

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 05. No. 356 Jamadi-us-Sani 23, 1445 AH Saturday January 06, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Senate adopts resolution calling to postpone elections

Non-binding resolution moved by Senator Dilawar Khan highlights concerns over security situation, cold weather; Caretaker government, PML-N oppose the move; Political parties slam resolution

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Senate on Friday adopted a resolution calling for the postponement of general elections scheduled for February 8 in order to facilitate the effective participation of people across the country in the election process in view of security and harsh weather conditions. The resolution, moved by independent Senator Dilawar Khan, was passed by the House with a majority vote. However, there was low attendance.

Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi and Senator Afnan Ullah Khan of the Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) opposed the resolution. Senator Dilawar, while presenting the resolution, urged the chair to postpone the agenda for taking up the matter of serious concern. He read out the resolution, which maintained that the Constitution of Pakistan "upholds the right to vote for every citizen of Pakistan."

The resolution read: "The constitutional duty assigned to the Election Commission of Pakistan to conduct free and fair elections is contingent upon inclusivity and ensuring the participation of all regions and people. "The voter

turnout in colder areas remains notably high during moderate weather conditions; January and February are recognized as the coldest months in a majority of the areas of Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"Various groups and political parties have expressed significant reservations regarding anticipated difficulties in ensuring the participation of residents in cold areas during the election process." It noted that the recent incidents, including the foiled attempts on the lives of Jamiaat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and former MNA Mohsin Dawar,



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on Inclusive Education for Persons with Disabilities.

President for inclusive education for children with disabilities in schools

Independent Report

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for providing equal educational opportunities to all children, regardless of physical ability or socio-economic background, by promoting inclusive education in the country. He urged private schools and welfare organizations to support the governments in making education accessible for all children, especially Children with Disabilities (CWDs).

The President expressed these views during

a meeting with the representatives of private schools and schools run by NGOs in Karachi, at Governor House, today. Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, Sindh's Minister for Education and Literacy, Mrs Rana Hussain, Secretary Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD), Secretary School Education & Literacy Department (SELD), and representatives of schools in Karachi at-

tended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, the President emphasised the need for the development and implementation of an inclusive curriculum that accommodated diverse learning styles and catered to the needs of students with different abilities (SWDs). He said that educational institutions should be made physically accessible for SWDs by ensuring the availability of ramps, elevators, and other necessary facilities.

PPP doesn't believe in hate & anarchy: Bilawal

Asks woman workers to propagate party manifesto, 10 promises

LAHORE (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday expressed his wholehearted desire to serve the common Pakistanis and announced a range of initiatives that his party plans to undertake once in power.

During an address in Lahore's NA-127 constituency, Bilawal voiced his joy at celebrating the birth anniversary of party founder Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in Lahore.

He emphasised that ZA Bhutto had represented the common people of Pakistan, and reiterated that there was only one political party truly representing the nation.

Bilawal repeated his commitment to doubling salaries once in power, noting the current inadequacy of wages for survival in Pakistan. He promised to provide free electricity up to 300 units to the general populace.

Encouraging those present to become his ambassadors, Bilawal urged them to visit every household and inform people about his ten promises. He underscored the significance of the financial assistance provided through the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), asserting that the PPP was the sole party responsible for its initiation.

Bilawal pledged to provide Benazir cards to labourers, Kisan cards to farmers, and Jawan cards to the youth, directly addressing the prevailing issues of poverty, inflation and unemployment.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Permanent Representative in UN Mr. Munir Akram calls on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

PM asks envoys to identify avenues for Pakistan's int'l economic collaborations

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday asked Pakistan's envoys in the United States and the United Kingdom to identify the new avenues for Pakistan's economic collaborations at international level.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Pakistan's Ambassador in the US Masood Khan and Ambassador in the UK Dr Muhammad Faisal, instructed them to constantly highlight the Kashmir cause as well as Pakistan's stance on Palestine issue.

The envoys briefed the prime minister about the performance of their respective missions and also got the prime minister's instructions on Pakistan's foreign policy.

The prime minister also directed the envoys to hold road shows for attract-



LARKANA: Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari along with her maternal aunt, Sanam Bhutto showering flowers at the grave of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the eve of his 96th birth anniversary at Garhi Khuda Bakhsh Bhutto.

British High Commissioner meets Mayor Karachi

KARACHI (APP): British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and Deputy High Commissioner Evan Harris met Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab at his office on Friday.

The Mayor Karachi welcomed the British HC and expressed the hope that mutual cooperation between the two countries in various fields will expand further. Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that Britain is a long-standing friend of Pakistan and cooperation between Pakistan and Britain in various fields has always continued.

He said that Britain can help Pakistan in various fields and told the British High Commissioner about the history of Karachi, its culture and de-



LAHORE: Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari cutting the 96th birthday cake of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto at NA 127 Kot Lakhpat Pindi Rajputan.

Education development is vital for poverty alleviation in Pak: Education Minister

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi on Friday education development is vital for poverty alleviation in Pakistan that is the reason we are paying attention to education and skill development.

He was addressing as chief guest on the occasion of 20th Annual Convocation-2023 of SZABIST University - Karachi Campus held at Expo Center here.

Madad Ali Sindhi said that educated and skilled manpower are imperative for growth of any society. He said that the large proportion of the popula-

tion get education from the public sector education system, therefore there is a need to impart training to teachers of the public sector schools.

The Federal Education Minister called upon the political parties to give priority to education development in the next five years.

He recalled that the Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Institute of Science and Technology (SZABIST) was founded by former prime minister, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in 1995 and now SZABIST is established as a well-reputed education institute.



KARACHI: Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, and Social Welfare and Arts Council President, Muhammad Ahmed Shah along with Muhammad Mubeen Jumani, Caretaker Sindh Minister for Local Government, Housing and Town Planning addressing a press conference, at Civic Center in Karachi.

Minister Hazir Ho No officer or minister should hesitate to face media: Shah

All the officials are answerable to the public

Independent Report

KARACHI: The caretaker provincial minister for information, minority affairs, social protection and President Arts Council of Pakistan Muhammad Ahmed Shah has emphasized that no officer or minister should hesitate to face the media, as all officials are answerable to the public. He stated that the performance of other departments will be presented to the public, one by one.

Muhammad Ahmad Shah added that, as per the

of guidelines of Caretaker Chief Minister Sindh Justice Retired Maqbool Baqar, a series of briefings titled "Minister Hazir Ho" are being held to inform the general public about the performance and initiative of provincial Government departments by its in charge Minister himself through media. "This marks the sixth such briefing in the series. He further said the performance of SBCA has improved and the credit goes to Mr. Jumani.

Most patients are complaining of high fever, cough, body pains, runny nose, headaches and sore throat due to the outbreak of influenza virus.

Health experts have advised citizens to use facemasks and wash their hands to avoid contraction of the influenza virus as it is easily transmissible from an infected person to others.

No directives from PM, cabinet for delay in elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi on Friday said that there was no directives from the Prime Minister or the federal cabinet for delay in general elections.

Talking to the media outside the Parliament House, the minister said that he did not get a chance to give arguments in the resolution on the postponement of the elections in the upper house.

According to Article 218(3) of the Constitution, it was the power of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), to conduct elections, give a date or change the date for elections, he said. "We cannot interfere in the affairs of a constitutional body," Murtaza Solangi said.

Acknowledging the problems mentioned in the resolution were the real problems, he said adding that these problems had existed before in the history of Pakistan's Parliamentary politics and elections.

Influenza virus cases increasing in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): An alarming increase in the cases of respiratory infections including influenza and pneumonia is being reported in Karachi on Friday.

According to Dr Halar Shaikh, general physician at Jinnah Hospital Karachi, the cases of influenza virus among people, especially among elderly citizens are increasing.

About 70pc cases of influenza are being reported in Karachi, while 30pc others are of various types of Pneumonia, Dr Halar said.

Most patients are complaining of high fever, cough, body pains, runny nose, headaches and sore throat due to the outbreak of influenza virus.

Health experts have advised citizens to use facemasks and wash their hands to avoid contraction of the influenza virus as it is easily transmissible from an infected person to others.

CJP says Will not hear individual cases related to elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa has said that we will not hear individual cases related to elections.

He expressed these remarks while hearing a set of 15 petitions to determine the period of disqualification under Article 62(1)(f), especially in light of the inconsistencies found between two constitutional provisions — one prescribing a lifetime ban while the other proposing a five-year disqualification period. The court will decide whether the 2018 Samiullah Baloch case, or the 2023 amendments to the Elections Act

2017 that reduced the ineligibility period to five years, will prevail.

The case of interpretation of Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution is being heard by a 7-member bench of the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa, and comprising Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Aminuddin Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali.

Proceedings are being broadcast live on SC's website and YouTube channel.

President approves reconstitution of CCI

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr. Arif Alvi on Friday approved reconstitution of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) on the advice of the prime minister. The president gave the approval under Article 153 of the Constitution. The CCI would be headed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan while the chief ministers of the four provinces and three federal ministers would be members of the council.

The three federal cabinet members include Federal Minister of Finance and Revenue, Minister of Privatization, and Minister of Law and Justice.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Madad Ali Sindhi, addressing the ceremony of Book Launching written by Dr. Afshan Malik Chairperson Sindh Social Welfare Trust at Sindh Police Museum and Headquarter.

Federal government, KE ink agreements to ensure energy security for Karachi

Our Correspondent

ISLAMABAD : The Federal government and Karachi Electric (KE) signed various agreements on Friday, aimed at ensuring energy security for Karachi.

The agreements were signed at the Energy Division through representative bodies in the presence of Muhammad Ali, Minister of Energy, Power and Petroleum, and Dr Shamshad Akhtar, Minister of Finance while

KE was represented by CEO, Moonis Alvi and CFO, Muhammad Aamir Ghaziani.

These agreements address longstanding disputes between the government and KE, particularly in formalizing and securing a stable power supply from the National Grid to Karachi, up to the interconnection capacity.

Resolving these legacy matters is crucial for both Karachi's energy security and the sustainability of KE

as a company. The agreements include the Tariff Differential Subsidy Agreement (TDA) and Power Purchase Agency Agreement (PPAA), marking a significant milestone for the power sector. The Interconnection Agreement (ICA) is expected to be signed after approval from NEPRA.

The firm supply of energy from the National Grid is anticipated to provide affordable power to KE customers.



ISLAMABAD: Power Division and K-Electric ink landmark agreements, in the presence of Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali, providing energy security for Karachi held at Power Division in Islamabad.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Gathering storm?

Any hopes that the new year would bring some stability to the Middle East have been quickly dashed. Instead, fears are growing that the volatile region's intertwined conflicts will explode into something much larger — and uglier.

The first week of 2024 has been marked by two pivotal acts of violence linked to the ongoing Israeli slaughter in Gaza, as well as the larger confrontation between Iran and the US-Israeli combine. On Wednesday, the Iranian city of Kerman witnessed two bomb blasts near the tomb of Iranian general Qassem Soleimani.

Over 80 mourners who had gathered to mark the anniversary of Soleimani's assassination by the US in 2020 were killed in the Kerman atrocity. The bombings are amongst the highest mass-casualty attacks Iran has suffered in many years.

Only a day earlier, top Hamas leader Saleh Al Arouri, along with other colleagues, was assassinated in a missile strike in Beirut's Dahiyeh neighbourhood — a stronghold of Iran-backed Hezbollah.

It is unclear who is responsible for the Kerman blasts; terrorists belonging to the self-styled Islamic State group have struck Iranian targets in the past, while Israel has also carried out assassination campaigns against Iranian military and government figures.

Amongst these was the murder of a top Pasdaran commander in Syria late last year. With regard to the Arouri assassination, there is little doubt that Tel Aviv is responsible.

Israel usually maintains an air of ambiguity about its murderous foreign operations. But in the current circumstances, it would be playing with fire by trying to provoke its adversaries in Iran, Lebanon and elsewhere in the region into striking back.

If the Iranians or Hezbollah were to react to these attacks, Israel could play the victim card and draw its American protectors deeper into the Middle East quagmire.

The resultant conflict would shake the international order to its core. So far, both Tehran and Hezbollah have marked their responses with restraint. But it will be hard for them to maintain this posture if Israel continues with its provocative behaviour. Though logic would dictate that de-confliction mechanisms be deployed immediately to bring down the temperature, the reality is that a larger conflict may not be a matter of 'if' but 'when'.

Of course, if Israel were to stop its genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip, things could be controlled. But the extremists at the helm in Tel Aviv do not appear to be interested in this option, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has a vested interest in prolonging the conflict to escape domestic censure.

Washington's policymakers must explain if they are okay with their Israeli allies setting the Middle East on fire; there are no signs yet they would rather work towards reining in Tel Aviv.

Prudent living



Amin Valliani

Presently, many countries are going through a painful cost-of-living crisis. A few years ago, the world faced the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected millions across the globe. Many lost their lives, while others suffered huge economic losses. The global economy has not been able to fully recover from these shocks. In such a situation, families need to be vigilant, especially about how to surmount day-to-day economic challenges.

Economic stability is essential for any family to survive and prosper. Therefore, every family should try and improve its economic status while abiding by the ethics of Islam such as hard work, saving, sharing, and gratitude to Allah, etc.

The economy depends on earthly resources. Islam says: "He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth..." (2:29). This means that there is no dearth of resources on earth. Allah is the Creator and continues to create resources for humanity. The science of economics helps guide us on how resources are to be used. Islam enjoins Muslims to practise moderation, instead of being miserly or becoming spendthrifts. Allah says: "And let not your hand be tied (like a miser) to your neck, nor stretch it forth to its utmost reach (like a spendthrift), so that you become blameworthy and in severe poverty (17:29)."

Similarly, Islam does not like wastage of resources (7:31) but emphasises prudent living, so that every individual can achieve the goal of quality life. But what is prudent living? It means making wise decisions based on principles and managing practical affairs in an effective manner. Studies have shown that people who lead prudent, conscientious lives can also end up having a longer, healthier life. In other words, families have to look carefully at the economic context which is around them.

Pakistan's economy is currently going through severe uncertainty, facing numerous economic hardships including inflation, high cost of day-to-day needs, severe climate shocks and insufficient public funds to finance development programmes. There will be no surprise if, in the coming months, we see more difficult situations causing further instability and uncertainty in many sectors. Therefore, every family must be prudent in daily spending because it is the right way to prepare for the future.

In crisis situations, people are always left to fend for themselves; very few helping hands come forth. Therefore, families should tighten their belts, strive to live within their means, contain their expenditure, enhance their income and minimise the use of utilities such as electricity, gas and water etc. Above all, families must be disciplined in financial matters.

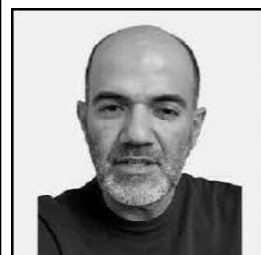
Leading a simple life is the need of the hour. However, it is difficult to define a simple life. It is subjective, for every individual has his or her own standard of simplicity. Simple life for a businessman is totally different from the one who works manually. But generally, simplicity is the habit of living frugally, wasting little, and being thoughtful with money. People who live a frugal lifestyle do not try to

'keep up with the Joneses' and get trapped into constantly buying more. This is a time of hard work, earning more and reducing the overall cost of living and trying utmost to save money for the future. In a nutshell, every middle-class family has to make plans for careful spending and stop buying that which is not needed. Families have to evaluate their lifestyle and be prudent while spending money on day-to-day commodities. For example, consuming more locally grown vegetables or locally manufactured goods, instead of costly imported items or processed food, can help save money while being good for one's health. In frugality, one has to avoid expenditure on fast food, drinking sugary beverages, smoking, betel nuts, paan and other harmful things.

The condition of those families who have only one breadwinner is more precarious, therefore, they have to be extra vigilant. Similarly, the middle- and working-class households should focus on their health as any health issue at the time of financial crisis can make the situation more cumbersome and unbearable. Moreover, in these difficult times, the government should improve health services at public facilities as lower middle-class people cannot afford costly private healthcare. Without health, no one can visualise a happy and prosperous life. In other words, life becomes extremely difficult if one's health deteriorates.

An unhealthy person remains dependent on others. His mind remains obsessed with his constant pain and agony. Therefore, each one of us needs to monitor and nourish our health throughout life. As the Holy Quran says: "O you who believe! Take care of your own selves" (5:105). -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab must decide



Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Election season is when the bourgeois political class makes all sorts of promises and at the same time says nothing at all. Take, for example, the complete neglect by mainstream politicians of Baloch protesters in Islamabad. They are sitting in front of the National Press Club in the federal capital.

Even if the bigwigs can't make time to visit, there's no obvious reason they cannot release a statement of support. Maryam Nawaz had no problem doing photo shoots with missing persons' loved ones a couple of years ago, but being anti-establishment was in fashion back then.

The ethnic peripheries — Baloch, Pakhtun, Sindhi, Seraiki, Gilgit-Baltistani, Kashmiri — have been treated this way for as long as one can remember. The establishment and most mainstream politicians evince much interest in the lands, scenic highlands, minerals, coastlines, and freshwater lakes of the peripheries, but couldn't care less for the teeming millions that live there. In fact, the more politically conscious you are and demand access to your own resources, you are considered a threat to development, security, and the state itself.

What about the Punjabi heartland? It is here that consent has been cultivated to sustain Pakistan's militarised structure of power. The PTI's rise and fall suggests that this consent has fractured to some extent at least. But our bourgeois political class, or at least those who are now

the incumbents, are not going out of their way to build on this.

For as far as the eye can see, most bourgeois politicians in Punjab offer to reproduce everyday life for the vast majority — a life mediated by state institutions like the thana, katcheri and patwari, and dictated by high-caste, moneyed classes who own land, business and peddle social influence. They all claim to be better than their competitor, while throwing in 'ideological' rhetoric about religion for good measure.

This is how elections are fought and won, especially one that is shaping up to be as rigged (primarily against the PTI) as this one. But social, economic and political life will change little after Feb 8. And the political and intellectual mainstream will acknowledge our deep, structural crises in knee-jerk fashion only when necessary.

The burning of the ethnic peripheries will represent the most acute form of these interrelated crises and will be forced into the public eye again and again, largely because of politically conscious youth that refuse to stay silent about their plight. But what can we expect from the majority of this country's young people who reside in the Punjabi heartland?

It is true that to be young and from the Punjab means that one has better chances at social mobility than if one is young and hails from virtually any other ethnic-national community in Pakistan. But class war plays out in Punjab too, where millions of children are out of school, workers and peasants face dispossession and live in semi-serfdom, and all sorts of health problems play out alongside environmental despoliation.

Other than the very well-off, most Punjabi youth — many who have been taken by the PTI and

Imran Khan — continue to suffer the cumulative economic effects of the pandemic and IMF-imposed austerity, as well as the hyper-financialised and consumption-based economic model that prevails in Pakistan today.

In short, that there is simply not enough gainful and dignified employment available for the number of young people seeking jobs, let alone housing, health, education and recreation. The most coveted option is to leave the country by hook or crook, but even that is an option for a very small percentage of the population.

I believe that a growing number of young people in Punjab do understand that the establishment-centric system offers them only hateful rhetoric, and in fact, subjects many to military-led dispossession. It is also noteworthy that more are speaking about deep injustices in faraway places like Palestine as well as the ethnic peripheries in Pakistan.

The next step is to understand that political commitment is not about following a Pied Piper to the ends of the earth. It is about coming to terms with the causes (rather than the symptoms) of the predicament one faces, and then having the wisdom to make common cause with all others concerned with building a different future.

The future for Punjabi youth — especially those lower down the class ladder — is not as bleak as some others but it certainly is not great. The young Baloch women protesting peacefully in Islamabad for their loved ones have said they seek to make common cause with the ordinary people of Punjab. Our collective future will be shaped by how Punjab's increasingly politically conscious young people respond in the due course of time. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Ample stock of fertilizer available to meet domestic demand: Murtaza Solangi

ISLAMABAD (INP): Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs, Murtaza Solangi, Friday informed the Senate that there is an ample stock of fertilizer available in the country to meet the domestic demand.

In response to a calling attention notice moved by Zeeshan Khanzada regarding the problems being faced by the farmers due to the

shortage of urea fertilizer and its soaring rates, he expressed hope that, due to steps taken by the caretaker government in the coming days, there would be a further noticeable reduction in urea prices in the country.

The minister said that urea prices, which had previously exceeded Rs. 5,000 per bag, have now decreased to Rs. 4,451 per bag due to the government's

interventions. Emphasizing the significance of agriculture in the country, Murtaza Solangi highlighted that approximately one-fourth of Pakistan's GDP is attributed to agriculture, with 40% of the labor force linked to this vital sector.

Regarding the steps taken by the government, he informed that around 220,000 tons of urea had been recently imported by the government.



ISLAMABAD : A Chinese business delegation led by Zhang Yang, Chairman, Chang Jiang Industrial Company (Pakistan) Co., Ltd, and Director Chongqing Federation of Industry and Commerce visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and explored the possibilities of joint ventures and investment in Pakistan. The representatives of Li Ting International China and Yihai Culture Communication Co., Ltd of China were also in the delegation.

Emirates celebrates 25years of success serving Islamabad and Lahore

ISLAMABAD (APP): Emirates, the world's largest international airline, proudly commemorates its 25th anniversary of operations at Islamabad and Lahore airports. Since its inaugural flights to both cities in January 1999, Emirates has played a crucial role in connecting Islamabad and Lahore to the world via Dubai, while fostering economic growth and cultural exchange.

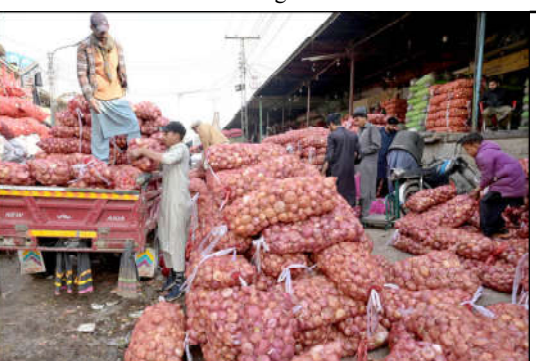
movement and significantly contributed to the development of the country and region through tourism and trade. The airline's strong presence in Islamabad and Lahore underscores its position as a leading and reliable carrier which is committed to excellence and innovation in the aviation sector.

In its pivotal role, Emirates ensured seamless journeys for millions of passengers on its routes



Over the past quarter of a century, Emirates has been a reliable partner facilitating seamless passenger and cargo

from the key points in Pakistan, with the airline operating a robust schedule of ten weekly flights from each of the two cities.



ISLAMABAD: Workers loading onion on delivery rickshaw at vegetable market.

Business facilitation centres being set up in five big cities: Minister

LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Trade and Industry SM Taveer has said that business facilitation centres are being established in five big cities of Punjab after Lahore.

He was presiding over a meeting of the Punjab Small Industries Corporation here on Friday, which reviewed performance of the business facilitation centre. Secretary for Industry and Trade Eshaan Bhutta briefed the minister about progress on business facilitation centres in Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan, Gujranwala and Rawalpindi. The meeting was told that the business facilitation centre had changed the investment culture in Punjab and now no-objection certificates

(NOCs) were being issued in 10 to 15 days for setting up new factory. Till now, 161 NOCs had been issued from the business facilitation centre, while 86 more were in process.

SM Taveer said that during the current month, caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi would inaugurate five more business facilitation centres. He said that business facilitation centre was a revolutionary step to facilitate the business community and added that officers of 20 departments of federal and provincial governments were performing their duties at the business facilitation centre. He said 106 different NOCs were being provided in the business facilitation centre under one roof.

Gold rates decline by Rs1,200

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.1,200 and was sold at Rs.217,000 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs.218,200 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.1,028 to Rs.186,043 from Rs.187,071 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.170,539 from Rs.171,482, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs.2,660 and 2,280.52 respectively.

PSX loses 124 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Friday, losing 124.26, a negative change of 0.19 percent, closing at 64,514.90 points against 64,639.16 points the previous trading day.

A total of 949,559,318 shares valuing Rs.19.355 billion were traded during the day as compared to 548,989,972 shares valuing Rs. 15.395 billion the last day.

Karim urges significant cut in policy interest rate to help to revive economy

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, Chairman Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Capital Office, Islamabad said that the record high interest rate has made it very difficult for the private sector to get credit from banks for the expansion of existing businesses and make new investments due to which the business activities are suffering badly. He further said that rising interest rates make your business debt more expensive which means

more cash required to cover interest costs. Kareem Aziz Malik urged a significant cut



in the policy interest rate to help to revive the economy.

He said that current 22% interest rate has severely damaged the business environment without achieving its intended objective of controlling inflation.

Trade deficit shrinks by 34.29%, export grow by 5.17% in 1st half

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's merchandise trade deficit contracted by 34.29 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year compared to the corresponding period of last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The Trade deficit from July-December (2023-24) was recorded at \$11.148 billion as against the deficit of \$16.965 billion in July-December

(2022-23), showing negative growth of 34.29 per cent. During the period under review, the exports increased by 5.17 per cent to \$14.981 billion compared to the exports of \$14.244 billion during the corresponding period of last year, according to the latest PBS data.

On the other hand, the imports narrowed by 16.28 per cent and were recorded at \$26.129 billion compared to \$31.209 billion last year.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, lanthe, FSM and Bolan scheduled to load/offload Bitumen, LPG and Gas oil, berthed at Multi-Purpose Terminal, Engro Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Thursday.

Meanwhile two more ships, Athenian and AnanyaNaree also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours load/unload Containers and Rice respectively. A total of eleven ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours.

CNG closed till Jan 31 to ensure uninterrupted gas supply

PESHAWAR (APP): The Deputy Commissioner Peshawar Afaq Wazir on Friday imposed a ban on the operation of CNG pumps till January 31 to ensure uninterrupted gas supply to domestic consumers. A notification issued here said that the DC has imposed section 144 and ordered the closure of CNG pumps within the premises of district Peshawar with immediate effect, adding that anyone to be found violating this order would proceed under section 188 P.P.C.

Chinese companies increase investment in Pakistan for copper production

ISLAMABAD (Online): Chinese companies in collaboration with their local partners in Pakistan have increased investment for copper production in the recent years.

Copper and articles thereof have seen an increase in export to China from Pakistan as well. In the first eleven months of 2023 increased by 9%, crossed one billion dollars mark, sources from Commerce Ministry told China Economic Net.

Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor at the Pakistan Embassy in Beijing, told CEN that the Pakistani government is keen to boost copper and associated product

exports to China. He also mentioned that Pakistan's exports of copper to China have increased recently, and he anticipated that the value of these exports will rise as a result of refined copper products.

"Pakistan has been actively seeking foreign investments, particularly from big Chinese companies, to bring in value addition and produce more valuable products for the global market.

Having Chinese companies invest in Pakistan would not only provide a boost to the country's economy but also open doors for advanced technologies and expertise.

Faculty members of Afghan varsities call on Governor, discuss promotion of education

PESHAWAR (APP): Higher Education Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali has urged the faculty members of Afghan universities to focus on intellectual orientation of students and divert their attention towards research and modern technology.

He was talking to a delegation of faculty members of Afghan universities, which called on him at the Governor House here on Friday. The delegation was comprised of 38 faculty members of Afghan universities who are getting training in IM Sciences Hayatabad with the financial assistance of

Haji Ghulam Ali said that Afghan students should be provided education and technology to remove backwardness and induce development. He also highlighted significance of higher education institutions for development of a nation.

On the occasion, governor was told that one month capacity building course is underway in IM Sciences for Afghan professors, assistant professors and lecturers. He was informed that various courses would be arranged for Afghan professionals in second phase.

He said that capacity building of Afghan youth would further strengthen peace and led the country on course of progress and prosperity.

He also stressed upon faculty members to provide students with knowledge and education enabling them to tap potential of Afghan natural resources.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali in a group photo with delegation of faculty members of Afghanistan Universities during their visit to Peshawar.

CM inaugurates Special Initiative Police Stations of Cantt & Saddar Baroni

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI: Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi here on Friday inaugurated the Special Initiative Police Stations of Cantt and Saddar Baroni.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khurram Ali, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta, City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

Talking to the media, the chief minister said that police stations across Punjab were being renovated under the Special Initiative Police Station program.

Two days ago, 36 police stations of 36 districts were inaugurated, he said adding, today, in the second phase, 36 more police stations were inaugurated.

The objective of the initiative is to provide the best service delivery in the best environment to the citizens, the CM added.

Mohsin Naqvi appreciated the RPO, CPO Rawalpindi and their team for the excellent work under Special Initiative Police Stations of Cantt and Saddar Baroni.

He directed the authorities to complete the Safe City project and CPO office in one month. The CM also announced to provide Rs 180 million for the completion of the CPO office project.

He instructed to complete the Safe City Project and CPO Office Rawalpindi by January 30.

Punjab Governor says: Book exhibition is good effort to develop habit of reading books among people

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today inaugurated the 4th Education Expo and Book Fair organized by Idara e Nazria Pakistan at Aiwan Quaid-e-Azam, Lahore.

Speaking to the media after inaugurating the exhibition, Punjab Governor, Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that this book exhibition is a good effort to develop the habit of reading books among people.

Governor Punjab lauded the efforts of officials of Idara e Nazria Pakistan for organizing the

education expo. He said that the young generation is the valuable asset of the country, adding that it is important to provide them with proper guidance in the field of education.

He said that the purpose of education is to impart knowledge to the youth and make them life-long learner. He said that it is very important to inculcate the habit of reading books among the students. He said that in this age of technology, e-books are also available, but there is no substitute for the satisfaction of reading books traditionally.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi cutting a ribbon of Police Station (Saddar) under Police Station up gradation project.

Govt of Sindh 'first time initiative to provide 55 electric bikes' to female vaccinators

ISLAMABAD (APP): Almost 55 female vaccinators are set to benefit from the historic initiative of the Sindh government to use 'Electric bikes' which will not only align with environmental sustainability goals but also enable them to easily move during the national vaccination drives and ensure that vaccines reach their intended destinations promptly.

This strategic decision aims to overcome logistical challenges, ensuring timely and widespread vaccination coverage throughout the province, said a report aired by a

private news channel. While acknowledging the importance of empowering these vaccinators women in their roles, the government of Sindh would provide training sessions to recipients of the electric bikes, said a female vaccinator who hailed the groundbreaking step of the government.

The provision of specific uniforms for these women will also foster a sense of identity but also contribute to a more professional and organized approach to vaccine distribution, said another lady health worker.

ANF recovers over 243 kg drugs in six operations

Independent Report
RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its crackdown against drug traffickers conducted six operations across the country and managed to recover over 243 kg drugs and arrested six accused including a foreigner, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that 220 kg hashish was recovered from a trailer near Indus Chowrangi, Karachi area and an accused was arrested. 10 kg hashish was recovered from the bag of an accused rounded up near Zero Point, Gwadar. 8 kg hashish and 4 kg ice were recovered in two operations near Chongli No. 26 Islamabad while two accused were arrested. In fifth operation, 1 kg hashish was recovered near Shershah Toll Plaza Multan and an accused was arrested.

In sixth operation, a capsule containing 17 grams cocaine was recovered from the stomach of an accused, a Nigerian national arrested from Lahore. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are underway.

Dr. Riaz inaugurates new year's maiden anti-polio drive

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Advisor to the caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Health, Dr. Riaz Anwar inaugurated the current year's first polio vaccination campaign by administering drops to two children at Police Services Hospital, Civil Secretariat here Friday, with a target of making 2024 as 'year of complete eradication' of the crippling disease from the country.

Officials of Health Department including Deputy Coordinator EOC,

Muhammad Zeeshan, Sarfaraz Khan from WHO and Shadab Younas from UNICEF Communication were present on the occasion.

Talking to newsmen, Dr. Riaz apprised that the polio drive would be carried out in the whole of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in two phases. The first phase will commence on January 8 to 14, next wherein polio drops will be administered in all the districts except Lalki Marwat, Upper and Lower Orakzai district.

Two killed in jeep-motorcycle collision in Kahota

Independent Report
KAHOTA (APP): Two people lost their lives when a jeep collided with a motorcycle near Kanil, Kahota on Friday here.

According to Police, The incident occurred in the jurisdiction of Kahota police station, two lives were tragically lost as a jeep and a motorcycle collided.

The collision occurred in the Kanil area, sending shock waves through the community and prompting swift action from the local police.



LAHORE: Activists of Youth Forum for Kashmir holds placards and shouting slogans during protest against the Indian oppression, to mark the Self-Determination Day, in Provincial Capital.

Punjab health minister announces crackdown on harmful beauty products

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Punjab Minister for Primary and Secondary Health, Dr. Jamal Nasir has announced a crackdown on harmful beauty creams and cosmetics. Operations will be conducted against unqualified individuals administering beauty injections or performing any kind of surgery. Joint teams from the Punjab Healthcare Commission (PHC) and the Drug Control Directorate are being formed for this purpose. The Drug Control will determine the registration status of

beauty creams and cosmetics, while experts from the PHC will assess clinical practices.

This information was shared by the minister in a press conference held here on Friday. He stated that non-standard creams claiming to lighten skin are causing diseases, adding that the use of substandard beauty creams is causing severe damage to the skin of hundreds of individuals. He said that some cosmetics contain dangerous amounts of lead, toxins, and other harmful chemicals, leading to life-threatening diseases such as liver and kidney cancer.

International News

Russia used missiles from North Korea to strike Ukraine: White House

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Russia recently used short-range ballistic missiles (SRBMs) sourced from North Korea to conduct multiple strikes against Ukraine, the White House said on Thursday, citing newly declassified intelligence.

National security spokesperson John Kirby told reporters the United States will raise the development with the United Nations Security Council.

Kirby called North Korea's arms transfer to Russia a "significant and concerning escalation" and said the United States

would impose additional sanctions against those facilitating the arms deals.

Both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied conducting any arms deals, but vowed last year to deepen military relations.

The use of the missiles drew condemnation from Britain, as well as South Korea, which had reported in November that North Korea may have supplied SRBMs to Russia as part of a larger arms deal that also included anti-tank and anti-air missiles, artillery and mortar shells, and rifles.

"Our information indicates that the Democratic

People's Republic of Korea recently provided Russia with ballistic missile launchers and several ballistic missiles," said Kirby, using the official name of North Korea.

On Dec. 30, he said, "Russian forces launched at least one of these North Korean ballistic missiles into Ukraine," adding that it appeared to have landed in open field. Then on Tuesday Russia launched "multiple" North Korean missiles as part of a broader wave of heavy air strikes, Kirby said. Washington was still assessing the impact of those missiles.



Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi speaks during a funeral ceremony in Kerman, Iran.

Red Sea attacks are not isolated incidents, UNSC told

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: During a UN Security Council briefing on Wednesday afternoon, some member states emphasised the need to address attacks on ships in the Red Sea.

Some states also called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, urging caution to prevent an escalation in tensions.

US ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative, Christopher Lu, however, called on member states to "speak with one voice and demand that the Houthis stop their attacks".

He said the threat to

navigation rights and freedom in the Red Sea was a global challenge that necessitated "a global response".

He accused Iran of providing financial and material support to the Houthis and called it "the root of the problem".

The US diplomat called on the Council to speak with one voice and demand that the Houthis stop their attacks on ships.

"We call for a global response from this Council to this global challenge, and we are ready to discuss the situation further with other member states," he said.

Macron pays tribute to Delors

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron praised the late Jacques Delors at a service of national tribute on Friday for giving European Union integration some of its greatest leaps forward during his time as European Commission president.

Delors, an ardent advocate of post-war European integration, died on Dec. 27 at the age of 98. He served as president of the European Commission, the EU executive, for three terms - longer than any other holder of the office - from January 1985 until the end of 1994.

9 children among 14 killed in Israeli attack on Gaza camp

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: Israeli shelling killed 14 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip's south, packed with people who had fled attacks in other parts of the besieged enclave, on Thursday. The dead included nine children, an official said.

All the 14 Palestinians were killed in a strike at Al Mawasi camp, to the west of Khan Yunis.

Gaza residents said Israeli planes and tanks bombed three refugee camps in the centre of the shattered enclave, prompting many civilians to head south.

Israeli shells had landed near tents erected in the area by displaced people, they said.

Footage on Palestinian media showed several bod-

ies wrapped in blankets inside a hospital morgue in Khan Yunis.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said its headquarters in Khan Yunis was hit, killing one person and wounding others.

The Israeli military reported several clashes in Khan Yunis, where it has said previously that it is trying to capture "Hamas leaders hiding there".

In its daily briefing, it said Israeli warplanes killed three Hamas members who had tried to detonate explosives next to ground troops, and Israeli soldiers killed two more. Five Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air strike on a car in Al Nusseirat refugee camp on Wednesday, health officials said.



A general view of a tent camp sheltering displaced Palestinians, who fled their homes due to Israeli strikes, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Islamist group Hamas, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip.

Armed men kidnapped 32 migrants in Mexico for extortion, president says

Monitoring Desk
MONTERREY: The armed men who kidnapped 32 migrants in northern Mexico over the weekend aimed to extort money from them and their families in the United States, Mexico's president said on Thursday, one day after the migrants were released from captivity.

He said that the migrants, who were found on Wednesday, were abandoned by their kidnapers in a shopping center in the northern city of Reynosa in the state

of Tamaulipas.

"Because there was a strong deployment (from Mexican authorities), they decided to free them, safe and sound," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said in his morning press conference.

The case has highlighted the risks faced by the hundreds of thousands of migrants who cross through Mexico en route to the US border each year, who are targets of extortion and kidnapping by powerful criminal groups.

India sends warship after hijacking of Liberian-flagged vessel in Arabian Sea

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: An Indian Navy warship was moving towards a hijacked Liberian-flagged vessel in the Arabian Sea, and aircraft were closely monitoring the situation, the Indian navy said on Friday.

At least 15 Indian crew members were on board the MV Lila Norfolk, which was hijacked near Somalia's coast and the navy received information about it on Thursday evening, Indian news agency ANI, in which Reuters has a minority stake, reported earlier, citing military officials.

The ship sent a message on the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations portal saying five to six unknown armed personnel had boarded on the evening of Jan 4, the Indian navy statement said.

An Indian warship, the INS Chennai, was diverted and deployed to assist the vessel, the statement said, adding that a naval aircraft overflew the hijacked vessel.

Sister of North Korean leader derides South Korea's president but praises his predecessor

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has derided South Korea's conservative president for being "foolishly brave" but called his liberal predecessor "very smart" — rhetoric likely meant to help stoke domestic divisions in South Korea.

Her statement Tuesday came as a response to South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's New Year's Day address, in which he said he would bolster South Korea's military capability

and enhance its alliance with the United States to cope with North Korea's evolving nuclear threats.

Since taking office in 2022, Yoon has made such comments numerous times. Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, used Yoon's latest remarks as an opportunity to fire off derisive rhetoric against him.

"This person ... has persistently called for 'peace by force' and got hell-bent on the beefing up of the extended deterrence and the South Korea-U.S.

India's foreign minister signs a deal to increase imports of electricity from Nepal

Monitoring Desk
KATHMANDU: India's foreign minister concluded a two-day trip to Nepal on Friday, during which he signed an agreement to increase the amount of electricity India imports from its neighbor. "I assure you we are committed to extending our steadfast support and work with same earnestness to further realize the potential of the relationship for the full benefit of the people of the two countries."

Houthi launch sea drone to attack ships hours after US, allies issue final warning

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: An armed unmanned surface vessel launched from Houthi-controlled Yemen got within a "couple of miles" of U.S. Navy and commercial vessels in the Red Sea before detonating on Thursday, just hours after the White House and a host of partner nations issued a final warning to the Iran-backed militia group to cease the attacks or face potential military action.

Vice Admiral Brad Cooper, the head of U.S. Navy operations in the Middle East, said it was the first time the Houthi had used an unmanned surface vessel, or USV, since their harassment of commercial ships in the Red Sea began after the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war. They have, however, used them in years past.

Fabian Hinz, a missile expert and research fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said the

USV's are a key part of the Houthi maritime arsenal and were used during previous battles against the Saudi coalition forces that intervened in Yemen's war. They have regularly been used as suicide drone boats that explode upon impact.

Most of the Houthi's USVs are likely assembled in Yemen but often fitted with components made in Iran, such as computerized guidance systems, Hinz said.

At the United Nations, U.S. deputy ambassador Christopher Lu said at an emergency Security Council meeting on Wednesday that Iran has supplied the Houthi with money and advanced weapons systems, including drones, land attack cruise missiles and ballistic missiles. He said Iran also has been deeply involved in planning the Houthi's attacks on commercial vessels in the Red Sea.

Dr. Nadeem urges society to play role in polio eradication, importance of family planning

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan Friday emphasized the necessity of raising awareness about family planning-related myths among the rural population and called upon every section of society to play its due role in the complete eradication of poliovirus. Talking to a private news channel, he said that every government was playing its top-level commitment and thoroughly engaged in various national polio drives where it is immunizing children under five in the country against the paralyzing poliovirus.

"Every child has the right to live life free from the threat of disability caused by polio and we will not rest until all children are safe from it," Dr Jan said.

Minister also urged that scholars, educators, media, and civil society should create more awareness for importance of family planning, adding, government needs the help of Islamic scholars to convince the public.

Replying to a query about the upcoming 'Global Health Security Summit in Islamabad' which will officially be inaugurated from January 10th to 11th said that

moot would serve as a great opportunity of bringing together international and national experts to share expertise and knowledge for a safer world. He said that around 70 countries' experts and intellectuals will participate in the summit, adding, over fifty other ambassadors from various countries will also be part of this moot.

He said first time Pakistan is hosting an international health conference to address pandemic-related issues which would present a positive image of Pakistan and prove that the country could play a key role in the health sector.

He said national and international experts are taking part in the summit, adding, summit will discuss global pandemic planning responses and its facility for low-and middle-income countries to prevent disproportionate utilization of vaccines between the first and third world. He said effective measures were also being taken to increase the capacity of health sector.

To another question, minister said that there is a great deal that Pakistan can contribute to the knowledge and experience of the global community in the fight against pandemics.



MULTAN: Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman, Asif Ali Zardari addresses during a ceremony on the occasion of 96th birth anniversary of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held at Peoples Secretariat in Multan.



COLOMBO: Secretary Defence Lt Gen (Retired) Hamood Uz Zaman Khan calls on President of Sri Lanka, Ranil Wickremesinghe at Presidential Secretariat Sri Lanka.

Madad Ali Sindh launches book 'Police Samaji Idara'

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindh launched a book titled 'Police Samaji Idara (Police a Social Department)' at Sindh Police Museum here on Friday.

DIGP South Karachi Asad Raza and Author of the book Dr. Afshan Malik were also present on the occasion.

While addressing the book launching ceremony, the Caretaker Federal Minister Madad Ali Sindh said that the Police department was truly a social institution. He said, "We have an

old history of Police,' and it (Police) had a background in the Sindh province.

Sindh said that the law and order situation was different in British era in Sindh. He said that the crime rate had increased in the province and it could only be brought down by putting the system right.

The Caretaker Minister said, 'A Station House Officer (SHO) can improve law and order situation if he wished so.'

He also emphasized that the government had to provide cops of the Police with good salaries to improve their performance.

Siddiqui emphasizes strengthening political movement

HYDERABAD (APP): The Convener of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui said the party will never put at stake its political movement for the sake of any other objective.

Addressing the party's workers at Puqqa Qila ground here on Friday, Siddiqui said the party would promote only the industrious workers to the next ranks so that they could strengthen the movement. He maintained that MQM-P was a party which always fought for

the truth and for what was right and that it was not a party of the people who indulged in infighting.

"All the decisions would be taken keeping in view the principles," he underlined.

Siddiqui expressed his disapproval of the tendency to idolize the political leaders and said all workers were equal except that some of them had been given certain responsibilities in the party.

The member Rabita Committee Abdul Rauf Ajmeri and other leaders also expressed their views.

Cake cutting ceremony on ZA Bhutto anniversary held

MULTAN (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentary president, Asif Ali Zardari, cut the cake on the birth anniversary of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto here on Friday.

Asif Zardari, along with PPP Vice Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, PPP Southern Punjab Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood cut the cake.

A good number of activists participated in the ceremony and chanted slogans on the occasion.

PPP leaders Mir Changiz Khan Jamali, Hina Rabbani Khar,

Khawaja Rizwan, Mahmood Hayat Tocci, Natasha Doltana, Abdul Qadir Shaheen, and others were also present.

Gilani reaffirms PPP commitment to ZAB mission

MULTAN (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is committed to the mission of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (ZAB) who steered the country out of crises through his leadership qualities, vision and forward thinking.

Former Prime Minister, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani in a statement on ZA Bhutto's 96th birth anniversary here on Friday said that his services rendered for the country and the nation will always be remembered.

PPP Senior Vice Chairman noted that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a visionary, forward-thinking leader who empathised with the people's pain and with his leadership abilities, showcased a positive identity for the country internationally.



LARKANA: Commissioner Larkana Division, Abdul Waheed Shaikh presiding over a divisional meeting of Divisional Task Force on Eradication Polio, at his office in Larkana.

Karachi admin to use SMS service for mass awareness against polio

KARACHI (APP): Karachi administration on Friday decided to start a communication campaign for parents and community through SMS service to impart awareness of the importance and benefits of vaccination and make the next round of anti-polio campaign a success.

The decision was taken in a meeting held at the Emergency Operation Center with Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Salim Rajput in the chair while Coordinator Emergency Operations Center Irshad Sodhar, Chief of UNICEF Polio Team in Pakistan Melissa Corkum, representatives of the World Health Organization, UNICEF, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, senior police and health officials attended.

The meeting reviewed arrangements for the week-long anti-polio campaign starting from January 8 across the province while all Deputy Commissioners were briefed in detail about campaign arrangements and objectives in their respective districts through web link.

To make the campaign successful and eliminate the polio virus from Karachi the meeting decided to form special teams to carry out the campaign effectively in high-risk areas and deployment of police force to protect the polio vaccine.

It was also decided that the micro plan of anti-polio campaign would be updated every month and the deputy commissioners concerned would prepare the micro plan of their respective district in consultation with the health department officers especially the Union Council Medical Officers, polio teams and international partners.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Women Wing President, Faryal Talpur along with Saeed Ghani, Nisar Khuhro and others cutting a cake during the 96th birth anniversary ceremony of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto held at Zardari House in Karachi.

DRO/ DC Jamshoro chairs meeting to review preparations of general elections

HYDERABAD (APP): The District Returning Officer/Deputy Commissioner Jamshoro Ali Zulfikar Memon on Friday presided over a meeting in connection with preparations for general elections at DC office. The meeting was attended by SSP Jamshoro Muhammad Tariq Nawaz, District Election Commissioner Ahsan Altaf Abbasi, Additional Deputy Commissioner-I Nooruddin Hingorjo, Additional Deputy Commissioner II Asadullah Khoso, Chief Monitoring Officer Maqbool Ahmed, Executive Engineer Education Works Javed Ahmed Sheikh, all DROs, AROs and other concerned officers of the district.

The DRO/Deputy Commissioner took detailed information about the election preparations from all ROs of Jamshoro district, during the meeting and directed the executive engineer of education works to complete all the arrangements in the schools where the polling stations will be established.

He further said that water, electricity, washrooms and other basic facilities should be provided at every polling station so that voters do not face any inconvenience.

IGP visits police museum showcasing 1843 policing history

KARACHI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, toured the "Sindh Police Museum," located at the Police Headquarters District South. This unique establishment portrays the comprehensive evolution of policing from its inception in 1843 until the present day.

During the visit, IGP Riffat Mukhtar Raja received an extensive presentation from Saud Mirza, the former Inspector General and museum curator.

The museum's focal point is the emergence of Sindh Police in 1843 under

Sir Charles Napier's model, which revolutionized policing by dissociating it from the military and influencing similar formations across British India.

Initially comprising 2400 personnel and overseeing Karachi, Hyderabad, and Shikarpur districts, Sindh Police was structured into Mounted Police, Urban Police, and Rural Police divisions. The pivotal role of Captain Marston, serving as the Commandant for 21 years, solidified the force as one of the most dedicated and active in the subcontinent.



MUZAFFERABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir holds placards and shouting slogans during protest against the Indian oppression, to mark the Self-Determination Day, in City.

PPP Pays rich tribute to ZA Bhutto on his 96th birth anniversary

SUKKUR (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party on Friday observed 96th birth anniversary of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and founder of the party late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto across the northern Sindh and paid tribute to him for the services he had rendered for strengthening of democracy in the country.

Several cake-cutting ceremonies were held in different areas, including Sukkur, where party's central and provincial leaders paid homage to late ZA Bhutto. Addressing the event, Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah said that workers and leaders of

PPP would continue their efforts to take forward the philosophy, vision and mission of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Benazir Bhutto, adding that democracy was restored in the country due to the sacrifices of the party workers and leaders.

Divisional President Advocate Syed Muhammad Bachal Shah said that the party's founding leader brought all the stakeholders on the same page for the 1973 Constitution, allowed the trade unions and students unions and served the people irrespective of their political affiliations, area and religion.

DC launches polio awareness campaign in Mirpurkhas

MIRPURKHAS (APP): Deputy Commissioner Dr. Rasheed Masood Khan has taken a proactive step by launching an anti-polio awareness campaign in Mirpurkhas on Friday.

According to Deputy Commissioner Office, the DC officially launched the polio awareness campaign on January 8.

The five-day campaign, which aims to reach 3,48,465 children under the age of 5 through door-to-door efforts and remind parents of their crucial role in protecting their children from the deadly virus.

In his speech, Dr. Rasheed emphasized the importance of every individual's role in making the campaign a success and urged parents to cooperate with the health department's team that will be going door to door to administer the polio vaccine.

The inauguration held at St. Treza (American Hospital), was attended by various officials and community members who pledged their support towards this crucial cause.

PTI's Qureshi, Haleem Adil allowed to contest elections

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court's (SHC) election appellate tribunal on Friday accepted the appeals of PTI Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi, his son Zain and party provincial president Haleem Adil Sheikh against the rejection of their candidatures for the upcoming polls.

Qureshi and his son had contested the rejection of their nomination papers by the returning officers (ROs) from the NA-214 constituency (Tharparkar-I) while Sheikh had done the same for NA-238 (Karachi-East IV). The development comes just a day after Sheikh was granted bail by Malir judicial magistrate Saima Katto in a case related to the May 9 violence. A day before that, he was indicted in a case linked to rioting at city courts in Karachi. The appeal acceptance also follows that of PTI Central Vice President Firdous Shamim Naqvi, who had submitted his nomination papers from Karachi's NA-236.

The RO had objected to Qureshi and Zain's candidature for not providing details of their assets, source of income and paid taxes. Meanwhile, Sheikh's papers had been rejected for failing to "disclose details of clearance from the police/anti-corruption" and not providing the No Dues Certificate from the provincial assembly, as per the last hearing's order.

Mayor Sukkur pays tribute to ZA Bhutto

SUKKUR (APP): Sukkur Mayor, Barrister Arslan Sheikh has said that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gave the country 1973 Constitution, nuclear technology, empowered youth, established heavy industries, developed agriculture, framed labour laws and made poor peasants masters of their land through land reforms.

Talking to media here Friday, he said that the Great Bhutto fought for the rights of the downtrodden people and opened jobs for the jobless educated youth in different departments. A great politician who made Pakistan prosperous with revolutionary steps was assassinated under an international conspiracy on the pretext of a false case, he added.

PTI's Alamgir, Masroor Syal appeals rejected

KARACHI (INP): The Election Tribunal on Friday maintained the Returning Officer's (RO) decision, dismissing Alamgir Khan's appeal over rejected nomination papers.

The appeals, centered around the rejection of PTI candidate Alamgir Khan's nomination papers for NA-236, and Masroor Syal's candidacy for NA-230 and NA-231, were fervently debated in the Election Tribunal. However, the Tribunal ultimately sided with the RO, upholding the rejections.

Two day International conference starts at BNBWU Sukkur

SUKKUR (APP): The two-day conference on "Geopolitics from Below: Affect and Social Sciences," jointly organized by King's College London, UK, and Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University (BNBWU), Sukkur, started here on Friday at the Begum Nusrat Bhutto Women University Sukkur. The international-level event brought together academia, researchers, and experts to delve into pressing global issues from an interdisciplinary perspective.



KARACHI: Residents collect their belongings from the burnt debris of their houses after fire broke out shanties in a slum area of Teen Hatti area of the Provincial Capital.

Crackdown against water theft restores supply, revenue

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Rangers Sindh, in collaboration with Karachi Water Board, executed an extensive crackdown on water theft within the city, significantly reviving the water supply.

The joint press conference held at the Rangers headquarters by Pakistan Rangers Sindh Sector Commander Brigadier Kabir Ahmed and Managing Director (MD) Water Board highlighted the success of the operation, which led to a substantial restoration of water access to Karachi's residents.

The initiative, which officially commenced on September 17, 2023, targeted the water mafia's illegal activities, dismantling approximately 150 illegal hydrants and disconnecting 1200 illegal connections. These unauthorized operations were siphoning off an estimated 100 MGD (Million Gallons per Day) of water, causing significant financial losses for the Karachi Water Board and inflating prices for consumers.

During the operations, 177 individuals were apprehended, and 152 FIRs were filed against them, marking a significant dent in the illicit water network.