at Governor House Karachi on Sunday and discussed various issues with him including art and culture.

Kamran Tessori said that Crescent Art Gallery was playing effective role

for promoting art and culture and all possible cooperation will be provided in exhibition and other matters.

Speaking on the occasion, Nasir Javed said that Pakistani art and culture were being promoted in Canada. He said that art shows and art competitions were organized frequently in the UK and other countries to encourage students and improve their skills.

He said that exhibitions, workshops and seminars were also organized as they were trying to promote art despite the limited resources.

ECP fully functional, no crisis of any kind: Solangi

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi has said the Election Commission of Pakistan is fully functional and there is no crisis of any kind.

In a post on social media platform X, he urged the general public not to give any attention to rumors. Confirming the sickness of Secretary ECP Omar Hamid Khan, he prayed his

early and complete recovery. The Minister also shared a press release of the Election Commission, which states that Omar Hamid Khan is an intelligent and hardworking officer and is performing his responsibilities well. It further said Omar Hamid Khan has been facing some health issues for last few days. It added the secretary has been on medical leave in the past as well.



LAHORE: President PML-N Lahore Saif-ul-Malook meeting with President PML-N and former Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif.

Social media giants, services face disruptions as internet disrupted across Pakistan

People expressed frustration over inability to access popular social media platforms

ISLAMABAD (INP): Internet services were disrupted across Pakistan as users reported difficulties accessing popular social media platforms, including X, Facebook and YouTube on Sunday, Internet Monitor Downtime said.

According to Downtime, the social media platforms, especially the website versions have been down shortly after 5pm local time.

Users in major cities such as Karachi, Lahore

and Islamabad began experiencing difficulties accessing social media sites shortly after 4pm. Additionally, users also complained about sluggish internet services.

A sharp rise in connection outages on YouTube, X and Facebook was seen in downtime's graphs.

The reason behind the widespread disruption is yet not clear as the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has not issued any statement.



KABUL: Ameer Jamiat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI) Maulana Fazlur Rehman along with delegation meeting with Vice Afghanistan Prime Minister Maulvi Abdul Kabeer.

JUI-F's Fazlur Rehman in Afghanistan to discuss security issues

KABUL (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday reached Kabul, Afghanistan to hold talks on regional and security issues amid a spike in cross-border attacks.

According to party spokesperson, the JUI-F chief — who is on maiden visit to Afghanistan in nearly 10 years — was welcomed by interim Afghan Foreign Minister Ameer Khan.

Fazl last visited Afghanistan in 2013 and met then-president Hamid Karzai.

In a post on X (for-

merly Twitter), the JUI-F said Fazlur Rehman departed for Afghanistan with a high-level delegation of party leaders, including Maulana Abdul Wasi, Maulana Salahuddin, Maulana Jamaluddin, Maulana Salimuddin Shamzai, Aslam Ghauri and others.

During the visit, Fazlur Rehman will hold meetings with the Afghan Taliban leaders and discuss the regional and security situation, the statement noted.

It is pertinent to mention here that the representative of the Taliban government and Afghan envoy

in Islamabad had officially invited Maulana Fazlur Rehman a few days ago to visit Afghanistan on behalf of his government.

Relations between the Taliban government and Pakistan have seen a rapid deterioration after an increase in terrorist attacks in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, mostly claimed by outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

Islamabad has stated that the TTP and other groups use Afghan soil against Pakistan — a claim denied by Afghan Taliban government.



Pakistan Navy Ship escorting merchant vessel in Arabian Sea

Muhammad Ahmad Shah attends mass marriage ceremony of 122 Hindu couples

Independent Report

KARACHI: Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, Social Protection, president Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah while addressing

the mass marriage ceremony of 122 Hindu couples arranged by Pakistan Hindu Council congratulated that Council for arranging hundreds of marriages every year.

All the couples have been given Rs 50,000 each from the Minority Marriage Fund", he added Caretaker

Minister for Information said for the 17th year in a row, the Pakistan Hindu Council has organized mass marriages, which is a commendable effort.

He said that our ministry has funds for education and treatment for the children of minorities. "Hindu Marriage Law is there but it is not being implemented", Caretaker information minister for minority affairs said "He assured that the rights of all minorities will be protected."

Nationwide anti-polio drive to start from today

ISLAMABAD (INP): A nationwide anti-polio campaign of varied duration will begin tomorrow to administer vaccine drops to children under five years age.

During the campaign, a statement said, that polio teams of the health department would go door to door in all 159 districts of the country.

In Punjab, during a week-long polio campaign over 23 million children will be administered polio drops. The health department has declared Lahore, Faisalabad and Multan as the most sensitive cities in this regard.

MQM-P, PML-N to hold talks on electoral alliances today

LAHORE (INP): The Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) are gearing up for a meeting to discuss final seat adjustments ahead of the upcoming elections.

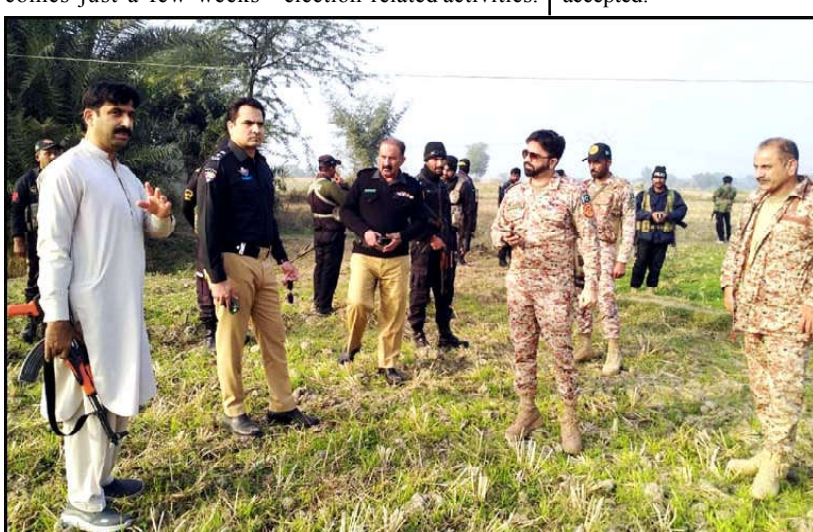
In this regard, a delegation from MQM is set to visit the central secretariat of PML-N for final talks on various matters related to seat adjustments.

According to sources, the negotiations between the two political entities are scheduled to take place on Monday at 5:00 PM.

Both parties will deliberate on seat adjustments, with the discussion centered around the final verdict on the contested seat in the National Assembly, NA-242.

NA-242 has become the epicenter of political interest, with Mustafa Kamal from MQM and Shahbaz Sharif from PML-N emerging as the primary contenders for the seat.

Likely, the MQM will also offer seat adjustment to the Muslim League-N on the seats of Lyari and Malir, sources said.



SHIKARPUR: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Shikarpur, Dr. Muhammad Imran Khan along with Rangers Colonel visiting Kacha area of Khanpur district Shikarpur where they started search and targeted operation against the criminals.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Commendable work

Thankfully, at least some of the checks and balances safeguarding the electoral process appear to be working as intended. There have been encouraging updates from all over the country about appellate tribunals reviewing and, in most cases, overturning the rejection of nomination papers by various returning officers.

Though the process is still ongoing, the tribunals have already cleared the path for scores of candidates who had previously been disbarred from participating in elections on various grounds. The rejection of papers, described in some contexts as 'wholesale' and 'based on flimsy reasoning' by observers, had disproportionately affected those who have been critical of the state, especially the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf. By the time the initial scrutiny was completed, most of the PTI's strongest candidates had been knocked out. This was followed by complaints that ROs in some constituencies had also withheld copies of their decisions, allegedly to prevent them from being appealed on time.

It now appears that many of those affected may have been right about being wronged. At least one judge hearing the appeals, Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir, is reported to have made remarks to the effect that the ROs in Islamabad and Rawalpindi had, in the majority of cases, rejected papers over petty issues which could have been resolved within five to 10 minutes in their offices. The question does arise as to why such hasty decisions were taken in the first place, but the affected candidates may take heart knowing that the appellate tribunals seem to be working independently and without fear or favour. As a result of the tribunals' decisions, many from PTI's top-tier leadership — what remains of it — are now back in the running. They include well-known names like Hammad Azhar, Atif Khan, Firdous Shamim Naqvi and Zulfi Bukhari, as well as other, less-prominent ones. Though appeals filed by some other big names have been turned down, the party remains committed to participating in the elections, and it seems it will find a way to make do.

The work of the appellate tribunals is commendable as it has restored a sense of fairness after the ugliness that marred the formal start of the electoral process.

From snatching of papers to abductions of candidates, instances of state interference had been widely documented, casting a dark shadow on the legitimacy of the upcoming polls.

With the tribunals acting sensibly, a significant portion of the controversies surrounding the pending election will now die down, allowing parties and candidates to focus on their campaigns and strategise for their wins. With both local and international analysts repeatedly underscoring that a free and fair election is the only way out of the crises Pakistan is mired in, any effort to ensure that the exercise remains free of controversy should be encouraged and celebrated.

Not a new normal



Muna Khan

I tested positive for Covid on the first day of the new year in New York. It is not an ideal start to the year, or holiday, but the period of isolation so far has brought many reflections.

The most obvious is that the pandemic is not over.

Last Sunday, the technical leader to the World Health Organisation's Covid-19 response, Dr Maria Van Kerkhove, reaffirmed on X that Covid remains a global health threat.

[This new phase] is marked by reduced impact compared to the peak of Covid 19 a few years ago, but it's still a global health threat and it's still a pandemic causing far too many (re)infections, hospitalisations, deaths and long covid when tools exist to prevent them.

Yet this has not received the media attention it deserves.

At the time of my writing, the United States is facing the second biggest surge of the pandemic according to data from the Centres for Disease Control.

The surge is expected to peak next week with an estimated two million infections per day and estimates that one in three people will get Covid. People must take precautions, especially masking, but masks alone have become a divisive issue here. Many people cite "science" that claims masks are ineffective in preventing the spread.

This is why the media's role in public messaging is critical right now, yet its focus is on other issues.

Professor Eric Topol's op-ed in The Los Angeles Times on Thursday should sound alarm bells for policymakers, certainly in the US, who "are still playing make-believe" about the current wave apt of high cases of the flu and respiratory virus.

The current JN.1 variant "has continued its evolution with mutations adapted for infecting or re-infecting us," writes Topol. But, he offers some good news: the latest booster in the US "provided protection from hospitalisation in the range of about 60 per cent against JN.1 and other recently circulating variants." Even those who had not gotten this booster were protected from hospitalisations or visits to the ER.

The bad news is that only 19pc of Americans have received the latest booster, so far. This is the tragic face of health inequities.

The United States isn't alone in its "state of denialism and general refusal to take simple steps to reduce the risk of infection," writes Topol. Countries all over the world are not acting on Covid mitigation strategies. There's a need to resume testing, data collection and public guidelines (like masking) backed by trusted science sources.

We know masks, air filtration and proper ventilation work against variants. When combined with vaccinations and testing, "we have layers of defense that work effectively together, no matter how the virus evolves. The key is to do it all, not rely on only one," writes molecular biologist Dr Lucky Tran.

In fact, he recently posted an image of a rapid test that checks for SARS-CoV-2, RSV, Adenovirus, M.pneumoniae, and influenza. It isn't approved in most countries but "imagine if governments provided this for free to the people!"

But governments like Joe Biden's are more interested in securing a second term and giving their ally Israel a free pass to co-mit more atrocities. "This passivity re-infuses the illusion that the pandemic is be-hind us when it's actually raging," writes Topol.

Since isolating, Topol's piece is one of the few I've come across on a mainstream media outlet about the dangers this wave poses. Friends in Karachi say they're hearing about a rise in cases there, too. My chacha called a public hospital in Karachi to ask about boosters but was told there are none and no plans afoot to get them either.

At least protect the most vulnerable — the elderly, the poor, the immunocompromised. Relaunch the NCOG and resume data collection so it can be used to understand the virus and prepare strategies to combat it.

The journalist Ed Yong, who covered the pandemic in 2020, wrote about watching publications he once respected "become complicit in normalising a level of death once billed as incalculable."

In a piece for The New York Times last month he wrote: "In this status quo, people are expected to ignore the threat of infection, pay through the nose if they get sick and face stigma and ridicule if they become disabled. Journalism can and should repudiate that bargain." Yong reminds us that Covid isn't just a health problem, it is a social one. Journalists must ensure this story is told and let people feel everyone's health matters. Until those that matter take note and take action. -- Courtesy Dawn

Complex conflict



Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Three months into the war in Gaza, thousands of Palestinians, including a large number of children, have been martyred by the Israeli Defence Forces. What is the end goal of Israel for which it has unleashed unprecedented death and destruction? Israel's stated objective is that it wants to destroy Hamas. This is not credible because Israel is meting out genocide-like collective punishment to all Palestinians, and not just Hamas. Is Israel's goal, then, to create a 'greater Israel' by forcibly pushing the Palestinians into neighbouring Arab countries or elsewhere? If that be the objective, Israel has certainly overestimated what its brutal force can achieve, and underestimated the resilience of Palestinians, who seem determined not to leave the land on which their ancestors had lived for millennia.

The Palestine-Israel conflict is a complex issue. One land, two claimants: Jews and Palestinians. Both cite history to consolidate their claim to the land. The roots of this conflict lie in the decision of the British in 1917, called Balfour Declaration, to settle the Jews of Europe in Palestine. Once a sufficient number of Jews had reached Palestine and displaced the local Arab population, the British took the matter to the UN in 1947, where it was agreed to have two separate states, Palestine and Israel. However, Israel has never allowed the two-state solution to work. Instead, it has imposed an apartheid-like occupation on the helpless Palestinians.

The issue also has an

ideological dimension. The state of Israel was created for the Jews of the world. The name itself comes from Hazrat Ya'qub (Jacob), the son of Hazrat Ishaq, and grandson of Hazrat Ibrahim. Hazrat Ya'qub was also called Israel, and his descendants as Bani Israel. His successors included Hazrat Daud (David) and his son Hazrat Suleiman, both of whom built large kingdoms in this territory. Prophet Moses rescued the Bani Israel and brought them to this land from Egypt. All these Prophets are equally sacred for Muslims. Add to that the Masjid al-Aqsa, which was the Qibla-i-Awwal. Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) ascended to Heaven (Mairaj) from this mosque. Israel has no right to deny Muslim Palestinians the right to live in the lands which they hold in such holy esteem.

Israel continues to justify its atrocities in the name of "self-defence". The Hamas action of October 7, 2023 did not take place in a vacuum as the UN secretary general had rightly remarked. The Palestinians are under brutal occupation. The Hamas action was an act of resistance against the occupying force, which is permissible under international law.

Israel's indiscriminate firing on Palestinian houses, schools, and hospitals has elicited massive protests not only in Arab or Muslim countries, but all across, including in the United States. Yet, Israel is not ready to listen to these voices. One reason for such a ferocious Israeli response could be that there is domestic criticism for not anticipating the Hamas attack. Further, Netanyahu wants to look strong as his domestic popularity is declining. The firm support of the US may have also emboldened the Israeli leadership. Another reason could be that Arabs and Muslims could not

display enough unity to take tangible actions against Israel, such as boycotting Israeli products or even cutting off diplomatic ties.

Nevertheless, pressure is now mounting on Israel. The US cannot continue to ignore the loud calls of the international community for an immediate and permanent ceasefire. Some European countries, like the UK, stand with Israel, but their people are agitating against the relentless bombardment of civilians in Gaza. Israel is also suffering a heavy financial cost of the war. Many businesses have closed down in Israel. A major setback for Israel is that the Arab-Israeli normalisation process has halted.

The US influence in the Middle East has also received a setback. The Arab world, including the Gulf countries, are now looking ever more inclined to explore other options for their security needs. The US has also been widely criticised for casting its veto, thus paralysing the United Nations from playing a role in stopping the war in Gaza, an objective supported by 153 countries of the world. It is high time for the Biden administration to revisit its unqualified support to Israel. Given the unwavering resolve of the Palestinians, Netanyahu's dream of creating a greater Israel is not likely to succeed, but he and his right-wingers are surely destined to go into history books as the most ruthless and heartless regime. Pakistan has consistently supported the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Pakistan has also not formally recognised the state of Israel. There have been some voices in the country for doing so. However, after the recent war in Gaza, there is even less likelihood that Pakistan would recognise Israel. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

VP PBF says: Regional Trade Agreements vital to reinvigorate growth

LAHORE (INP): Vice President, Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad has said that devising regional trade agreements among South Asian countries was need of the hour to improve the economic well beings of billions of people; though Pakistan's regional trade was below the desired level which needs to be seen in whole prospective before SIFC.

He said, "In international relations it is a common axiom that a state can change its friends but it cannot replace its neighbours due to geographical compulsions. If neighbours cannot be replaced, ideally a state should enjoy at least cordial relations with its surrounding states if not the best relations".

Talking to the members of FPCCI here on Sunday, Chaudhry Ahmad Jawad said that Pakistan must start putting sustainable and inclusive economic growth, above all we must create a cycle of profligacy and austerity. As the average annual economic growth between 2010 and 2023 has been lackluster, around 4 percent, and has been accompanied by a rise in Pakistan's total debt as a share of its GDP, from 55 percent to 76 percent.

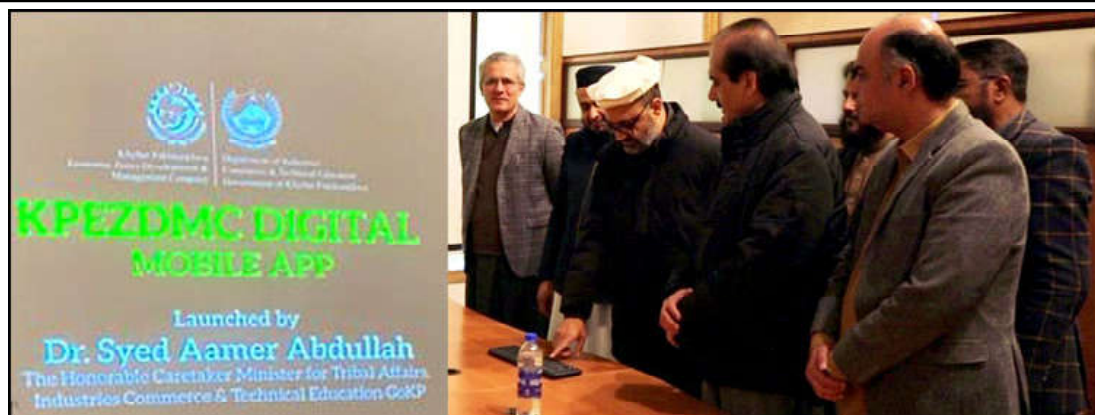
GILGIT: A vendor selling a traditional steel fire stove to the customer at his work place.

Shahid Rasheed says: Pakistani businessmen milking masses against developed countries

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt has said that exploitation of rights of citizens was not allowed in developed countries but business in Pakistan was unthinkable without exploitation.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, he said that key sectors and industries were operated without any regulatory oversight in Pakistan, allowing businessmen to rob the

masses and promote poverty in the country. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that in developed countries, no business was allowed to exploit the people and if it was done, it was made an example but the majority of businesses in Pakistan were milking the masses. Irresponsible and greedy people, whose only aim was to make money, exploit people in the name of business, as most of the big businesses were in their hands, he added.



KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Newly Merged Districts Affairs Dr. Aamer Abdullah formally launching Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) digital mobile app.

Freelancers to now receive their payments through PayPal: Minister

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif on Sunday announced that freelancers would now receive their payments through PayPal. In a video message, he said that it had been a longstanding demand of freelancers to have access to PayPal for easier payment receipt in Pakistan.

The minister clarified, "While PayPal itself is not coming to Pakistan, an agreement has been reached where remittances would be channelled through

PayPal via a third party." "Under the newly devised program, freelancers will not need to open a PayPal account. Instead, individuals outside the country will make payments from their PayPal accounts, and the funds will be promptly deposited into the freelancers' accounts," the minister explained.

He said that under the nation's first space policy approved by the federal cabinet, international companies would be allowed to provide communication services through low-orbit communication

satellites, which were relatively closer. Saif said that satellite communication technology was advancing rapidly and many private companies in the world wanted to provide communication services through low-orbit satellites.

"Satellites used to be geostationary, far away from the land. They are useful for broadcasting TV signals but communicating is difficult because there is latency," he said. Saif said that communication services and internet services could be offered through low-

orbit satellites, which were relatively closer. He said that there had been a lot of development in this regard in the private sector.

"So now it has become possible for communication services in Pakistan to be provided through satellites and the private sector has this technology," he said.

He said the National Space Policy would enable private sector companies to "offer affordable internet services in Pakistan while enabling increased investment in our national space program".

Silwat says: Business Facilitation Centre to be functional soon

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed said on Sunday the Business Facilitation Centre would be made functional soon to facilitate the business community of Faisalabad.

Addressing an online meeting with caretaker Provincial Minister for Industries SM Tanveer, she said a state-of-the-art business facilitation centre was established at Commissioner's Complex to resolve business related issues speedily.

KP-EZDMC launches mobile app to facilitate investors

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) has launched a digital mobile app to make the services of the company easily accessible to investors and industrialists.

The launching of the digital mobile app is being considered a milestone towards the facilitation of investors and industrialists as the required services, facilities and information of the company would now be available on it. With this initiative, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become the first province in the country, to introduce such a unique kind of comprehensive and useful app for industrialization in the public sector. The app was formally launched by the KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce and Technical Education, Dr Aamer Abdullah at the headquarters of KP-EZDMC, the other day, said an official press release issued here on Sunday. Besides, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KP-EZDMC, Javed Iqbal Khattak, and other senior management of the company were also present on the occasion. It is worth to mention

SNGPL cuts off another 347 connections for gas theft

LAHORE (APP): In a relentless effort to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) conducted a series of targeted raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Islamabad.

During the crackdown, around 347 unauthorised connections were disconnected, and fine of Rs 3.47 million were imposed. SNGPL's spokesperson told media here on Sunday, in Lahore, the regional team disconnected 13 connections on illegal use of gas while another 23 on use of compressor. In Rawalpindi and

Islamabad the team disconnected 98 connections on illegal use of gas and amount of Rs 0.30 million have been booked against gas theft cases. In Multan 25 connections were disconnected on illegal use of gas while another 25 on use of compressor. The team also imposed fine of Rs 0.050 million against gas theft cases. In Peshawar and Karak, the company disconnected 93 connections on account of direct use of gas and illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 3.05 million against gas theft cases.



KARACHI: A vendor is displayed fancy plants pots attraction for customers at his roadside setup Kumhar Wara area in Provincial Capital.

PIEDMC directed to submit report on 5000 acres Rwp Economic Zone

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chhatta has directed the Punjab Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (PIEDMC) authorities to complete the survey of the 5000 acres Economic Zone site on the Rawalpindi Ring Road and submit a report next week.

According to a Commissioner's office spokesperson, a delegation of PIEDMC during a meeting with Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chhatta gave a detailed presentation on the proposed site at Rawalpindi Ring Road Economic Zones and the facilities to be provided to the businessmen. The task of site survey for establishing an economic zone on 5000 acres land along the Rawalpindi Ring Road had been given to PIEDMC Lahore, the Commissioner informed. The officers concerned were also instructed to arrange a visit of the PIEDMC delegation immediately to the site and provide them with all the necessary information and support.

Governor KP underlines important role of graduates in healthcare development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali on Sunday recognized the important role of graduates in the ongoing development of healthcare and emphasized the importance of their contribution to the wider healthcare landscape.

He said this while addressing the first annual convocation 2024 of Khyber Medical University (KMU)-IMS and Kohat Institute of Dental Sciences (KIDS).

He said that the role of medical and dental graduates play in shaping the wider health landscape is commendable.

Chief Guest Governor Haji Ghulam Ali congratulated the graduates of Medical and Dental

Colleges and Gold Medalists. He appreciated their unwavering dedication to medical knowledge and their outstanding efforts.

Highlighting the importance of the convocation, the Governor thanked VC KMU Prof. Dr. Ziaul Haq, Principals and all the attendees for making the event a memorable gathering for teachers, proud graduates, parents and distinguished guests.

During the ceremony, Governor Haji Ghulam Ali announced that 286 students were awarded MBBS and BDS degrees.

He termed awarding gold medals to 200 students as a great honor for colleges, KMU, and their parents.

The Governor

praised the important role of KIMS, KIDS, and KMU in shaping the future healthcare workforce.

He said that these graduates will use their tireless efforts and ability to raise the quality of healthcare not only in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa but in the whole of Pakistan.

Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, in his welcome speech, described the participation of Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other distinguished guests in this convocation ceremony as wonderful.

He also deeply acknowledged the continuous support from the parents and congratulated the all medical and dental graduates.



PESHAWAR: A delegation of 30-members tribal elites of merged District Mhmand meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali.

Feroze Shah pays homage to Kargil Hero Captain Karnel Sher Shaheed

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: In a solemn and respectful visit, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, the Caretaker Minister of Information and Public Relations of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, undertook a detailed visit to the shrine of the revered Kargil war hero, Captain Karnel Sher Khan Shaheed Nishan-e-Haider.

During the visit, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel laid wreaths, recited Fatiha, and documented his reflections in a commemorative book. Expressing gratitude for

the opportunity, he conveyed, "It is my good fortune to recite Fatiha at the martyr's grave. Such brave individuals bring immense joy to the lives of nations."

The caretaker minister also extended condolences to the family of Captain Karnel Sher Khan, emphasizing the profound significance of the sacrifices made by the martyrs.

He remarked, "Captain Colonel Sher Khan Shaheed is the pride of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the only son who courageously earned Nishan Haider.

CM orders early completion of Children Hospital upgrade

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Children Hospital and reviewed progress on the upgradation work of the medical facility.

On the direction of the CM, upgradation work in the emergency, main corridor and other wards of the hospital has been expedited. The chief minister inspected the main corridor, reception counter and checked the quality of work and directed to ensure quality along with undertaking preventive measures in the electricity and air conditioning wiring work. He directed to

complete the wiring work in three days and early completion of tiles installation work in the main corridor.

Mohsin Naqvi lauded the performance of the Secretary Communication & Works, Secretary Health and their team on undertaking swift work in the main corridor. He met with the labourers working late night and commended them for working with diligence. He issued directions for early completion of the ongoing upgradation work.

Mohsin Naqvi said that task for the provision of better facilities in more than 100 hospitals of Punjab would be

completed by 31st January. "The whole team is striving day and night to accomplish this task. The fruit of hard work with a noble intention would definitely be passed on to the people," he maintained.

The Secretary C&W and Secretary Health gave a briefing about the work being done under the upgradation project. He said that installation of tiles and finishing work had been started.

Provincial Minister for Information Amir Mir, Secretary C&W, Secretary Health, Commissioner Lahore, Deputy Commissioner and officials concerned were also present.

Secretary of Relief pays visit to Rescue 1122 office in Abbottabad

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Relief, Rehabilitation, and Settlement Department KPK Anayatullah Waseem paid a visit to the Rescue 1122 district office in Abbottabad on Sunday. District Emergency Officer Arif Khatak gave a detailed overview of the emergency services offered and the collaborative efforts with various departments to ensure effective service delivery.

In discussions with the Rescue 1122 personnel, Secretary Relief Anayatullah Waseem highlighted that Rescue 1122 stands as a formidable force equipped with modern technology and a dedicated team.

The organization is committed to providing equal and efficient emergency services to the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Rescue personnel, possessing extensive practical knowledge, strive to deliver

timely and optimal assistance during emergencies.

Anayatullah Waseem emphasized the active involvement of Rescue 1122 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the leadership of Director General Rescue 1122, Dr. Khateer Ahmad.

The organization operates tirelessly, ensuring the provision of services around the clock in a manner that reflects a well-organized daily routine.

Moreover, Rescue 1122 collaborates with security forces, district administration, and other institutions to implement a comprehensive policy aimed at delivering services to the public.

The administration of Rescue 1122 is also taking diverse measures to enhance the welfare and well-being of its personnel, ensuring a promising and secure future for them.

29 cases referred to drug court

FAISALABAD (APP): The District Quality Control Board (DQCB) has referred cases of 29 clinics to drug courts for further proceedings.

During its meeting held with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh in the chair, the Board heard 56 cases and issued warnings to owners of 18 medical clinics whereas cases of nine clinics were adjourned to the next meeting as record of these cases was not completed yet.

5 children hospitalized for suffocation

FAISALABAD (APP): Five children of a family were hospitalized due to suffocation in the Samundri police limits.

A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a family had lighted a fire in their house to beat the cold but the fire caused suffocation.

Breaking shackles of poverty through welfare projects

PESHAWAR (APP): In a foggy morning, Zakir Khan, an impoverished fruit seller, starts his rickshaw journey from his mud house in the outskirts of the provincial metropolitan to Peshawar's fruit market hoping to purchase apples, guavas, bananas, and other fruits on reasonable rate to support his eight-member family.

Assisted by his son Asadullah Khan, the 65-year-old vendor, donned in traditional attire - woolen Chadar and Chitrali cap, starts his day with Fajr prayer and after having breakfast, rushes to Chamkani fruit market in Peshawar expecting to get fresh fruits through open auction on reasonable prices and anticipates a profitable sale in the local

market.

After purchasing fruits, he unloads his fruit-packed rickshaw at his hand cart in Pabbi fruits market at Nowshera after covering 15-kilometer distance from Peshawar and working till night. "I have been associated with the painstaking fruit seller business since my childhood and recently my two sons Arifullah Khan and Asadullah Khan have started assisting me to sell all stock before night," he said.

"It is an extremely challenging business and sometimes he suffers financial losses in case fruits are not sold on time," he said, adding that due to exorbitant prices of the fruits many customers just ask about prices of different fruits and return

empty handed.

"Last year, citrus of Khanpur tehsil of Haripur and Manki Sharif of Nowshera districts was available at Rs180 per dozen that has now jumped to Rs 250 per dozen in local market with start of new year while apples per kg were sold at Rs 200 per last year against Rs 250 this year making difficult to continue this hard earned business due to discouraging response of consumers and poverty," he said.

"I have come to purchase fruits for birthday party of my granddaughter, but the prices were sky-high this morning and will come again at night hoping for reduction of prices of apple, guava and banana to celebrate the event with

great pomp and show," said Riazul Haq, a retired teacher while talking to APP at Pabbi fruit market.

Complaining about soaring prices of fruits and vegetables with the start of the new year in the local market, he said that district administration failed to regularly check fruits prices at market and take strict action against price hikers and hoarders.

"Poverty is the mother of all social ills including illiteracy, corruption, street crimes, drugs addiction and unemployment besides creating socio-economic imbalances in the society," said Professor Dr Muhammad Naem, former Chairman Economics Department, University of Peshawar.

He said that

thousands of youth were being graduated by the public and private sectors universities every year and could not find suitable jobs due to our outdated education system and lack of coordination between government departments, educational institutions and industries in terms of jobs creations, as result, increase in poverty ratio in recent years.

Professor Naem while quoting a World Bank report said that the poverty ratio has raised from 34.21 per cent in 2022 to 39.41 per cent in 2023, pushing 12.5 million people below poverty line. He said that Pakistan labour market was yet to recover fully from the 2022 devastated floods, COVID-19 pandemic and shabby economic situation.

International News

On Orthodox Christmas Putin vows to back soldiers who 'defend' Russia

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin vowed on the eve of Orthodox Christmas to back soldiers who "with arms in hands" defend Russia's interests, ordering his government greater support of those who fight and calling on his people to be merciful and just.

"Many of our men, our courageous, heroic guys, Russian warriors, even now, on this holiday, defend the interests of our country with arms in hand," Putin said at a late Saturday meeting with

families of Russian soldiers who have died in Ukraine.

Russia lunched its full-scale invasion on Ukraine in February 2022, in what Kyiv and its Western allies said was an unprovoked imperialist land grab.

Nearly two years later, the war, which has killed thousands and displaced millions, has shifted to increased air strikes at each other's territories as both sides have struggled to make significant gains along the frontline.

State television footage showed the Russian leader attending with a small group of families of soldiers killed an intimate midnight service, known as the Divine Liturgy, later on Saturday at a chapel at his residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow.

There was no call from Putin this year for a ceasefire in Ukraine to coincide with the holiday, which many Orthodox Christians celebrate on Jan. 6-7 - as was the case a year ago.



Russia's President Vladimir Putin attends the Orthodox Christmas liturgy at a cathedral on the territory of the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow, Russia.

Gaza has simply become 'uninhabitable', says UN

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israel bombed southern Gaza on Saturday as the UN warned that the besieged Palestinian territory has been rendered "uninhabitable" by three months of war.

Top Western diplomats were in the region as part of a fresh push to boost the flow of aid into Gaza and address mounting fears of a wider conflict.

The Egyptian Red Cr-c-scent on Friday said 1,200 water purifiers, 100 oxygen cylinders, one oxygen generator, 1,000 solar-powered items, 24 power

generators and 418 medical supplies had been blocked by Israel from reaching Gaza since the conflict started. The fighting, triggered by the October 7 attacks on southern Israel by Hamas, has sent tensions soaring across the region, and shows no signs of abating with the conflict entering its fourth month.

Civilians in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip have borne the brunt of the violence as the scale of the destruction has triggered mass displacement and a deepening humanitarian crisis.

Jordanian army says it killed 5 drug smugglers in clashes on the Syrian border

Monitoring Desk
AMMAN: The Jordanian army said Saturday that it killed five drug and weapon smugglers and arrested 15 in a day of clashes with armed groups of smugglers attempting to cross into Jordan from Syria. The army statement said the clashes broke out before dawn between Jordanian border guards and armed organizations "that practice smuggling and rely on systematic infiltration operations."

US regulator orders inspections on some Boeing 737 MAX 9 planes after panel blows out mid-flight

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US air safety regulator said on Saturday that it had grounded some versions of Boeing's 737 Max 9 jets pending inspections, causing dozens of flight cancellations a day after a panel blew out of one of the planes over the western US state of Oregon.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) "is requiring immediate inspections of certain Boeing 737 Max 9 planes before they can return to flight", the agency said on X.

It added that around 171 aircraft worldwide would be affected, with each inspection taking four to eight hours.

Alaska and United Airlines fly the largest number of Max 9 planes, while Turkish Airlines has a smaller fleet.

As of Sunday, all three airlines had grounded their jets for inspection.

Boeing has so far de-

livered about 218 of the 737 Max planes worldwide, the company told AFP.

US-based Alaska Airlines grounded all 65 of its Boeing 737 Max 9 jets on Friday after a flight carrying 171 passengers and six crew was forced to make an emergency landing.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said a sealed-over door panel had opened and come off mid-flight.

Alaska Flight 1282 had departed from Portland International Airport and was still gaining altitude when the cabin crew reported a "pressurisation issue", according to the FAA.

The plane quickly returned to Portland and there were no major injuries.

Images posted on social media showed a side panel of the plane blown out, with emergency oxygen masks hanging from the ceiling.



An elderly woman puts ballot paper inside a ballot box after casting her vote in the morning during the 12th general election in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Global food prices eased 10pc in 2023, says Food and Agriculture Organisation

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Global food prices experienced a notable decline in 2023, further easing concerns over food inflation worldwide.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported on Friday that its Food Price Index (FFPI) concluded the year over 10 per cent below its December 2022 level.

The index fell to 118.5, the lowest since February 2021, down 1.5pc from November and 10.1pc from December 2022. The overall in-

dex for 2023 was 13.7pc lower than the average value for 2022. Notably, the international sugar price index was the only one higher over the year, despite experiencing a significant drop of 16.6pc in December due to increased sugar production in Brazil and reduced use of sugarcane for ethanol production in India.

The Cereal Price Index saw a 1.5pc increase in December 2023, driven by rising prices of wheat, maize, rice, and barley, primarily due to shipment limitations faced by exporters.

Americans divided on US role in Mideast crisis

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A recent Gallup survey shows that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is rapidly becoming unpopular in the United States, so is the war he has unleashed on Palestinian civilians in Gaza.

The survey's assessment of Americans' views on Netanyahu, who faces charges of fraud, bribery, and breach of trust are getting increasingly unpopular. Netanyahu's unfavourable rating of 47 per cent surpasses his favorable rating of 33pc, marking a significant reversal in trend since 2019.

Republicans continue to view him more favorably (55pc), while Democrats (14pc) and independents (30pc) show lower favourability.

The poll, conducted from Dec 1 to Dec 20, 2023, provides insights into public opinions on the level of US engagement, approval of Israel's military actions, and perceptions of support for Israel and the Palestinians.

North Korea's Kim Jong Un sends sympathy messages to Iran, Japan: KCNA

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un sent messages of sympathy to the leaders of Iran and Japan on Saturday, state media said, after the countries were hit with deadly bombings and earthquake respectively this week.

Two bomb blasts in Iran claimed by Islamic State killed nearly 100 people on Wednesday, while the death toll in Japan's devastating earthquake on New

Year's Day is nearing 100.

Kim expressed condolences to Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida with the hope that affected areas would be restored to stability soon, according to state media KCNA.

He also expressed sympathy to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and reaffirmed North Korea's stand in "opposing all sorts of terrorism", KCNA said.

EU Council President Michel says to step down in July

Monitoring Desk
BRUSSELS: Belgian politician Charles Michel has announced he will step down as European Council president after running in the European Parliament elections set for June. The surprise move will heighten speculation about who will be the next EU leader as negotiations begin for a new round of top jobs in November. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen of Germany, who like Michel was appointed to her post in 2019,

Italian foreign minister calls for formation of EU army

Monitoring Desk
ROME: The European Union should form its own combined army that could play a role in peacekeeping and preventing conflict, Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said.

In an interview with Italian newspaper La Stampa, Tajani said that closer European cooperation on defence was a priority for the Forza Italia party that he leads.

"If we want to be peacekeepers in the world, we need a European military. And this is a fundamental precondition to be able to have an effective European foreign policy," he said in an interview published on Sunday.

"In a world with powerful players like the United States, China, India, Russia - with crises from the Middle East to

the Indo-Pacific - Italian, German, French or Slovenian citizens can only be protected by something that already exists, namely the European Union," he added.

European defence cooperation has risen up the political agenda since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine almost two years ago.

However, efforts have been more focused on NATO expansion, with EU nation Finland joining the alliance last year and Sweden also on track to become a member.

Tajani also said the 27-nation EU should streamline its leadership and have a single presidency, rather than the current structure of a European Council president and a European Commission president.

Govt committed to provide all fundamental rights to trans community: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (INP): Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussain Mullick here on Sunday said that the government was committed to provide all fundamental rights to the transgender community across the country at gross root level.

She was addressing at the concluding ceremony at a workshop on wellness and communication development for non-binary and transgender persons, organized by AQ Khan Foundation. She said that over 0.3 million transgenders were registered with concerned government department and the government was planning to a mass campaign with the name of

"Dukhtar" rest of the country for the protection, jobs and skilled programs for trans community.

Transgender persons are guaranteed all fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of Pakistan. In addition, the Act recognises transgender persons' right to property inheritance, voting, education, employment, healthcare, assembly, access to public places and to hold public office, she said.

Mushaal underlined that trans community was playing its vital role for the development of the country and they were contributing at every level with their sincere efforts and hard work.

She said that the government would constitute

committees at district level for collecting the proper data of transgenders, to provide the education, health care, jobs, social security, social media trainings, vocational trainings and other opportunities to make them a productive and economically independent citizens.

"We all are human beings and have the rights to do every positive act for the development and promotion of the society and state", she added.

The SAPM also appreciated the best efforts of Dareecha organization for the development of trans community. Ms Jameela, Sheela, Usman and Aksh were also address and highlighted the problems of trans community.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Human Rights and Women Empowerment, Mushaal Hussain Mullick, addressing the workshop on "Wellness and Communication Development for non-binary and transgender individuals".

Verdict reserved on Imran Khan's plea for Mianwali nomination papers

Monitoring Desk
RAWALPINDI: An election tribunal on Sunday reserved its verdict on incarcerated Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan's plea challenging the rejection of his nomination papers from his home city, Mianwali in Punjab — a constituency from which he won previous elections.

The former ruling party had moved to election tribunals to contest the rejection of the nomination papers he filed from Mianwali's NA-89 constituency ahead of the February 8 general elections.

Justice Chaudhry Abdul Aziz heard the appeal filed by the deposed prime minister — who was removed from power via a parliamentary vote in April 2022 — against the returning officer's (RO) decision to reject his nomination papers.

Barrister Ali Zafar, Mianwali in Punjab — a constituency from which he won previous elections. Umair Niazi and Lamia Niazi appeared before the tribunal while representing the PTI founder.

Meanwhile, the Director General (DG) Law Arshad Malik along with a legal team attended the hearing on behalf of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), whereas, Assistant Attorney General Tayyab Bilal gave arguments.

SC 9-member larger bench to hear Zulfiqar Bhutto presidential reference on Monday

ISLAMABAD (Online): A 9-member larger bench headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isha will hear the Zulfiqar Bhutto presidential reference on January 8 (today).

Notices have also been issued to the parties for this.

On the other hand, last week, the People's Party submitted a 108-page written response to the presidential reference against the death sentence of former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in the Supreme Court.

Lawyer Farooq H. Naik submitted to the Supreme Court on behalf of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.



ISLAMABAD: Additional Chief Secretary, Gilgit-Baltistan Captain Retd Mushaq Ahmed addressing a press conference at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.

Tribunal clears way for Maryam Nawaz to contest election from NA-119

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice-President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz on Sunday got a green signal to contest elections from NA-119 in Lahore.

Election Appellate Tribunal disposed of an appeal against the acceptance of Maryam Nawaz's nomination papers from NA-119.

It may be mentioned here that Maryam Nawaz has submitted nomination papers from six constituencies of National and Punjab Assemblies.

Maryam Nawaz's nomination papers had been submitted from NA-119

and NA-120 in Lahore, and from PP-80, PP-159, PP-160, and PP-165.

Also on Saturday, the Election Tribunals had given go-ahead to top members of the Sharif family including Maryam Nawaz to contest general elections from different constituencies.

The Election Tribunal in Lahore had dismissed appeal filed against approval of Nawaz Sharif's nomination papers.

The Election Appellate Tribunal upheld the returning officer's decision to accept Nawaz Sharif's nomination papers from NA-130 Lahore.

Qureshi set to move LHC against election tribunal's decision

Monitoring Desk
MULTAN: Former foreign minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has reportedly decided to challenge the election tribunal's ruling which barred him from contesting elections from Multan, in the Lahore High Court, it is learned.

After being deemed ineligible to participate in elections from his ancestral city Multan, Qureshi has opted to appeal against the decision of the Multan election tribunal by moving to the Lahore High Court.

Details indicate that Qureshi's legal team has initiated preparations to contest the tribunal's decision before a larger bench of the high court.

460,881 illegal Afghans returned to their homeland

ISLAMABAD (INP): Repatriation of illegal foreign nationals including Afghans returned to their homeland is continuing in a dignified and safe manner on Sunday.

As per details, 693 illegal Afghan nationals returned to their country during past 24 hours, taking the total number of returned immigrants to 460,881.

23 vehicles were used to transport 200 men, 164 women and 329 children to Afghanistan.

The apex committee of the National Action Plan (NAP) in a meeting on October 3, chaired by Caretaker PM Anwarul Haq Kakar gave a deadline to all foreign nationals living illegally in the country until October 31 to leave voluntarily or face deportation.

Father kills daughter for marriage refusal in Dadu

DADU (INP): In a shocking incident, a father shot dead his 16-year-old daughter for refusing to marry in Sindh's Dadu district, police said on Sunday.

According to details, the man opened fire at his daughter Firdous Rafiqan and later shot himself after girl refused to marry on his will.

The incident was reported in the limits of Bhand Mari Police Station in Dadu's Mehar.

The victim's brother, Wassim, said his father wanted to marry his sister and on refusal, she was shot dead.

More flights cancelled as fog persists

KARACHI (INP): Air operations remained disrupted on Sunday due to the prevalence of heavy fog in various parts of the country.

A total of 22 flights more were cancelled. In first seven days of 2024 year, a total of 250 flights were cancelled and more than 200 domestic and international flights were delayed.

Meanwhile, the met department has forecast cold and dry spell for most parts of the country and the hilly areas will experience intense cold on Sunday.

According to the Met Office, the ongoing spell will continue in most parts of the country.

The weather in the upper districts of KP, north-western districts of Balochistan, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan will be cloudy and cold.

PPP-P not in the race for 19 national, provincial constituencies from its stronghold Sindh

LAHORE (INP): Sindh is a PPP-Parliamentarian stronghold. No doubt about it. But things are perhaps changing as the PPP-P hasn't been able to field candidates on several national and provincial constituencies in the province, including Karachi and interior Sindh.

There are 61 National Assembly seats allotted to Sindh, however, the PPP has is aspiring for 53 of these, meaning there are no party candidates in the remaining eight.

Similarly, the PPP-Parliamentarian [PPP-P] has issued party tickets to 119 candidates for the 130 Sindh Assembly seats, leaving the 11 open to the adversaries.

The PPP-P always presents itself as the sole representative of women in Pakistan. But the ground realities show otherwise in a province where honour killings and forced marriages are rampant.

Hence, there are only two women PPP-P nominees vying for the National Assembly from entire Sindh — Nafisa Shah, who is the daughter former chief minister Qaim Ali Shah, is one of the contestants in NA-202 Khairpur I and Shazia Atta Mari who filed her nomination papers for NA-209 Sanghar I.

Details of the National Assembly constituencies where the PPP isn't in the race is given below.

Feb 8 polls to bring prosperity, says Shehbaz

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the Feb 8 elections will bring prosperity in Pakistan.

He expressed these views during meetings with several party leaders and workers on Sunday.

The preparations for general elections and other party issues were discussed in the meetings. Shehbaz Sharif lauded the workers for their commitment and loyalty with the party. Those who called on Shehbaz Sharif include party stalwart Khawaja Saad Rafique, Kh Salman Rafique, Mian Javed Latif, Mian Atta Maneka, Malik Afzal Khokhar, Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha, Sardar Irfan Dogar, Malik Saif Khokhar and others.

APHC expresses concern over continued illegal detention of Hurriyat leaders

ISLAMABAD (APP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has expressed serious concern over the continued illegal detention of thousands of Kashmiris, including Hurriyat leaders and activists languishing in different jails in India Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman, in a statement issued in Srinagar, said that the freedom-loving people of Kashmir had been facing the worst type of Indian state terrorism for demanding their inalienable right to self-determination.

He said that despite the Indian suppression and repression, the exemplary steadfastness displayed by the people of Kashmir had jolted Indian military arrogance and utterly bulldozed its nefarious designs to break the will of the Kashmiri people.

The spokesman, denouncing the confiscation of properties and houses of the people of Kashmir by the Indian Bharatiya Janata Party regime with the help of Indian armed forces, urged the United Nations Human Rights Council and other rights organizations to visit IIOJK and monitor the worst situation where people were being imprisoned in their houses, having no right to talk and walk freely in the territory.

He also urged the international community to support the Kashmiris' just struggle for the right to self-determination, help stop the massive human rights abuses perpetrated by Indian forces in IIOJK.



MOHENJO DARO: A tourist delegation from Germany are visiting and expressed keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro.

Sindhi writers are playing vital role in betterment of society: Muhammad Ahmed Shah

Independent Report
KARACHI: Caretaker provincial minister for information, minority affairs, social protection and president arts council muhammad ahmad shah attended the sindhi association of north america (sana) sindh conference 2024, held at arts council of pakistan karachi. Addressing the conference, he said, "we have gathered here to talk about human rights. Sindhi writers are also playing their role in the betterment of our society, and many important topics will be discussed in the conference. He said that the youth can play their role in taking the country forward, sindhi youth also seem to be very active and they keep a close eye on everything. Muhammad ahmad shah said that the younger generation can take the country forward by being associated with the it sector. Youth can work to connect people not only in pakistan but all over the world, today's youth are the role model of pakistan. He further said that he worked with different communities for literature, you will learn a lot from this conference. The caretaker provincial information minister said the sana conference would play vital role in the development of sindh. Provincial information minister muhammad ahmad shah further said that we cannot depend on the private sector.

Karachi industrialists need security not advisory: Altaf Shakoor

KARACHI (INP): Pasban Democratic Party (PDP) Chairman Altaf Shakoor here Sunday said that the industrialists of megacity Karachi need security and not advisory.

He said the industry is the backbone of the national economy, but the industrialists face crime, extortion and kidnapping for ransom. They need hundred percent safety from these threats.

He said the industrial areas of Karachi need peace and security. They need better infrastructure and a smooth supply of gas, water and electricity. He said the performance of police should be improved to end the thefts, robberies and kidnappings. He said without introducing reforms in our policing system we

can't give peace to our city. He demanded that recruitment in police from top to bottom should only be made on merit, without any political influence. He said in fact all government vacancies should be filled through the public service commission.

He said for giving a push to the economy it is necessary to boost industry, but it can't be done without peace and security. He said crime is on the rise in Karachi and the traders and industrialists are either closing down their businesses and industries or shifting them to other cities. He said no one is ready to invest in Karachi and if this situation continued the megacity would face a serious economic crisis and huge unemployment.



KARACHI: People facing difficulties due to accumulated sewerage water main road of New Karachi area as needs to attention for concern authority in Provincial Capital.

Appeal to parents from Pakistan Pediatric Association

KARACHI (INP): The January Nationwide (NID) Polio vaccination campaign is scheduled to be conducted from January 8th - 12th January 2024 in all provinces and regions of the country.

However, in three districts of South KP, namely Lakki Marwat, South Waziristan Upper, and South Waziristan Lower, the campaign is scheduled for January 15 - 19.

A total of 44.35 million under five children will be targeted for vaccination during campaign

including 22.6 million children in Punjab, 10.3 million children in Sindh, 7.5 million children in KP, 2.6 million children in Balochistan, 0.72 million children in AJK, 0.28 million children in GB and 0.42 million children in Islamabad.

It will be a 3 days campaign + 2 days catchup in general (in mobile team areas) and 5 days campaign + 2 days catch up in areas implementing the Community Based Vaccination and Special Mobile Team approach.



KARACHI: Residents of Manghopir are holding protest demonstration against high handedness of affluent people, at Karachi press club.

PPP extends olive branch to JUI-F ahead of elections 2024

KARACHI (INP): In significant political development, the PPP and JUI-F have formally engaged in discussions for seat adjustments in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Sources privy to the development told ARY News that PPP wants JUI-F to withdraws its candidate against Bilawal Bhutto on Larkana seat as Maulana Rashid Soomro enjoys good vote bank in Larkana constituency against PPP.

The two parties have also formed committees to finalise matter pertaining to seat adjustment.

Earlier, Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited the residence of Jamiat Ulema e Islam Sindh General Secretary Maulana Rashid Soomro and condoled with him over the death of his daughter.

He also expressed his condolences to Jamiat Ulema e Islam Larkana Emir Maulana Nasir Soomro.

On Friday, Jamiat Ulema e Islam-Fazl finalised seat adjustment with Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Manshehra district.

JUIF party supporters hold flags during a party rally in this image released on October 26, 2023. — Facebook/Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan

JUIF party supporters hold flags during a party rally in this image released on October 26, 2023. — Facebook/Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan.

Forget election for next five years if not held on Feb 08: Gabol

HYDERABAD (INP): In a recent statement, senior leader of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Nabil Gabol, issued a stern warning, stating that if the elections scheduled for February 8 are not held, the country can forget about elections for the next five years.

Gabol, while expressing worry about the safety of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, underscored that such life threats were common to all political figures.

707 Students appear in KU Evening Entry Test 2024

KARACHI (APP): As many as 707 candidates appeared in the entry test for the BS first year of the BSCS and BSSE (Computer Science) Evening Program 2024 at the University of Karachi on Sunday.

The KU has received 855 online forms for the available 220 seats in both BS programs of the department of computer science. A 100-minute-long entry test was started at 11 a.m., and 20 examination classrooms were established in the political science and computer science departments.

According to the in-

Nawaz Sharif should vie for presidency not premiership: Mushahid

ISLAMABAD (INP): Senator Mushahid Hussain has advised Nawaz Sharif to become president instead of vying for the prime minister's office.

Chairman Senate standing committee for defence Mushahid Hussain was talking to a private television channel in an exclusive interview.

"In view of ground realities and knowing Mian Nawaz Sharif, I will tell him to shun the premiership. It will be better for the country and the democracy that he becomes the head of state," Mushahid said.

"I don't want him to be expelled from office fourth time. Now it is a hybrid-plus system, not conducive for Nawaz Sharif, as three among six prime ministers have been jailed," he added.

"Nawaz Sharif is a king, he makes strong decisions like nuclear and CPEC," Senator Mushahid said.

"He has become prime minister of the country thrice, and mother of all deals is that no big distance would remain between the 'elite' and the 'street' any long. This distance should be ended, and I think it will happen," Senator Syed said.

Mushahid Hussain Syed said that the Army Chief's US visit was very pleasant, "see those that were more favourites, have now become favourites to a lesser extent".



KARACHI: People are filling their water cans from public tap as they facing shortage of drinking water in their area, at Malir area in Karachi.