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PM vows befitting response in case of 2019-like aggression from India

Says no one should be delusional about Pakistan's response as it had an entire defence mechanism in place to protect its people; Reiterates government's resolve to respond to any threat, regardless of whether there were elections in the country or not.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday warned that with a renewed determination and defence capability, Pakistan would befittingly respond if India resorted to any 2019-like aggression, ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

"Pakistan will exactly do the same as it did in 2019. We will hit their planes. We will respond in the same

coin... Neither our bullets nor determination are old. Our bullets are new and our determination is quite renewed and fresh," the prime minister said in the podcast with a digital media channel. He said that no one should be delusional about Pakistan's response as it had an entire defence mechanism in place to protect its people.

He viewed that till the resolution of the Kashmir

dispute, the potential for conflict would continue to exist and anything could trigger any sort of exchange. Coming to the upcoming general elections in Pakistan, he said the threat of terrorism existed especially in the southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and certain areas of Balochistan, posing significant vulnerabilities to candidates and their campaigns. However, the situation had not reached a level

to question the legitimacy of the entire electoral process.

He reiterated the government's resolve to respond to any threat, regardless of whether there were elections in the country or not. Asked about the Senate resolution passed recently calling for the postponement of the elections, the prime minister said, "I do not see any legal implications as the Senate resolution is not mandatory."



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets a group of Envoys from African and Asian Countries.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar presides over a meeting regarding the restoration of Chowkundi Graveyard, held at CM House in Karachi.

KU, Sindh Food Authority joins hands to promote food safety, hygiene

Independent Report
KARACHI: The University of Karachi and Sindh Food Authority joined hands to create awareness of the importance of food safety and hygiene in the public. The SFA has established a four-tier ambassador program for the whole

Science and Technology Department Professor Dr. Rashida Ali as the Chief Ambassador of Food Safety and Hygiene to acknowledge her over 50 years of service in the field of food science.

Earlier, the Sindh caretaker Information Minister

they also invested in the education and research sectors. He mentioned that people associated with the food safety and hygiene project should not compromise on hygiene principles because it is a problem of our life and it affects the entire society. Ahmed Shah shared that our youth need to be revolutionized through pen and writing, although modern technology has made it possible for our youth to have easy access to everything unfortunately our youth lacks focus.

Ahmad Shah further said that he was surprised that the government of Pakistan has not yet awarded a civil award to Professor Dr. Rashida Ali who has dedicated her life to teaching and research.

He announced that there would be no further delay in conferring the award and she would get her due medal on August 14 this year.



province during a special ceremony held at the Jinnah Auditorium of the Dr. A.Q. Khan Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering, University of Karachi, on Tuesday. On this occasion, the SFA appointed the Founder Chairperson of the KU Food

Ahmed Shah said that when the United States was discovered, they built various universities in the states, and now they are ruling the entire world. We have witnessed the development of the West and one of the main reasons for their success is that

Business community take advantage of GSP+ by diversifying exports: EU

KARACHI (APP): Ambassador of European Union (EU) to Pakistan, Dr. Riina Kionka, Tuesday, advised business community of Karachi to broaden and diversify their exports to EU for taking maximum advantage of EU's GSP Plus scheme for Pakistan which has recently been rolled over for four more years up to 2027.

The EU envoy, while exchanging views at a meeting during her visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said that EU's GSP Plus for Pakistan has been rolled over without any changes to the rules framework so everything was going to stay the same up to 2027, said a statement issued here.

"GSP Plus has been extremely positive and useful in economic terms during the last 10 years as it helped in increasing Pakistan's exports to EU by 108 percent while EU imports also ascended by 40 percent since the start of

this program", she added. Riina Kionka termed GSP Plus as tremendously important for Pakistan's economy as it was beneficial not only for textile producers but also through the trickle-down effect of all those people who work in textile factories.

While identifying Gems and Jewelry, Tourism, Handicrafts and Auto Parts etc. as potential sectors under GSP Plus, the EU Envoy noted that 28 percent of Pakistan's exports come to European single market which was a good number but it could further be enhanced.

She informed that EU Delegation in Islamabad has been working to enhance Pakistan's exports through better utilization of GSP Plus, diversifying exports, investing in value-addition, using new technologies and IT solutions for better access to EU Market, besides bringing in the SMEs who are the backbone of any economy.



RAWALPINDI: A view of meeting of Trilateral Defence Collaboration between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye.

Zardari vows to provide Sui gas to Dera Bugti if elected

No one can hamper Balochistan to progress under PPP leadership: Sarfaraz Bugti

DERA BUGTI (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman and former

president Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday vowed that his party after coming to power would lay a pipeline in Dera Bugti to provide Sui gas to the local people. If voted to power, the PPP would also ensure the share of local people in gas fields and ample employment opportunities for them, he said while addressing a public meeting here through video link.

Zardari, who was unable to travel to Dera Bugti due to bad weather, promised that he would soon visit the area and meet the workers.

He said that he was well aware of the problems of the people of Dera Bugti in general and Balochistan in particular, and would take concrete steps to resolve them.

The provision of jobs and the establishment of a best hospital in Dera Bugti were part of the PPP's election, he reiterated.

Zardari appreciated Sarfaraz Bugti, who joined the PPP recently and the party workers for organizing such a successful gathering in the cold weather conditions.

PM underscores need to enhance trade, economic linkages with African countries

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday, while acknowledging that Pakistan and Africa had enjoyed excellent political relations over the years, stressed the need to enhance trade and economic linkages which were yet to realize their full potential.

He also highlighted the importance Pakistan attached to Africa and expressed the desire to strengthen ties with African countries, at the bilateral as well as regional level.

The prime minister met a group of resident envoys representing African countries as well as select Asian countries over lunch, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by the Ambassadors of Algeria and Sudan as well as High Commissioners of Bangladesh, Brunei, Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Africa. Other participants included the Charges d' Affaires of Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe.

The caretaker prime minister mentioned that the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade Conference was underway in Cairo, Egypt from January 9-11 where Pakistan was represented by a large business delegation led by the commerce minister.

Missing Persons Commission submits its report

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Missing Persons Commission has diligently complied with a court order, submitting detailed information to the Attorney General on Tuesday in Islamabad.

According to the report, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) recorded the highest number of missing persons cases, totaling 3,485. The disappearances from KP were attributed to factors such as mischief and drone attacks. Additionally, Balochistan reported 2,752 cases of enforced disappearance, with instances of individuals leaving the country without informing their families during war situations.

The report disclosed that 744 production orders were issued to locate missing persons, but only 52 were successfully implemented. Alarming, 692 production orders issued by the commission remained unimplemented by relevant authorities. Police and sensitive institutions submitted 182 requests to review production orders, while 503 unexecuted orders pertain to cases from KP.

From March 2011 to December 2023, 4,413 missing persons returned home, while 994 individuals remain detained in various centers, and 644 are incarcerated in different prisons across the country.

Review restoration of Chowkundi Graveyard CM orders bulldozing of illegal construction at Shahrah-e-Faisal

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar presiding over a follow-up meeting regarding the beautification of Shahrah-e-Faisal and restoration of Chowkundi Graveyard has directed the Sindh Building Control Authority to bulldoze the under-construction building opposite Star Gate which has been taken out near the main road.

The meeting was attended by Minister Sports & Antiquities Dr Junaid Shah, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Forest Najam Shah, Secretary Culture Khalid Chacher, Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput, Architects Ali Naqvi, Ms Komal Pervez, Consultant Dr Kaleem Lashari and others.

The CM pointed out that a building opposite Star Gate was being built but it has encroached on the service road. He directed DG SBCA to bulldoze the building and take strict action against the officers of the District East who have approved the layout plan or deliberately ignored illegal construction.

Commissioner Karachi Saleem Rajput told the CM that a wall had been erected in front of Falaknaz Apartments. The wall would be beautified with stone carving work and tiles showing the different cultural colours of Sindh.

A spot was identified at the corner of the road going to Jinnah Terminal for which the CM decided that the KMC would develop a park there. The CM also decided that the underpass

at Drigh Road would also be beautified with lights, paints and installation of different tiles.

The two flyovers located on the Shahrah-e-Faisal would also be beautified with tiles, paints and greenery. Sitting areas would be developed under the flyovers/bridges.

Mayor Murtaza Wahab told the CM that the green belt of Shahrah-e-Faisal was being beautified with a plantation of trees, seasonal flowers and beautiful grills would also be installed there. The CM said that he would personally visit Shahrah-e-Faisal to witness the progress of the beautification plan. He directed DG SBCA Ishaq Khuro to urgently move the builder of the Flaknaz Apartments to repair and renovate his buildings and treat their seepage.

The petitioner Hussain Chohan took the plea Shehbaz Sharif has not attached correct affidavit with the documents related to NA-242.

EC rejects second appeal plea against Shehbaz Sharif nomination papers from NA -242

KARACHI (Online): Election Tribunal (ET) has rejected second appeal against the acceptance of nomination papers of PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif. ET of Sindh High Court (SHC) took up for hearing appeal plea against the acceptance of nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif from NA-242.

The petitioner Hussain Chohan took the plea Shehbaz Sharif has not attached correct affidavit with the documents related to NA-242.

The petitioner said Shehbaz Sharif has given false statement in the affidavit regarding his business. The decision of Returning Officer (RO) is nullified and nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif is rejected. The ET rejected the plea of the petitioner after hearing the arguments. However written decision will be issued later.

It is pertinent to mention her ET had rejected appeal against the acceptance of nomination papers of Shehbaz Sharif a day before from NA-242 Karachi.

Delegation from Pak Navy War College visits SSU headquarters

KARACHI (APP): The delegation from Pakistan Navy War College undergoing 53rd PN Staff Course and 21st Correspondence Staff Course led by Deputy Commandant Pakistan Navy War College Lahore Ehsan Ahmed Khan, Sitara-e-Imtiaz Military, visited Special Security Unit (SSU) headquarters and appreciated the existing professional standard of SSU and measures being adopted to further improve capabilities of commandos aimed at to fight terrorism and ensure foolproof security.

Commandant SSU Dr. Farrukh Ali welcomed and briefed the delegation about the functions of various sections of SSU.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi and Caretaker Federal Minister for Health Dr. Nadeem Jan addressing a press conference at PID Media Center.

Imran Khan admitted article published by foreign journal was AI generated: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that former Chairman PTI had admitted that he didn't write the article published by The Economist and it was an artificial intelligence-generated write-up.

Using his social media platform X account, the minister said that the current Chairman of PTI did not endorse its anti-establishment and anti-American content but the PTI overseas, some semi-literate anchors and The Economist were jubilant over AI-generated shenanigans.

INP adds: Caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi says caretaker government has no authority to

postpone the elections.

Speaking in a PTV programme, he said according to Article 218(3) of the Constitution, it is constitutional prerogative of the Election Commission to give or change the date of elections.

The Minister said, however, government will fully support to Election Commission of Pakistan to hold free, fair and transparent elections in the country.

The Minister acknowledged that problems are there but these are not so grave to postpone the elections. The Minister said Secretary Election Commission is ill and this issue should not be politicized. Murtaza Solangi said our security forces are capable enough to meet all security challenges.

MQM, PML-N agree over seat-adjustment in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The MQM-Pakistan and the PML-N have agreed over seat adjustment on Karachi's seats for the general election next month.

The sources sharing details of the meeting between the committees of two parties said that the PML-N will field its candidates on the national and provincial assemblies' seats of Karachi in NA-229 and NA-230. The MQM-P will field its candidates on NA-231 and its provincial constituencies.

that the PML-N will field its candidate in national assembly constituency of NA-239 in Karachi South district.

The issue of seat adjustment on the NA-242 constituency of Keamari district is pending and it will be decided in next 48 hours, sources said. PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and MQM leader Mustafa Kamal are the candidates from NA-242.

People's Party has also fielded former MNA Qadir Khan Mandokhel in NA-242 constituency. Both parties decided

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Moving forward

Yesterday, Article 62 was, hopefully permanently, de-democratised of its most lethal effect: lifetime disqualification of a lawmaker from holding public office.

Though several problematic 'morality' requirements in Articles 62 and 63 had been inserted in the Constitution during the Zia era, the 'lifetime disqualification' aspect under 62(1)(f) was a more recent innovation — one that happened five years ago, when the Supreme Court interpreted the clause to deem anyone legally determined to have failed the 'sadiq' and 'ameen' test to have lost forever the right to lead the people of Pakistan as an elected representative.

The verdict had been met with immediate outrage, and it was seen widely as the state hammering the final nails in the coffin meant for Nawaz Sharif's political career.

Yesterday, the Supreme Court finally undid its earlier mistake. A new set of judges agreed, by a majority of 6-1, that the old bench had overreached by 'reading into' the Constitution while taking a rather expansive view of how the clause ought to be interpreted.

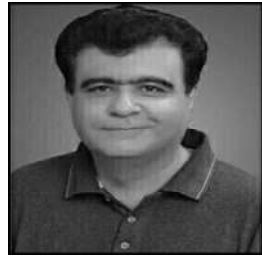
The new bench noted that there is no "law that provides for the procedure, process and the identification of the court of law for making the declaration mentioned in Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution and the duration of such a declaration, for the purpose of disqualification thereunder, to meet the requirements of the fundamental right to a fair trial and due process guaranteed by Article 10A of the Constitution."

It declared that till the law is updated to address these deficiencies, disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) cannot hold for life. Positive as the news is, it should be pointed out that the clause remains very much intact.

It remains up to an elected government to, either with consensus or two-thirds majority, undo it. All the work has done is ensure it won't be used as Damocles' sword over a condemned politician's neck. It has long been argued, and by better legal minds, that the eligibility requirements for holding public office as currently laid out in the Constitution contain several provisions that are patently unrealistic or impossible to attain and must, therefore, be reconsidered.

This publication has long agreed with this view. There is nothing wrong with expecting national leaders to adhere to a high standard of conduct; however, when 'requirements' for qualification start demanding personality traits based on ideas of morality that will be interpreted very differently by different people, they lose their purpose altogether. It cannot be up to the law to choose, based on such arbitrary conditions, who is and who isn't 'morally deserving' of leadership and who, therefore, is to be allowed to participate in the electoral process. Such decisions should be left to the judgment of the voting citizenry.

Decaying politics



Dr Niaz Murtaza

Politics is to acquire and use power to achieve one's aims and is often autocratic (won via force to favour elites). However, its best form is democratic, where rulers present pro-poor policies to win and implement them. But elites have created many perverse political forms to prevail even in democracy: patronage, populist, fascist and religious politics.

Our politics is clearly elitist. Sadly, it has shown a huge drift to perverse political forms over time. Our mother political form was Muslim League's freedom one. Unlike Congress and Awami League's pro-poor left ideology, its politics were rightwing ethno-religious populism based on fear of Hindu rule sans a pro-poor vision. Yet this national politics hid many regional forms.

Muslim League co-opted feudal Unionists in Punjab and patronage politics ruled there for long, with elites winning by offering crumbs to familial voter blocs rather than pro-poor agendas. Yet Punjab voted for PPP's leftist agenda in 1970 but later adopted aberrant rightwing forms again like PML-N's patronage and PTT's populism (anti-elitist sans clear pro-poor agenda). So, which one will prevail in Punjab is unclear. A distinct Seraiki identity has emerged in its poorer southern region but is yet to spawn ethno-ideological politics there. After 1947, Pakhtuns stuck to Ghaffar Khan's leftist ethno-ideology for long. Religious parties as-

cended slowly in isolated areas like Dir, Kohistan and the south but PTT's religio-populist nationalism now holds sway despite the crackdown. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Hindko region, better off than many Pakhtun areas, has always stuck to patronage politics, like Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir.

Sindh and Baloch too started with leftist ethno-ideology led by G.M. Syed and Bizenjo. Among the Baloch, establishment ploys have stoked religious and feudal ethno-ideological parties face extinction. Sindh's leftist ideology, but then adopted patronage politics. Ethno-ideological Sindh parties now get few votes. Mohajirs supported Muslim League's rightwing politics initially, swung to religious parties in 1970, then turned to MQM's ethno-populist quasi-fascism after 1980 and PTT in 2018.

With both PTI and MQM facing state oppression, religious parties (JI and TLP) are rising again. But rule Punjab, the future of Mohajir politics remains unclear though it too may remain rightwing. Mohajir politics is the oddest nationally as despite their high education, income, global links and exposure, urban location (which makes mobilisation easy) and big intellectual pockets, they keep moving from one perverse political form to another.

So nationally, there is no ethnicity or region where ideological politics prevails. Even those who had it have embraced perverse politics. Stagnant patronage is now our main political form, vacuous populism its main challenger, religious extremist politics the main wild card, and terrorist politics the main spoiler, cutting a bleak view of our politics. This state is mainly due to the

establishment's autocratic politics that serves as the bedrock of our politics. It has ruled directly for 30 years and runs politics covertly, and even otherwise, by furthering various forms of political patronage. Our huge economic, security, social and foreign policy failures stem from our political failures. Our political failures exist because powerful forces have blocked our natural political evolution for six decades.

The view is not entirely bleak as small pro-poor forces are rising. Strangely, these are mainly in the two poorest and most violent areas: ex-

Fata and Balochistan. The misery from poverty is magnified by terrorism — religion in ex-Fata to conquer the state and ethnic in Balochistan. PTM won two national seats in 2018 in ex-Fata.

Baloch forces are still loose as seen in Gwadar protests and Baloch march. So, politics in these areas now has three forms: patronage politics, militant politics, and mass politics, which rejects both.

The state is unwisely crushing it, not seeing its value in ending both forms of terrorism. The huge political energy of Baloch protests must crystallise into durable political forms like PTM. In my solidarity visits to the Baloch protest camp in Islamabad, I requested Mahrang Baloch and others to think on these lines.

Our political decay reflects a larger Saarc proclivity: Bangladesh embraces one-party autocracy, India has illiberal extremism and Sri Lanka stagnant politics. Yet nowhere are multiple crises and the need for mass politics bigger than in Pakistan. — Courtesy Dawn

Health security



Arif Azad

The greatly anticipated Global Health Security Summit, one of the major calendar events on the global health security agenda, gets underway in Islamabad on January 10.

The two-day event draws delegates from over 40 countries and is the personal initiative of the current caretaker Health Minister, Dr Nadeem Jan, who worked hard to bring it to Pakistan since taking over as the third technocrat at the health ministry after Dr Zafar Mirza and Dr Faisal Sultan. This clearly shows that a technocrat with command over the brief can lead from the front on key health challenges facing the country. And herein lie many rays of hope for the health sector.

As a rule of thumb, global health security means the presence and development of robust and resilient public health systems that can help prevent, detect and respond to infectious disease threats. This assumes particular importance in our globalised world, where a disease threat anywhere is a disease threat everywhere.

Remember the oft-repeated line during the Covid-19 pandemic: no one is safe until everybody is safe? The Covid pandemic underscored the necessity of global solidarity and working across borders and governments in a whole-of-the-world approach to infectious diseases. In this context, the global health security agenda represents global efforts to strengthen the world's ability to prevent, detect and respond to infec-

tious disease threats.

Global health security gained policy salience after the Ebola outbreak. It led to the adoption of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) in 2014, with the initial involvement of 40 countries. With more than 70 countries now signing up for the GHS 2024, it is expanding its footprint and reach to the rest of the globe. The key elements of the GHS involve developing sustainable financing mechanisms, promoting multisector collaboration, improving information sharing across countries and strengthening the accountability of member states to their country commitments.

While global health security had long been a concern, the Covid pandemic helped a further shift towards it. This was manifested in the interest of the media, the general public and health policy officials in cross-border infections. Not only this, the Covid pandemic also kick-started discussions on the need for pandemic preparedness and response treaties, as well as revision of existing International Health Regulations (IHR). In parallel, the GHS also acquired its present shape, intersecting and feeding into debates about new pandemic treaties and revisions to the IHR.

Pakistan has signed onto GHS 24, and the National Institute of Health (NIH) has been leading on both GHS and IHR. GHS 24 requires member countries to develop leadership and technical knowledge and initiate collaborative efforts to sustain health security in the long term. The GHS requires countries to show demonstrable progress in health security-related technical areas, as well as complete a joint external evaluation and reach a level of demonstrated capacity in at

least five technical areas.

Pakistan participated in a joint external evaluation in 2023. Based on the assessment, an action plan for health security is now being formulated. The summit offers an opportunity to not only review the progress Pakistan has made but also to benefit from the best global practices on show. Pakistan faces many challenges when it comes to infectious diseases. Tuberculosis and anti-microbial diseases remain issues of significant concern. Anti-microbial resistance in Pakistan is mounting, and what has been called a silent pandemic may balloon into a grand pandemic if not collectively addressed.

The work on building up a resilient public health system is of vital importance with respect to the global health security agenda. Yet, there is a long way to go when it comes to strengthening public health systems in Pakistan. The examples of Korea and Japan, where robust public health systems proved crucial in beating back the Covid pandemic, are illustrative in this regard.

Pakistan will obviously be looking to invest more in health systems, especially where laboratory and surveillance capacities are concerned. Funding for pandemic preparedness is also a long-standing issue, which is being negotiated in the new pandemic preparedness treaty. One funding window for pandemic preparedness and response has been opened up by the World Bank. Pakistan needs to be alive to such new funding streams. The global health summit offers an ideal opportunity to seize on these and other emerging opportunities and make use of them. More importantly, political ownership of GHS is also a must. — Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

ECC approves mechanism for weighted average price of urea

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Tuesday approved a mechanism for the weighted average price of urea, directing the National Fertilizer Marketing Limited (NFML) to ensure a reasonable price for the commodity and the Ministry of Industries and Production to provide oversight to the whole process.

The ECC meeting presided over by Minister for Finance, Revenue, and Economic Affairs Dr Shamshad Akhtar, took

this decision after discussing a summary of the Ministry of Industries and Production seeking approval of a mechanism for the sale of imported urea at a 'basket price' along with locally manufactured urea at length.

Among others, the meeting was also attended by Minister for Privatization and Inter-Provincial Coordination Fawad Hasan Fawad, Minister of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Sami Saeed, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Dr Muhammad Jehanzaeb

Khan, Minister for Law and Justice, Water Resources and Climate Change Ahmed Irfan Aslam, Advisor to PM on Finance Dr Waqar Masood, Federal Secretaries, and other senior government officers of the relevant ministries, a news release said.

On another agenda item, the ECC deliberated on a summary of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) for the provision of additional funds of Rs. 250 million during the current financial year 2023-24.

The IB representatives briefed the

committee about the recent surge of terrorism which needed effective countermeasures to thwart the nefarious designs of terrorists.

The ECC approved the funds as a Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) for up-gradation, technical enhancement and field activities of the Intelligence Bureau with releases on a need basis. The committee considered and approved the summary of National Health Services Regulation and Coordination for the provision of Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG).



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar chairing a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif Launch Pakistan Startup Fund during ceremony organized by Ignite and Ministry of IT & Telecommunication.

CM announces 26,000 interest free electric motorbikes, rickshaws for public

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi unveiled a groundbreaking initiative, announcing the distribution of 26,000 electric motorbikes and rickshaws to the public on interest-free basis — a groundbreaking milestone in Pakistan's history.

The announcement took place at a special function organized by the

Punjab Transport Department at a local hotel on Tuesday, where the chief minister also inaugurated the Qingqi Rickshaw Registration Program across Punjab.

CM Naqvi presented the first license for electric rickshaw manufacturing to the CEO of Sazgar Company, marking the formal commencement of the electric rickshaw

industry in Punjab.

At the event, he disclosed plans to provide 10,000 electric bikes to students, facilitated by the Bank of Punjab, while another 10,000 electric rickshaws would be supported by Punjab Bank.

Notably, 2,000 electric three-wheeler bikes would be granted to special individuals free of interest.

Saif launches Startup Fund to catalyze investments for Pak

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Information Technology Dr Umar Saif on Tuesday launched the Pakistan Startup Fund, aimed at catalyzing investments in Pakistani startups.

The launching ceremony was attended by local and international venture capitalists, diplomats, and renowned technology companies. Dr Saif, while

addressing the event, said that the government had allocated Rs 2 billion for the Pakistan Startup Fund to accelerate venture capital investment in the country.

He said the Fund would provide financial assistance to the startups, with each receiving 30% support, while venture capitalists would contribute the remaining 70% of the capital.

Pakistan's exports to Afghanistan increase by 9.10% in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to Afghanistan witnessed an increase of 9.10 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

The overall exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$232.697 million during July-November (2023-24) against exports of US \$213.282 million during

July-November (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On a year-to-year basis, the exports to Afghanistan also surged by 39.30 per cent from \$37.263 million in November 2022, against the exports of \$51.911 million in November 2023.

Meanwhile, on a month-on-month basis, the exports to Afghanistan however witnessed a nominal decline of 0.50 per cent during November 2023 as compared to the exports of \$52.177 million.

Pakistan, Egypt agrees to focus on collaboration in key economic sectors

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Egypt on Tuesday agreed to focus on fostering collaboration in key economic sectors, including agriculture, textiles, engineering, and services.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz, Federal Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investments, engaged in discussions with Ahmed Samir, the Minister of Commerce of Egypt and Chief Guest of the 4th Pakistan-Africa Trade

Development Conference (PATDC) and Single Country Exhibition (SCE), said a press release issued here on Tuesday.

Both parties recognized the mutual benefits that can arise from expanding economic and trade ties between Pakistan and Egypt.

The meeting, held in the presence of policymakers and business leaders from various countries, facilitated a convergence of diverse

ideas and opinions, creating an enriching environment for meaningful discussions.

This event serves as a crucial platform aimed at fostering economic ties and exploring investment opportunities between Pakistan and Egypt.

The discussions underscored the commitment of both nations to deepening economic cooperation and leveraging each other's strengths in key sectors.

DC for ensuring sale of fertilizers at fixed prices

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bahawalpur Zaheer Anwar Jappa on Tuesday said that the sale of fertilizer should be ensured at fixed rates. Fertilizer supply should be improved at the tehsil level. He expressed these views in the meeting held in his office. He directed that legal action to be taken against the dealers who sell fertilizer at more than the fixed rates.

E-bikes, rickshaws to revolutionize transport sector: Minister

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hassan Murad said that provision of 10,000 electric bikes to students will be an important milestone in Punjab.

Speaking at opening ceremony of electric bikes registration here Tuesday, he said that 2.5 million three-wheelers were running illegally across Punjab, which are being registered. He said that today is a historic day for the transport department as e-vehicles will bring revolution in the transport sector. The Caretaker Provincial Transport Minister said that the license for e-rickshaws has been issued to Sazgar while 10,000 electric bikes will prove to be an important milestone in Punjab.

CM inaugurates desilting drive after 10 years gap

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the desilting campaign from the Lahore canal near Muslim Town Morr for removing silt from 17000 km long canals across the province. Provincial ministers SM Tanveer, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, commissioner Lahore, secretary irrigation, CCPO and others were also present. The CM removed silt through crane, stating that the first phase would continue till January 31, while embankments of 5000 km long canals would

be repaired in the second phase, spanning over two months. Water would be available to 3 to 4 lakh acres of land after the desilting of canals; he added and further stated that the desilting drive has been launched after a long gap. Talking to the media, he said that the silt would be removed from 17000 km long canals in the first phase as services of LIMS (Laboratory Information Management System) have been acquired for round-the-clock monitoring. For this purpose, concerned staff, DCs and commissioners have also

been trained through LIMS as this drive would be continuously monitored through satellite images and NESPAK would also monitor it as a third party, he added. CM Naqvi mentioned that complaints have been received about the mixing of drainage water in the Lahore canal at some points, adding that a committee comprising MD WASA and DC would probe the matter, as it could not be allowed. He appealed to the citizens to avoid polluting the canal as the government could not do everything all alone.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi along with provincial ministers and others high ups formerly inaugurates de-silting of Canals across Punjab.

Governor stresses to maintain financial discipline in varsities

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali chairing a senate meeting of the University of Swabi (UoS) here Tuesday directed universities of the province to maintain financial discipline keeping in resources of the province. The senate meeting was also attended by Vice Chancellor UoS, Nasir Jamal and concerned officials of education, establishment, finance and higher education commission. KP Governor said that the provincial government is paying Rs. 56 billion annually in lieu of salaries stressing that universities should explore new ways to overcome financial difficulties. He desired that varsities devise new plans to improve administrative, educational and financial affairs. The governor highlighted the need for research-based education and said that it would help improve capacity building of students and prepare them to meet challenges of emerging world.

Nation commends heroic sacrifices of police: Feroze

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Information and Public Relations Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel on Tuesday paid tribute and expressed the nation's profound gratitude for the unwavering sacrifices made by the Police.

bomb blast. Visiting the surgical emergency ward, he met each injured official and officer individually, inquiring about their well-being and assessing the treatment facilities. During this occasion, Barrister Kakakhel commended the resilient spirit and high morale displayed by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa police men. He prayed for the swift recovery of the injured, acknowledging their selfless dedication for protecting the nation. Barrister Kakakhel emphasized the nation's collective admiration for the sacrifices made by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police.

Along with Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry and Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Khan, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel visited Lady Reading Hospital to personally extend support to the injured policemen following the tragic Bajaur

May-9 violence: ATC extends interim bail of Asad till Feb 10

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Tuesday extended the interim bail of former federal minister Asad Umar till February 10 in 7 cases related to May-9 violence. ATC Judge Muhammad Arshad Javed conducted proceedings on the bail applications of the former minister. Asad Umar's counsel submitted an exemption application on behalf of his client, in the course of proceedings, and requested the court to exempt his client from personal appearance for one-day. At this, the court allowed the request and extended the interim bail of the former minister till February 10.

Minister urges prompt activation of Nowshera Aviation Training Center

PESHAWAR (APP): Minister for Technical Education and Industries, Dr. Amir Abdullah has directed the swift activation of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa School of Aviation Training and Services setup in Nowshera. During the visit, the officials informed the minister that the school had received new machinery for training purposes in 2019. On this occasion, the minister expressed regret over the non-utilization of the state-of-the-art training centre and its machinery.

Security official dies, six injured in Tank road mishap

PESHAWAR (APP): A security personnel were died while six others injured when a vehicle carrying them, skidded off the road and met with an accident in Manji khel area of Tank district on Tuesday. Local police informed a vehicle was on its way to Dera Ismail Khan from Asman Manza area of South Waziristan when it met with an accident. As a result, security officials embraced martyrdom while six others were injured. The injured were shifted to CMH Dera Ismail Khan.



LAHORE: Political Counsellor of the United Kingdom in Pakistan, Ms Zoe Weir, meeting with President Istehkaam Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan.

PHOTA organizes awareness seminar

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Prof. Dr. Javed Akram participated as special guest in the awareness seminar organized by Punjab Human Organ Transplantation Authority (PHOTA) at a local hotel on Tuesday. Secretary Auqaf Syed Tahir Raza Bukhari, King Edward Medical University (KEMU) Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Dr Mehmod Ayaz, Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU) VC Prof. Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal, Amirud Din Medical College's Principal Prof. Dr. Sardar Al-Farid Zafar, PHOTA Director General Prof. Dr. Shehzad Anwar, Punjab Institute of Neuro Sciences (PINS) MS Prof. Dr. Jodai Saleem, Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) Dean Professor Dr. Faisal Saud Dar and a number of other scholars attended the seminar. Caretaker Provincial Health Minister Prof. Dr. Javed Akram said that Pakistan is facing many problems in the health sector. "We have to adopt a better lifestyle to lead a better life. We are currently paying a heavy price for the habit of eating fast food." He added that PKLI is an exemplary institution. Recently, three human lives have been saved at the Institute. Indiscipline in action is being taken against the elements involved in the heinous business of illegal transplantation of human.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali, Caretaker Provincial Minister from Information Barrister Jamal Shah offering Fataha for Bomb Blast victims of Iranian city Karman during their visit to Iranian Council General.

NCCIA being set up to check cyber crimes: DG FIA

FAISALABAD (APP): The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) is being established to check increasing cyber crimes while stringent measures were being taken to control smuggling, said Rai Ijaz Ahmad, Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Addressing a meeting in the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he advised the business community to switch over to transparent transactions through government channels instead of making payments through "Hawala Hundi" to avoid any financial implication. Rai Ijaz said that the Financial Management Unit in State Bank of Pakistan was electronically monitoring available financial data and "red-flag" dubious, irregular and out of proportion transactions. He said that businessmen should take extra care and avoid indulging in illegal traditional practices as the monitoring system was going to be stricter in the coming days.

Corps Commander visits SBBWU, interacts with students

PESHAWAR (APP): Corps Commander Peshawar on Tuesday visited Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Peshawar and had an interactive session with its students and faculty members. He applauded the achievements of women from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in all fields of life, including their pivotal role in nation-building, said a news release.

International News

Blinken carries Arab message to Israel: keep Palestinian state hope alive

Monitoring Desk
GAZA: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, on his latest mission to rein in the Gaza war, told Israeli leaders on Tuesday there was still a chance of winning acceptance from their Arab neighbours, if they create a path to a viable Palestinian state. On his fourth trip to the region since October in a so far largely fruitless quest to tamp down the violence, Blinken said he would share what he had heard in two days of talks with Jordan, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. His talks would include a meeting with the Israeli war cabinet formed in the wake of the Oct. 7

attacks by Palestinian militants from Hamas, which rules Gaza, that Israel says killed 1,200 people. The Israeli offensive has killed more than 23,000 Palestinians, destroyed much of Gaza and displaced most of the population of 2.3 million at least once, creating a dramatic and worsening humanitarian crisis. Blinken had already said he would press Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government on the "absolute imperative" to do more to protect Gaza's civilians and allow humanitarian aid to reach them. His boss, President Joe Biden, said overnight that Washington was quietly pushing Israel to begin

withdrawing some of its forces. Blinken's meetings around the region have focused on trying to chart a longer-term approach to the decades-old Israel-Palestinian conflict, as part of a path toward ending the Gaza war. After his meetings with Arab allies, he said they wanted integration with Israel—a long-term Israeli aim—but only if that included a "practical pathway" to a Palestinian state. "I know of your own efforts, over many years, to build much greater connectivity and integration in the Middle East, and I think there are actually real opportunities there," he told his Israeli counterpart Israel Katz on Tuesday.



The wife of Hamza Wael Dahdouh, a journalist with the Al Jazeera television network, and his father Al Jazeera's bureau chief in Gaza, Wael Al-Dahdouh mourn over his body during his funeral, after he was killed in a reported Israeli air strike in Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

Ukraine has deficit of anti-aircraft guided missiles - air force

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine has a deficit of anti-aircraft guided missiles nearly two years after Russia's full-scale invasion, Air Force spokesman Yuriy Ihnat said on Tuesday. Ukraine has relied heavily on military and financial aid from its Western allies since the invasion in February 2022, but political wrangling has delayed the disbursement of major aid packages for this year. Ihnat told Ukrainian television that Ukraine had used a "considerable reserve" of missiles defending itself against recent attacks, and added: "It is clear that there is a deficit of anti-aircraft guided missiles." Russia has stepped up missile and drone attacks on Ukraine in the past few weeks, firing hundreds of missiles and drones at Ukrainian cities far behind the frontline, Ukrainian officials have said. In the latest strike this week, Russia fired 51 missiles of various types, killing at least four people and hitting civilian infrastructure, they said.

Taiwan says China launched a satellite

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: Taiwan's Defense Ministry issued an alert Tuesday saying China has launched a satellite and urging caution days before the island's elections. Taiwan holds presidential and parliamentary elections on Saturday which China has described as a choice between war and peace. The bilingual alert sent to residents' mobile phones cautioned in English that there was a missile flyover. The Defense Ministry later issued a statement apologizing to the public for the faulty English translation and clarifying that China had launched a rocket carrying a satellite—not a missile.

US, UK say Bangladesh elections were not free, fair

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US and UK on Monday criticized the Bangladesh general election that saw the ruling Awami League retain power as "not free" nor democratic as the polls held a day earlier were boycotted by the opposition after months of violence. The two Western allies also condemned the incidents of violence and alleged intimidation of opposition members in the months leading up to the election and urged Bangladesh's government to credibly investigate them. The United States shared the view that the weekend's elections in Bangladesh were not free and fair, the US State Department said on Monday, adding that Washington was concerned by reports of vote irregularities and condemned violence that took place. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina swept to a fourth straight term in power, with her party winning almost 75% of the seats in Sunday's general election. But the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) boycotted the vote and turnout was low. "The United States remains concerned by the arrests of thousands of political opposition members and by reports of irregularities on election day," a US State Department spokesperson said on Monday. "The United States shares the view with other observers that these elections were not free or fair and we regret that not all parties participated." The ruling Awami League party won 222 seats out of 298, according to unofficial results released by the Election Commission. The election was Bangladesh's 12th since independence from Pakistan in 1971.



France's newly appointed Prime Minister Gabriel Attal arrives for the handover ceremony with outgoing Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne at the Hotel Matignon in Paris, France.

Egypt rejects Israeli request to monitor buffer zone with Gaza

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO: Egypt has rejected a proposal by Israel for greater Israeli oversight over the buffer zone on the Egypt-Gaza border and is prioritising efforts to broker a ceasefire before working on post-war arrangements, three Egyptian security sources said. Egypt shares a 13km (8 mile) border with Gaza which is the only border of the Palestinian coastal enclave not directly con-

trolled by Israel. Along with Qatar, Egypt has also played a leading role in talks to broker a new ceasefire in Gaza and secure a deal for the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas. The Egyptian sources said that during those talks Israel had approached Egypt about securing the Philadelphi Corridor, a narrow buffer zone along the border, as part of Israeli plans to prevent future attacks.

Russia detains US citizen on drugs charges

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A US citizen has been detained in Russia on drugs charges which can carry up to 20 years in prison, a Moscow court said on Tuesday. Moscow's Ostankino District Court said that on Jan. 6 Robert Romanov Woodland had been remanded in custody until March 5 on charges relating to the illegal acquisition or possession of drugs. Russian internet news site Mash said that Woodland, 32, was charged with attempted large-scale production and sale of illegal drugs. He was detained on Jan. 5, Mash said. A Facebook account in the name of Robert Woodland indicated that he had been working as an English teacher in Russia, and lived outside Moscow. It was not immediately possible to contact Woodland in Russian custody. In 2020, Woodland, who was known to friends as "Rob", was a Russian newspaper that he was adopted in 1993 by US citizens from an orphanage in Perm, in the Urals.

Gabriel Attal becomes France's youngest prime minister as Macron seeks reset

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron appointed 34-year-old Education Minister Gabriel Attal as his new prime minister on Tuesday, seeking to breathe new life into his second mandate ahead of European parliament elections. The move will not necessarily lead to any major political shift, but signals a desire for Macron to try to move beyond last year's unpopular pension and immigration reforms and improve his centrist party's chances in the June EU ballot. Attal will be France's youngest prime minister and the first to be openly gay. Opinion polls show Macron's camp trailing far-right leader Marine Le Pen's party by around eight to 10 percentage points. Attal, a close Macron ally who became a household name as government spokesman during the Covid-19 pandemic, will replace outgoing Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne.

US vows to boost Afghan refugees' relocation

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The US State Department has informed Congress of its commitment to enhancing its capacity to process applications of Afghan refugees stranded in Pakistan. This initiative, which began in July 2023 on a limited scale, aims to address the plight of Afghan refugees seeking asylum in Pakistan.

Gaza cease-fire protests block New York City bridges, and over 300 are arrested

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Hundreds of protesters calling for an immediate cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war blocked traffic in New York City at crucial bridges and a tunnel, disrupting the Monday morning commute and leading to more than 300 arrests. A steady stream of demonstrations have broken out in cities across the United States and in other countries during the three-month war in the Gaza Strip. Protesters interrupted President Joe Biden's campaign speech Monday at a church in South Carolina with chants of "cease-fire now," and were removed from the building. In Manhattan, people chanting and holding anti-war signs sat in roadways and locked themselves together using zip ties and even cement-filled tires, which at times required officers to use power tools to pry the demonstrators apart. The New York Police Department said 325 people were arrested, with many facing misdemeanor charges. Demonstrators had gathered at City Hall Plaza at around 9 a.m. before marching to the protest sites at the Brooklyn, Manhattan and Williamsburg bridges as well as the Holland Tunnel to New Jersey. Protest organizers included the Palestinian Youth Movement and Jewish-led groups long opposed to Israel's policies toward the Palestinians, such as Jewish Voice for Peace.

President for implementing job quota for persons with disabilities

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday underscored the need to implement employment quota for persons with disabilities (PWDs) at all levels of the government for their financial empowerment.

He suggested that the government departments should identify jobs for PWDs and provide them employment as per their skill sets to increase their inclusion in the workforce, President Secretariat Press

Wing said in a press release.

The president expressed these views while chairing a meeting on implementing employment quota for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Allah Dino Khowaja, Secretary Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) Syed Hasnain Mehdi, Special Secretary Establishment Division Ali Tahir and senior officials of the government attended the meeting.

Highlighting the need to make PWDs productive members of society, the president said that they made up almost 12% of Pakistan's population and affirmative actions like job quotas could help overcome existing barriers to their employment.

He underscored the need to equip PWDs with employable skills and link them with potential employers to provide jobs to

them as per the nature and severity of their disability.

The president emphasized the need for attitudinal change towards PWDs by the society to encourage them to actively participate in socio-economic activities.

He recalled that he had been urging private schools to admit children with disabilities and take measures to promote inclusive education in mainstream educational institutions.

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on implementing employment quota for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi chairing a meeting on implementing employment quota for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar addresses during the Foundation Stone-Laying ceremony of the M9-N5 Link Road Interchange, held at Kathore in Karachi.

Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-24 commences at Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The opening brief of Exercise SEA GUARD-24 was held at Karachi on Tuesday with Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz as Chief Guest.

Representatives of various ministries, departments and organizations having linkages with maritime sector like Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Ministry of Livestock and Fishing Sindh, Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Narcotics Control, private entities and NGOs were involved in the exercise to support multifaceted challenges of Maritime arena both from traditional and non-traditional threats.

The session which includes Pakistan National Shipping Corporation, Anti-Narcotics Force, Pakistan Coast Guards, PMSA, KPT, Port QASIM, BYCO Petroleum was attended by leadership of various organizations in

addition to other prominent figures from private sector and fishing community.

Exercise Sea Guard aims to synergize efforts of stakeholders while remaining within their legal framework through a common pedestal of Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) to ensure security of Maritime Zones of Pakistan.

During the opening brief, participants were briefed about working methodology and contributions of JMICC to ensure maritime safety and security along our Coastline.

Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz applauded the efforts of all stakeholders in their contribution for a safer Maritime environment.

The exercise includes conduct of various practical scenario based exercises at sea along with Table Top Discussions to improve existing mechanism of security. Exercise will conclude with a debrief session on 18 Jan 24.

Commander Karachi calls on Sindh Caretaker CM

KARACHI (APP): The Commander Karachi (COMKHI) Rear Admiral Mohammed Saleem called on the Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar at Chief Minister House here on Tuesday. On the occasion, they discussed professional issues.

Senator Mehdi eyes February 8 as the day of PPP's historic victory

KARACHI (APP): Provincial General Secretary Pakistan People's Party Sindh, Senator Waqar Mehdi, Tuesday said that February 8 will be the day of the historic victory of the Pakistan People's Party which has presented practical solutions to the national issues in its election manifesto.

Senator Mehdi, in a statement issued here, said "PPP has always fulfilled all the promises made to the people in election manifesto while all other political parties of the country never implemented their election manifesto after assuming power."

He stated that citizens of Karachi have become politically liberated and they will exercise their right to vote by marking their own choice on ballot papers.

DC reviews first day of anti-polio campaign

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Commissioner Sukkur, Fayyaz Hussain Mahsra on Tuesday chaired a performance review meeting on the first day of the anti-polio campaign.

According to the DC Office, amidst the ongoing battle against polio, a crucial meeting was held on the first day of the campaign in the district.

Talking to members of polio teams, he said polio drops must be administered to all children under the age of five years to make the campaign successful.

Keamari Police seize large quantity smuggled betel nuts

KARACHI (APP): An operation conducted on Tuesday by Madina Colony police station in the Keamari district, a car carrying smuggled betel nuts was intercepted.

SSP Keamari, Arif Aslam Rao, reported the recovery of 30 sacks of betel nuts, totaling 350kg, from the vehicle. The confiscated goods and the vehicle were transferred to the police custody.

Cold, dry weather forecast for Sindh

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Tuesday predicted cold and dry weather for most parts of the Sindh province during the next 24 hours.

However, Fog and smog were predicted in Jacobabad, Mohenjodaro, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Ghotki, Khairpur, Kashmore, and Padidan during morning and night hours. Mainly, cold and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.

PM assures gov't's full support to UNICEF on public welfare projects

ISLAMABAD (APP): He told the prime minister that during the last five years, around US\$1 billion projects had been established in a range of fields including humanitarian aid, clean drinking water, food supply, education, and health under UNICEF in Pakistan.

The prime minister appreciated UNICEF Pakistan for successfully launching several projects for public welfare.

Termining UNICEF's role in the anti-polio drive in Pakistan as of special importance, he said a positive change in the anti-polio vaccination drive was being seen among the masses due to mutual collaboration of the government of Pakistan and UNICEF.

Pak, Lebanon sign accord for media regulatory bodies' cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Lebanon have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote cooperation between the regulatory bodies of their media which would eventually further strengthen the bilateral relations.

The MoU was signed between the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) and the Audiovisual Council of Lebanon (CNA) in Beirut, said a news release issued here on Tuesday.

The MoU is aimed at fostering friendly relations and cooperation between the two regulatory bodies of Pakistan and Lebanon.

Ambassador of Pakistan to Lebanon Salman Athar signed the MoU with



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training, Mr. Madad Ali Sindhi met with Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah and Secretary Information Ms Shahera Shahid to discuss the arrangements of celebration of 100 years of Shaikh Ayaz.

Government College University Hyderabad hosts opening ceremony of English Access Microscholarship Program

HYDERABAD (APP): Government College University Hyderabad (GCUH) hosted the opening ceremony of the English Access Microscholarship Program on Tuesday, ushering in a new chapter of educational empowerment and cross-cultural exchange sponsored by the Regional English Language Office (RELO Pakistan) through U.S. Embassy Islamabad.

The event, held at the university's historical Assembly Hall, brought together Access students, teachers, and esteemed guests to celebrate the launch of this transformative initiative aimed at providing English language education to the young individuals from economically disadvantaged backgrounds by providing students with language skills, cultural awareness, and a solid foundation for a bright future.

At the start of the ceremony, Program Director of the English Access Microscholarship Program at GCUH, Dr. Niaz Hussain Soomro, provided a comprehensive overview of the program including its objectives, curriculum structure, and the transformative impact it aims to achieve with a short video illustrating the progress of the program so far.

In her welcome address, the Vice Chancellor GCUH, Prof. Dr. Tayyaba Zarif, highlighted the significance of the English Access Microscholarship Program in fostering language proficiency, intercultural understanding, and global citizenship.



LARKANA: A view of dense fog covering surrounding areas of Road during morning time.

CM Baqar lays foundation stone of interchange to link M9- N5 roads

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (R) Maqbool Baqar speaking at the stone-laying ceremony of the M9-N5 Link Road interchange in Kathore said that the Link Road had been completed, but it needed to be integrated with the Motorway to make it fully operational for which he laid the foundation. The ceremony of the M9-N5 Link Road interchange was held at Kathore on Tuesday, a communique said.

The ceremony was attended by Information Minister Muhammad Ahmed Shah, Secretary Works Muhammad Nawaz Sohoo, DG PPP Unit Asad Zamin, Director PPP Unit Sajjad Gilal, PD M9-N5

Link Road Mr Muhammad Ali Memon, SE Works Khurram Mughal.

He said that he had laid the foundation of interchange on the M9. He added that the intersection to bridge the final gap in the traffic flow originating from Karachi's industrial arteries through the M9-N5 Link Road Project, extending its reach upcountry.

The CM said that with the culmination of the project, traffic would seamlessly navigate to the M9, streamlining the transportation network. He said that the road leading to this interchange M9-N5 Link Road Project was constructed in record time, and the facility was ready. "With the integration of this missing link, the whole project will be

fully operational, effectively realizing the project's objectives," he said. The M9-N5 link road stands as a milestone as the first Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in Pakistan, awarded solely based on traffic revenue, without any equity, Minimum Revenue Guarantee, or any form of financial support from the provincial government.

The Concessionaire for the M9-N5 Link Road Project not only financed the project independently but also committed to managing operations and maintenance for the next 23 years using its resources, additionally, the Sindh government would reap the benefits of traffic revenue throughout this period.



KARACHI: 'Commander Coast Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz addressing opening brief of Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-24.

DG KDA inaugurates arts gallery

KARACHI (APP): Director General Karachi Development Authority (KDA) Naveed Anwar on Tuesday inaugurated the art gallery in the public relations department of KDA here.

On this occasion, the KDA's spokesperson briefed the DG KDA about the office and administrative matters of the organization.

The DG KDA said that there is scope for further improvement in KDA and to fill this task all the officers and employees are performing their responsibilities with dedication.

He said that the KDA not only played a key role in the development of Karachi city but is also leading in providing basic facilities to the citizens.

PTI founder Imran arrested in GHQ attack case

RAWALPINDI (Online): Founder PTI Imran Khan has been arrested in GHQ attack case as well.

Rawalpindi police have arrested PTI founder in GHQ attack case.

The hearing of 12 cases related to May 9 incidents took place against PTI founder in Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) Rawalpindi.

Judge Malik Ijaz Asif heard the cases.

PTI founder was presented in the court from

Adiala jail through video link.

The respective SHOs appeared in the court along with record of 12 cases.

RA Bazaar police told the court PTI founder was informed about his arrest in GHQ attack case.

RA Bazaar police requested the court to grant physical remand of PTI founder in GHQ attack case.

The court directed police to investigate PTI founder in jail.

Death toll rises to two of Jan. 6 accident

HYDERABAD (APP): The death toll of the January 6 accident in Sakhi Pir area of Hyderabad in which a truck ran over persons standing by the roadside has increased to 2 after 50 years old Muhammad Shahid succumbed to his wounds in Liaquat University Hospital here on Tuesday.

Earlier on January 6 Shahid Bhatti, 45 years old, had died on the spot after a truck hit a cart and a motorbike near Pakistan Bakery while 4 persons were injured.

The truck's driver Muhammad Iqbal Arain, who belongs to Lodhran, Multan, was caught and manhandled by the local people before handing him over to the police.

9th Hyderabad Literature Festival (HLF-9) to begin at Sindh Museum from Saturday

HYDERABAD (APP): The 9th Hyderabad Literature Festival (HLF-09) will commence its two-day event on Saturday, January 13th. The inaugural ceremony is set to take place at the Sindh Museum Hyderabad on Saturday morning.

The event organizer and managing director of Academy for the Promotion of Art, Literature and Literacy (APAL) Izhhar Soomro told "APP" that the chief guests at the opening ceremony of the festival.

Commissioner visits Nawabshah city to inspect polio campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): On the first day of the 7-day National Polio Campaign in the Shaheed Benazirabad Division, Commissioner Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider conducted visits to various areas, including the Union Council of Nawabshah city and Bandhi town. He closely monitored the activities of mobile and transit point teams, as well as the fix team set up at the Rural Health Center in Bandhi.

During his visit, Commissioner Haider personally administered Polio drops to children and observed the figure marking process. However, he noted errors in the teams' work, specifically highlighting improper figure marking, which is crucial for ensuring the accurate administration of polio drops to children.

3.592 mln registered voters to exercise right of balloting elections 2024 in Larkana Division

LARKANA (APP): About 3592271 registered voters would exercise their right of franchise in the forthcoming general election 2024 for 8 National Assembly constituencies in the Larkana region including Larkana, Kamber-Shahdadkot, Shikarpur, Jacobabad and Kandhkot-Kashmore districts and 17 seats of the provincial assembly.

According to the statistics provided by the Regional Election Com-

missioner Office Larkana division, the total number of male registered voters is 1930896 and female registered voters 1661378.

The Larkana and Kamber-Shahdadkot districts with 4 National Assembly and 08 Sindh Assembly seats have the highest number of registered voters which is 1686287 of whom the strength of the male voters is 911309 and female 774978.



HYDERABAD: Jamiat Ulama-e-Pakistan (JUP) Noorani President, Sahibzada Abul Khair Muhammad Zubair addresses to media persons during press conference held at Hyderabad press club.

All resources to be utilized for transparent elections: DC

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner/District Returning Officer Sanghar Dr. Imran-ul-Hassan Khowaja on Tuesday said that all resources would be utilized for holding free, fair and transparent elections.

Conducting elections is our national duty, thus all Returning and Assistant Returning Officers appointed by the Election Commission should thoroughly assess facilities at all polling stations in their respective constituencies and

immediate arrangements should be made if any polling station lacks necessary amenities.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting with designated ROs and AROs in his office. On this occasion, District Election Commissioner Shahnawaz Brohi stated that we are in coordination with the appointed officers, and the arrangements for conducting general elections will be re-examined and all polling stations will be equipped with the required facilities.