

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 03 Rajab 04, 1445 AH Tuesday January 16, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Elections can't be postponed, ECP tells Senate on polls delay resolution

Electoral body says it made commitment before the Supreme Court to hold elections on Feb 8, 2024; Okays 250 million watermarked ballot papers for the February 8 polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has dismissed the proposal to postpone the general elections, emphasizing that the established polling date of February 8 was mutually determined with the President of Pakistan.

In a letter addressed to the Joint Secretary (Legislation) of the Senate, the ECP conveyed that it would not be prudent to postpone the general elections at this stage. Additionally, the resolution of the upper house of Parliament cannot be currently implemented.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has already directed the

caretaker government to ensure the maintenance of law and order during elections. This includes enhancing the security framework to create a favorable environment for peaceful and credible conduct of the 2024 general elections.

The letter stated that the ECP has made a commitment before the Supreme Court to conduct the general elections on February 8, 2024.

Similarly, it is worth noting that previous general elections and local government elections have taken place during the winter season.

It's worth noting that Independent Senator Dilawar Khan has written

a letter to the Senate Chairman, expressing concern that the ECP has not taken any steps to implement his resolution passed on January 5, which proposed the postponement of elections. The resolution received majority support with 14 votes from senators.

Meanwhile the Election Commission (ECP) tasked the Printing Corporation of Pakistan on Monday with producing 250 million watermarked ballot papers for the February 8 polls.

According to sources, the ECP sanctioned the printing of ballot papers for the upcoming general elections during its meeting.



QAMBAR SHAHDADKOT: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to media persons during his visit to Qambar Shahdadkot.

PPP accuses PML-N of attempting to rig elections

Bilawal blames Nawaz-led party for gradually sidelining its political opponents

QAMBAR SHAHDADKOT (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has accused the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) of resorting to rigging tactics ahead of the February 8 general elections.

As both political bigwigs eyeing the office of the prime minister, the PPP chairman blamed the Nawaz Sharif-led party for gradually sidelining its political opponents in a bid to come into power without having any electoral competition.

"Nawaz-league doesn't want to do fair politics but it wants to play alone by ousting all political opponents

from the pitch," Bilawal said while addressing a press conference in Qambar Shahdadkot on Monday.

He alleged that some PPP candidates had not been allotted 'arrow' electoral sign by the returning officer (RO) after being pressurised by the Nawaz-led party.

The politico, who served as foreign minister in the former PML-N-led coalition government, announced to approach the election commission and courts to challenge the decisions.

"In Punjab, PML-N is trying to take benefit of recent developments against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)," Bilawal said, while referring to the

Supreme Court's verdict that cost the Imran-led party 'bat' symbol.

He said that there is now a contest between 'lion' and 'arrow', the electoral signs of PML-N and PPP respectively, in upcoming elections.

Prior to his media talk, Bilawal asked PPP workers to strongly resist and thwart conspiracies being hatched by PML-N.

He reiterated his opinion against any further delay in the organisation of nationwide polls and said: "If some people are still thinking to see a delay in the conduct of polls or try to run away from the electoral battle then they would face a big loss."



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori addressing a press conference at Governor House. Zafar Abbas of JDC is also present on the occasion.

Iranian Ambassador calls on Sindh Governor

KARACHI (APP): Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam along with Consul General in Karachi Hassan Nourian called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori at Governor House here on Monday.

In the meeting, matters related to further strengthening of Pakistan-Iran economic cooperation, exchange of delegations between the two countries in various fields and other is-

ssues of mutual interest were discussed.

The Governor said that further enhance in bilateral relations was in mutual interest. He said that investors from Iran will be welcomed in Sindh.

The Iranian Ambassador appreciated the efforts of Governor Sindh to strengthen the bilateral relations and the public welfare initiatives of Sindh province.

Petrol price slashed by Rs8 per litre

LAHORE (INP): The federal government on Monday slashed petrol price by up to Rs8 per litre for the fortnight starting January 16.

However, the government decided to maintain the price of high-speed diesel.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Finance, the price of petrol has been reduced by Rs8 per litre, bringing the new price to Rs259.34 per litre.

The price of high-speed diesel will remain unchanged, i.e., Rs276.21 per litre.

ECP reveals minority seat candidates for 2024 polls

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission has unveiled the preliminary list of candidates contending for seats reserved for minorities in the National Assembly.

According to list issued by ECP, nomination papers of 37 candidates have been approved for the 10 National Assembly seats.

In light of the Supreme Court's decision, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is excluded from the competition for minority seats as they did not secure the election symbol.

According to the schedule issued by the Election Commission, appeals for the acceptance or rejection of nomination papers by returning officers can be submitted until January 16, and the Appellate Tribunal will hear them until January 19.

NAB asked to submit detailed report in Toshakhana case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Accountability Court of Islamabad on Monday directed the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to submit a detailed report about Nawaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari, and Yousuf Raza Gillani in the Toshakhana case within a week.

AC Judge Muhammad Bashir heard the Toshakhana case.

SC is operating under London Plan, alleges IK

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founder Chairman Inam Khan said that everything is happening under the London Plan and he was being punished for exposing Donald Lu and General Bajwa.

Holding informal talks with the media on Monday, former Prime Minister Inam Khan said the Supreme Court (SC) is implementing the London Plan. The former PM Inam Khan said his imprisonment, tearing down of the PTI and the pardoning of Nawaz Sharif's case are also part of the London plan. He said that everything is being done to show that 'they' are above the law.



HYDERABAD: Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senior Vice President, Sher Afzal Marwat addresses to lawyers during his visit to High Court Bar in Hyderabad.

No harassment from Bureau, NAB chairman assures officers

KARACHI (APP): National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Lieutenant General (ret'd) Nazir Ahmed Monday assured the government officers that the Bureau would not harass them and they should play their key role in the development of the country.

Addressing the civil bureaucrats in Sindh secretariat he said that he was bringing reforms in NAB and no officer would be subjected to a media trial during the process of

complaint verification and inquiry.

He said that complaints written under fictitious names or anonymous would not be accepted in NAB.

Nazir said that he knew the bureaucrats were working under immense pressure adding that due to the ongoing cases in

NAB, the development and construction projects get delayed, which should not happen and the projects should be completed on time.



LAHORE: President National Party Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch meeting with PML (Q) Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and President Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif.

Political parties bound to hold intra-party polls: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Monday said that every political party was bound to hold intra-party elections under their constitution.

The apex court's decision about the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's elections had set a precedent which would further promote democracy within the parties, the minister said while speaking in a talk show of the Pakistan Television.

He said the Election Commission did not take notice of the irregularities in the PTI's intra-party elections, rather a complaint to the effect was filed with it.

"Democracy is not only necessary in the country but also within the political parties," he said. Every one in democracy had the right to criticise and the caretaker government could not usurp that fundamental right, the minister added.

The basic role of the

caretaker government was to act as a bridge between two elected governments, and the incumbents were its responsibilities amicably, he remarked.

Solangi said under Article 218(3) of the Constitution, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was responsible for holding free, fair and transparent elections and the caretaker government was committed to assist it in that regard.

He said that every citizen should exercise their right to vote a per conscience.

To a question, he said the Pakistan Peoples Party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and one other party were campaigning about lack of a level playing field. On the contrary in 2013 many political parties had such complaints. The minister said all the political parties were being given equal coverage on the state media that were working on the tax payers' money.

Commissioner bans transportation of Fish without cover in Karachi

KARACHI (APP): The Commissioner Karachi Division on Monday imposed a ban on the transportation of fish without cover within the local limits of Karachi Division for a period of two months from January 1 to March 11 with immediate effect.

According to a notification here, the ban had been imposed in the wake of a meeting held under the chairmanship of Sindh Chief Minister regarding the imposition of a ban under section 144 Cr P C against the transportation of fish without cover, which not only created public nuisance but also polluted the environment.

Two shot dead after verbal clash

KARACHI (INP): Two people were shot dead after exchange of hot words between members of two rival groups in the metropolis, police said on Monday.

According to details, an exchange of hot words took place between members of two opponent groups near Muhammad Khan Chowki in Ittihad Town.

The verbal clash intensified after when armed men of one group opened fire at other killing two people on the spot and fled the scene.

The bodies were shifted to hospital for post-mortem and police after registering a case into the incident started raids to arrest the culprits.

FM Jilani reiterates Pakistan's commitment to a peaceful, stable Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jilani on Monday underscored Pakistan's commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan and emphasized the need for enhanced coordination for regional stability.

He received Iran's Special Representative for Afghanistan Affairs Hassan Kazmi Qomi, Foreign Office Spokesperson posted on X account.

The foreign minister also underlined the critical role of the neighbouring countries of Afghanistan to achieve the vision of a peaceful and stable region.

Earlier, Ambassador Qomi held extensive talks with Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan Asif Durrani over the situation in Afghanistan and the regional processes for peace and dialogue.



RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza exchanging views with Ali Bin Mubarak Al Khater, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Pakistan during meeting held in Rawalpindi.

Minister for equipping youth with technical, vocational skills

KARACHI (APP): Sindh caretaker minister for Revenue, Industries and Commerce, Muhammad Younas Dagha, Monday, stressing on need of equipping the youth with professional skills said that technical and vocational education should also be imparted in schools from the seventh grade.

He was speaking at a certificate distribution ceremony held here at Sindh Boy Scouts Complex Karachi Auditorium to honour students of backward areas of the province who have achieved significant success in matriculation examination.

The ceremony organized by a non-profit organization Green Crescent Trust (GCT) was attended by Sindh Caretaker Law Minister Barrister Muhammad Umar Soomro, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Iqbal Memon and others.

Younas Dagha while addressing the ceremony termed it as a matter of pride to present certificates of appreciation to children who obtained remarkable

achievement despite of financial hurdles.

He appreciated endeavor of GCT for the promotion of education and stressed on collaboration between Sindh government and non-governmental organizations on the basis of public-private partnership for promotion of education in the province. He advised the students to continue their studies with full zeal and dedication to earn laurels for their country and their families.

Chief Executive Officer Green Crescent Trust, Zahid Saeed, briefed at the occasion that GCT has established 166 welfare schools for promoting education and literacy in the backward areas of the province and 31,700 children were acquiring education in those schools.

He emphasized joint efforts by welfare organizations and the Sindh government to enhance enrollment of out-of-school children and said that development goals could not be achieved without ensuring the provision of quality education to all.



KARACHI: Caretaker Provincial Minister for Commerce, Revenue and Industries Younas Dagha presents appreciation certificate to student on her best grades in Matriculation in Provincial Capital.

'Thank you very much': PTI withdraws SC petition for level playing field

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has withdrawn its petition from the Supreme Court (SC) seeking a level playing field in the upcoming general elections.

As the hearing of the PTI's appeal began in the Supreme Court on Monday, Counsel Latif Khosa said the party would like to go to the people's court for the survival of democracy.

"We want to go to the court of 250 million people," he asserted, and told the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP): "Thank you very much."

CJP Qazi Faez Isa asked: "Do you want to pursue the case or not?"

The PTI lawyer replied that he had been instructed to withdraw the application.

"We have been humiliated," the lawyer said. In response, CJP Isa said whether they wanted to accept the court's decision or not was their choice, adding that the judges should not be blamed for the court's verdict.

CJP Qazi Faez Isa asked: "Do you want to pursue the case or not?" The PTI lawyer replied that he had been instructed to withdraw the application.

"We came to you for a level playing field for fair and transparent elections," he remarked, adding that people had been allotted symbols like glass, eggplant, bowl etc.

"We have been humiliated," the lawyer said and added ECP can only take back the electoral symbol of the party, but here, a political party is being kept out from Parliamentary politics.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Missing empathy

In recent days, the missing persons' issue has attracted much back and forth between a group of determined protesters seeking the whereabouts of their disappeared loved ones, and a caretaker government that simply refuses to recognise their anguish as legitimate.

Amidst repeated attempts to gaslight the protesters and paint them as troublemakers, a fresh report submitted by the Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances gives the lie to the state's position that it has been unfairly criticised.

In the report, requisitioned by the Supreme Court, the commission has conceded that merely seven per cent of the production orders issued by it have ever been complied with.

Considering that production orders are issued for individuals believed to be in state custody, it is no wonder that the vast majority of victims' families see the authorities as complicit in the disappearance of their loved ones.

Last week, an Islamabad High Court justice underlined once again that the higher authorities, including the prime minister and his cabinet, are responsible for ensuring the right to liberty of all Pakistani citizens.

He also expressed the hope that the officials directly responsible for disappearing citizens will one day be prosecuted. He made these remarks as protests were roiling Balochistan, where more people have reportedly been disappeared despite the massive spotlight shining on this issue.

Meanwhile in Islamabad, the Baloch Yakjehti Committee, led by Mahrang Baloch, continues to wait on the government in Islamabad, hoping it would make some attempt at rapprochement. Along with other BYC leaders, she remains camped outside the National Press Club, still knocking on the state's door, still hoping the Baloch will be welcomed in. One hopes it won't be long. From the 'welcome' given to these protesters by the Islamabad police, the hurtful remarks made about their 'duplicity' by the caretaker prime minister, and a fresh insult from the Balochistan caretaker information minister, who on Wednesday accused the protesters of using their grief to get visas for other countries, the state has made a mess of the situation.

There has recently been a global outcry against the subjugation of historically disadvantaged people, and this seems like a particularly bad time for Pakistan to be presenting itself as a case study. One wonders what the state believes it stands to gain from such tactics.

The country is in turmoil: internal security is weakening, the political arena remains gripped in chaos, the economy is on the ventilator, and too many social groups seem unhappy about the state's oppressive policies towards them.

Given the breadth of challenges facing the country, those who have assumed responsibility for it must start putting out fires, not stirring up more trouble for future generations.

Empowering local governance



Abdullah Khalid

As the promise of elections looms, manifestos take centre stage, promising reform and progress. In our volatile context, empowering local governments is a crucial, yet often overlooked pathway towards a more responsive and resilient democracy. Despite constitutional provisions for devolution, Pakistan's local governance system remains hobbled by a plethora of challenges. Over-centralisation, inadequate financial resources, weak institutional capacities and limited citizen participation have plagued this tier of government. Though varying in detail, existing Local Government Acts share the common flaw of inadequate devolution and excessive provincial control.

As general elections approach, parties are driven by political considerations, which shape their approaches to local governance. A review of some manifestos reveals inconsistent approaches to local governance. The PML-N, while promising devolution and financial autonomy, focuses on party-aligned initiatives. The PTI manifesto touches upon citizen participation and local development but lacks concrete mechanisms for implementation. The PPP emphasises that rural development aligns with local governance potential, but the required details remain vague. The PML-Q focuses on administrative reforms and overlooks the need for structural changes like fiscal devolution. The ANP manifesto primarily ad-

cludes education, health, and sanitation, to local bodies. Local government representatives can be more than just service providers. They can become catalysts for progress in diverse areas such as ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), Corporate Social Responsibility, and Disaster Risk Management. Local governments can promote environmental sustainability through waste management, renewable energy projects, and green infrastructure development. Additionally, they can champion social causes like women's empowerment, youth development, and minority inclusion. Local governments can foster partnerships with businesses and civil society organisations to address pressing issues like poverty, illiteracy, and healthcare access. This can create a collaborative ecosystem for social good and shared responsibility. Local governments can also be pivotal in disaster preparedness and response, leading community-based initiatives for early warning systems, evacuation plans, and post-disaster rebuilding efforts.

Pakistan's political manifestos must transcend rhetoric and translate into genuine commitment to local government empowerment. A comprehensive vision is needed, encompassing legislative reforms, capacity building, financial independence, and citizen participation. Only then can local governments become the engines of development, democracy, and social justice Pakistan desperately needs. The upcoming elections present a critical opportunity for parties to break free from political expediency and embrace a transformative vision for local governance. The future of Pakistan's democracy hangs in the balance. -- Courtesy Dawn

Southern promises



Zarrar Khuhro

Why South Africa? Of all the 195 countries that make up this world, why was it this nation that took Israel to court for its genocide of the Palestinian people?

Unlike the Muslim and Arab countries, South Africa has no real ethnic, cultural or religious affinity with Palestine and — unlike the Arab states — is located over 7,000km from Gaza. Why then did South Africa take on the Zionist state when those much closer — in all senses — to Palestine have chosen to remain silent spectators to mass murder?

The answer lies in history and in the shared experience of brutalisation by a white supremacist settler regime that prides itself on apartheid and bloody repression. Israel was created in 1948, the same year that the apartheid regime came into force in South Africa.

This coincidence aside, both states soon recognised that their status as white settler colonies established at the expense of local populations made them brothers in arms. This unholy dalliance officially began in 1953 when Daniel Malan, the prime minister of apartheid South Africa, conducted an official tour of Israel, which marked the beginning of a very close alliance.

In years to come, the alliance grew stronger with both apartheid nations learning from and supporting each other in repressing their respective native populations. Palestinian population centres were cut off from

each other in much the same way as South Africa created 'Bantustans', powerless black African statelets meant to ensure the exclusion of blacks from the South African political system.

The similarity was acknowledged and celebrated at the highest levels, with South African PM Hendrick Verwoerd, known as the architect of the Bantustan project, himself saying "The Jews took Israel from the Arabs after the Arabs had lived there for a thousand years. Israel, like South Africa, is an apartheid state." And while Israel would loudly condemn apartheid on international forums the reality was that it considered South Africa a kindred nation, with Israeli general Rafael Eitan saying that South African blacks "want to gain control over the white minority just like the Arabs here want to gain control over us... And we, like the white minority in South Africa, must act to prevent them from taking over."

Keeping these populations in check was also a shared priority and Israel would provide anti-riot vehicles, weapons and training for the forces of white South Africa; in the '80s hundreds of Israeli military advisors were stationed in South Africa while Pretoria's troops were training in Israel. Israel also helped their ideological cousins develop a nuclear programme, with Pretoria finishing at least six nuclear bombs, all of which were later dismantled when South African president F.W. de Klerk abandoned the nuclear programme in an effort to rehabilitate South Africa's global image.

Speaking of image, Israel often ran interference for South Africa in an effort to insulate their ally from foreign pressure, setting up a 'Joint Secretariat for Political and Psychological Warfare' in 1975 to conduct

"propaganda and psychological warfare," as part of a well-funded bilateral campaign to rehabilitate South Africa's international image.

But every action has a reaction, and as Israel cosied up to apartheid South Africa, the Palestine Liberation Organisation deepened its ties with Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.

Just as South Africa's white supremacist PM was one of the first major heads of state to visit Israel, one of the first leaders Mandela met on his release from jail in 1990 was none other than Yasser Arafat, who also asked Mandela's advice prior to the Oslo Accords. Mandela himself remained a lifelong supporter of the Palestinian cause and famously remarked that "Our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians."

As a result, the powerful Israeli lobby spent a red hot effort when it came to demonising Mandela and the ANC, with the Israeli-backed Anti-Defamation League condemning the ANC as "totalitarian, anti-human, anti-democratic, anti-Israel and anti-American."

Israel's greatest ally and partner in crime, the US, played a malign role as well, with strong evidence indicating that the CIA played a part in tracking Mandela's movements and leaking that information to the apartheid regime, leading to his 27-year-long incarceration. Mandela himself remained on the USA's terrorist watchlist till 2008.

Today, we see history come full circle, with the sons and daughters of those who struggled against oppression and injustice in South Africa seeking to free their Palestinian brothers and sisters from the shackles of a murderous regime. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

ADB's food security forum scheduled in April to tackle escalating food crisis

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum 2024 is set to take center stage from April 8 to 12, 2024, in Manila, Philippines to discuss actions for easing a worsening food crisis in the region.

This pivotal event, announced by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), aims to facilitate discussions on immediate actions to alleviate the worsening food crisis and strategize for long-term food security against the adverse impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss.

The forum would serve as an opportunity to evaluate the interim performance of ADB's

commitment to allocate a minimum of \$14 billion of its own resources to support food security between 2022 and 2025.

Additionally, it will outline ADB's forward program on food security, forging partnerships with a diverse array of stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to the ADB announcement, the Asia and the Pacific Food Security Forum 2024 will act as a platform for both public and private sector partners to showcase their thought leadership and innovative initiatives.

Participants will delve into discussions focused on constructing more

sustainable and resilient food systems, essential for navigating the challenges of climate, food, and nature in the region.

The significance of the forum extends beyond showcasing initiatives; it is poised to foster engagement with policymakers, government officials, development practitioners, food system and climate change experts, as well as ADB staff.

These interactions aim to build robust partnerships in the realms of policies, project implementation, and research, ultimately accelerating the transformation of food systems in Asia and the Pacific.



HYDERABAD: A vendor displaying quilts to attract the customers at his shop during winter season.

New cargo route important driver for Pakistan-China trade: Ambassador Hashmi

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi said that the new cargo route between Pakistan and China is an important driver for trade between the countries and a significant step forward in bilateral connectivity spectrum.

"A welcome development and an important driver for trade between Pakistan and China. A significant step forward in bilateral connectivity spectrum," he said in a statement. Ambassador Hashmi

said, four airlines with several weekly commercial flights were already operating between the two countries.

The new air cargo route was launched last week linking Ezhou Huahu Airport in central China's Hubei Province with Lahore. The Ezhou-Lahore cargo route is the first international air cargo route launched by SF Airlines in this year departing from Ezhou Huahu Airport, China's first cargo-focused airport.

FPCCI to hold Round Table Discussion on Packaging Sector on 17th

LAHORE (APP): Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) will hold "Round Table Discussion" on the Packaging Sector: Challenges and Opportunities" here at its Regional Office on January 17, (Wednesday).

The FPCCI spokesman told media here Monday that the packaging sector's "industry status" and issues will be discussed. All the stakeholders of the packaging sectors will attend the discussion. There will be five sessions in the Round Table Discussion. The first session will be introductory in which FPCCI Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Aijaz, Managing Director and CEO of Packages Limited, Syed Hyder Ali, Director & CEO of Century Paper & Board Mills Limited, Aftab Ahmed, CEO of Roshan Packages Limited.



NEIJIANG: Ambassador of Pakistan to China, Mr. Khalil Hashmi addressing a ceremony arranged by the city government of Neijiang city, celebrating the arrival of the first batch of 182 tons of Pakistani dry chilies.

Huge opportunities of investment available in AJK: Barrister Sultan

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said on Monday that huge opportunities of investment stood available in different sectors.

Talking to various public representative delegations at Jammu Kashmir house in the federal metropolis, the President invited the intending entrepreneurs from across the country besides the UK-based Pakistani Diaspora community to take benefit

of the bright opportunities of the available huge potential for investment in trade and industrial sectors in AJK especially in the twin industrial districts of Mirpur and Bhimber in particular.

Referring to the region's favourable climate and investment-friendly environment, the president said that the Private sector can invest in various sectors of Azad Kashmir. He said that besides it is natural resources Azad Kashmir has huge human resources.

"About 1.5 million people from Azad Kashmir are working in Europe, Middle East and North America", he said that there was no law and order problem in Azad Jammu Kashmir while the literacy rate was higher than the provinces of Pakistan.

He said that the proposed Muzaffarabad, Mansehra and Mirpur motorway and Dry port in the lake view city would further increase the scope of investment in the region.

China, Pakistan to forge strong software cooperation

BEIJING (APP): The 21st China International Software Corporation Conference was successfully held in Chengdu, China. The Cooperation Negotiation on Standardization and Internationalization, a sub forum of the conference, highlighted the significance of the growing software partnership between China and Pakistan.

During the event, Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman of the Pakistan Software Association, provided an insightful overview of Pakistan's software industry, highlighting the country's significant advancements in

cybersecurity, AI, gaming, and animation. He also emphasized the attractive incentives available through the Special Technology Zone Authority (STZA).

"Pakistani companies possess expertise in niche areas such as Fintech, Healthcare, E-commerce, and other solutions that are in high demand globally. Collaboration between China and Pakistan can extend beyond services to include joint ventures and co-development initiatives," Mr. Khan stated, he further highlighted the impact of Pakistani IT companies in African markets.



LAHORE: A vendor is unloading the woods from handcart to use as fuel at traditional mud oven at Misri Shah area of the Provincial Capital.

Pak needs extensive information outflow, data governance to revolutionize agrifood system: Experts

ISLAMABAD (APP): The experts at a webinar on the potential of agricultural food systems and lessening climate impacts have underscored the need to enhance the extensive flow of information to the stakeholders including media and manage the data governance for the advanced studies lying on the shelves to revolutionize the agrifood systems.

This was the gist of the Monday series webinar of the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) titled "Potential of Agrifood Systems and Mitigating

Climate Impacts" held here that was participated virtually by many online participants including members of academia, media and professionals.

Opening the discussion, the Executive Director, SDPI Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said food is a necessity and climate change is a reality that threatened its access and availability to the masses due to environmental degradation.

He said the year 2023 was declared the hottest year in our history and La Nina and El Nino impacts were creating havoc in the countries bearing the burden of its effects.

However, it is important to understand their impacts on the agriculture and food sectors.

Dr Suleri mentioned that in adverse weather scenarios services and manufacturing sectors can halt their services but the food and agriculture sectors will face irreversible impacts of crops and species loss due to shift in weather patterns.

He said, at the COP-28 moot, the FAO's baby step of producing a report on food system sustainability underlined the target of 32 percent CO2 removal from the crop sector through different strategies which

was a starting step but rather a positive one in the right direction.

He mentioned that the SDPI is conducting the dialogue as part of its series of efforts after its hackathon held before its flagship SDC conference in 2023 on food and agriculture with the support of the Canadian mission in Pakistan.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Representative in Pakistan, Florence Rolfe said that climate change is real and could not be denied anymore, either the world recorded the first or second hottest year in its history. She added that Pakistan

would have to adapt to climate change and extend effective incentives to its farmers in water conservation and crop productivity through alternative crops ensuring crop diversification.

She proposed that the country's due to rising temperature variability could focus on early crop sowing that can help generate more produce with the available water and resources provided the growing shift in pattern. She added that there was much scientific evidence on early crop sowing, however, the issue is that more production in the cotton crop.

LPC, Private Nursing Colleges sign MoU

LAHORE (APP): The MoU signing ceremony between Private Nursing Colleges Federation and Lahore Press Club (LPC) was held on Monday in a local hotel.

In the ceremony, Patron-in-Chief of Private Nursing Colleges Federation Mehmood Sadiq, President Nadeem Pal, Dr. Sania Khara, Lahore Press Club President Arshad Ansari, Secretary Zahid Abid, Senior Vice President Shiraz Hasnat, Vice President Amjad Usmani and all members of the governing body participated.

Arshad Ansari, while thanking the officials of the Private Nursing Colleges Federation, said that it is a

very welcome thing for the children of journalists that they will be able to get nursing education at a low cost. He said that the profession of nursing deserves high respect and it is a field in which there are job opportunities even today.

Dr. Sania Khara said that serving humanity is the mission of her federation and under this mission she is here today. He said that he and his team will also organize a medical camp in Lahore Press Club every month.

On this occasion, a luncheon was also organized in honor of the newly elected body of Lahore Press Club. Shields were also presented to the newly elected officials.



KARACHI: A view of the newly born cubs of African Lioness at Zoo in Provincial Capital.

Excitement at peak as Gilgit-Baltistan's annual Winter Feast kicks off

ISLAMABAD (APP): The enchanting landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan are set to witness an unprecedented celebration of winter sports as the annual seven-day Winter Feast commenced on Monday.

This year's festivities mark a historic milestone with the inclusion of the National Ice Hockey Championship, promising a week of exhilarating competitions and cultural events, according to event organizers.

For the first time in the festival's history, they said that the National Ice Hockey Championship takes center stage, drawing teams from various regions, including both male and

female competitors. The icy battlegrounds are ready to host an intense showdown of skill, speed, and teamwork as the players vie for victory.

Beyond the thrill of ice hockey, the festival boasts a lineup of diverse competitions, including Ice Skating and traditional local games such as Basra, Pindok, and Baalbut. Participants from across Gilgit-Baltistan are gearing up to showcase their prowess in these unique and culturally significant contests.

One of the highlights of this year's event is the active participation of female teams in various competitions.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Raza Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating E-Services/Mobile App at Lahore Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education.

Naqvi inaugurates 37 police stations, 5 projects in Gujranwala

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by the cabinet, embarked on an extensive 6-hour visit to Gujranwala, inaugurating 37 police stations, 5 projects, and inspecting the Lahore Sialkot Motorway Link Road.

The link road to Gujranwala is slated for traffic opening by January 31, accompanied by the construction of a flyover at 'Chan Da Qila' to connect the Expressway with GT Road, said a handout issued here on Monday.

The CM commended the progress on Gujranwala's roads, announcing the formation of a committee to finalize the design of the 'Chan Da Qila' Flyover. Updates on ongoing work at Gujranwala University and hospital upgrades.

CM inaugurates 'Arfa Teacher Chatbot' in honor of Arfa Karim

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a heartfelt tribute to Arfa Karim, the great daughter of the nation, during his visit to the Arfa Software Technology Park on Ferozepur Road here on Monday.

The CM inaugurated the "Arfa Teacher Chatbot" in honor of the visionary Arfa Karim and, as a symbol of remembrance, lit candles at the technology park. He also visited the Arfa Karim Technology Incubator, commending the Arfa Karim Foundation's endeavors in advancing IT initiatives.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed appreciation for the Arfa Karim Foundation team introduced to him, stating that there could be no better homage to Arfa Karim. He emphasized the role of digitalization and IT in aligning educational visions with contemporary requirements. The newly launched "Arfa Teacher Chatbot" is positioned as a tool to enhance Pakistan's positive global image and contribute to skill development.

Passenger bus overturns due to fog, 2 people die, 26 injured in Gujranwala

GUJRWALA (Online): A passenger bus has been overturned due to heavy fog in Gujranwala as a result of which 2 passengers were killed and 26 were seriously injured.

There were 50 passengers in the bus.

According to details, the bus full of passengers was going from Kohat to Lahore when it uncontrollably overturned due to heavy fog in Gujranwala while taking a turn.

'Women-driven EV 'Pink scooties' to take over streets of Punjab soon, Minister

Independent Report
LAHORE: Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hasan Murad said on Monday that the Punjab government has initiated a plan to introduce 'Pink EV Pink Scooties' to make women safer, which will provide livelihood to women for economic and domestic needs.

Talking to the PTV news channel, he said that the government of Punjab has initiated a program scheme to empower Pakistani females by introducing 'Pink Scooties', adding, that the government through a lucky draw will give over 2000 to 3000 scooties in the first phase of this scheme.

He explained that this scheme has various positive impacts on women and girls, adding, that women with Pink EV scooters will not wait at the bus stops for long hours for buses, vans and other transport they can travel from one place to another with a safe and friendly atmosphere. This ambitious initiative reflects the government's commitment to sustainable transportation solutions and environmental conservation, he added.

Talking about EV motorbikes and Rickshaws, he said that this initiative aims to provide a sustainable and eco-friendly mode of transportation while promoting the use of electric vehicles.

LHC wraps up petition seeking disbandment of Punjab care taker set up

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has wrapped up petitions seeking abolition of care taker set up in Punjab and constitution of new care taker set up declaring them in-fructuous in the light of reply from federation counsel.

The petitions filed by Sheikh Rashid and Zaman Virdig came up for hearing before single bench of LHC led by Justice Shahid Karim.

Federal government, election commission and governor Punjab have been made respondents in the petitions.

The petitioner took the plea the sitting government has completed its tenure after Supreme Court (SC) order for holding election on May 14 in Punjab. No care taker set up can stay after 90 days. The incumbent care taker government is working illegally and unconstitutionally in Punjab.

The care taker government of Punjab has abolished forthwith and order be issued for establishment of new interim set up in Punjab.

The counsel for federal government argued the said matter is pending hearing in Supreme Court (SC) too. SC has given order to hold election. Election schedule has been issued. The elections are going to be held on February 8.



KARACHI: Lady Health Workers and vaccinators of Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, at Karachi press club.

Home Deptt seeks details of focal persons other staff for election duty from DEOs

PESHAWAR (APP): The Home Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sought the details of focal persons and other staff including watchmen for election duty from the District Education Officers of all districts.

A letter issued here said that the focal persons should be nominated by all the district education officers and their data should be sent at the earliest, adding that all the watchmen should be assigned duties wherever the polling stations have been established.

In pursuance of the letter of the Home Department, the education department has instructed all the district education officers to formally nominate focal persons in connection with the general election 2024 and send their names along with related details. It further directed the DEOs to assign responsibilities to the watchmen of the schools.

International News

Yemen Houthi rebels fire missile at US warship in Red Sea in first attack after American-led strikes

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Yemen's Houthi rebels fired an anti-ship cruise missile toward an American destroyer in the Red Sea but a U.S. fighter jet shot it down in the latest attack roiling global shipping amid Israel's war with Hamas in the Gaza Strip, officials said.

The attack on Sunday marks the first U.S.-acknowledged fire by the Houthis since America and allied nations began strikes Friday on the rebels following weeks of assaults on shipping in the Red Sea.

The Houthis have targeted that crucial corridor linking Asian and Mideast energy and cargo shipments to the Suez Canal onward to Europe over the Israel-Hamas war, attacks that threaten to widen that conflict into a regional conflagration.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group allied with Iran that seized Yemen's capital in 2014, did not immediately acknowledge the attack.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the U.S. would retaliate for the latest attack, though President Joe Biden has said he "will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and the free flow of international commerce as necessary."

The Houthi fire on Sunday went in the direction of the USS Laboon, an Arleigh Burke-class destroyer operating in the southern reaches of the Red Sea, the U.S. military's Central Command said in a statement.

The missile came from near Hodeida, a Red Sea port city long held by the Houthis, the U.S. said.

"An anti-ship cruise missile was fired from Iranian-backed Houthi militant areas of Yemen toward USS Laboon," Central Command said. "There were no injuries or damage reported."



Swiss Federal Minister Guy Parmelin and Wang Shouwen, Chinese Vice Minister of the Ministry of Commerce shake hands after signing a joint statement of the free trade agreement, next to Swiss President Viola Amherd and Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China, Li Qiang during an official visit in Kehrsatz near Bern, Switzerland.

Pacific nation Nauru cuts ties to Taiwan, switches to China

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: The South Pacific nation of Nauru announced on Monday it was severing diplomatic ties with Taiwan and would instead recognise China.

The announcement came days after Taiwan elected the independence-leaning Lai Ching-te as its next president.

In a media release, the Nauru government said it would no longer recognise Taiwan "as a separate country" but "rather as an inalienable part of China's territory".

China claims democratic, self-ruled Taiwan as its own territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if needed.

Nauru said it would "sever diplomatic relations" with Taiwan immediately, and "no longer develop any official relations or official exchanges with Taiwan".

22 miners killed in Tanzania landslide

Monitoring Desk
DAR SALAAM: Twenty-two people have lost their lives following a landslide at a mine in northern Tanzania, officials said on Sunday.

The accident occurred in Simuyu region's Bariadi district, more than 500 kilometres north of the capital, Dodoma, burying the miners under heavy debris. "As we close the rescue operations, the death toll remains 22, all men," Faustine Mtiitu, acting commander for the region's fire and rescue force, told reporters on Sunday.

QatarEnergy pauses LNG shipments through Red Sea, seeking security advice

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: QatarEnergy, one of the world's largest exporters of liquefied natural gas, has stopped sending tankers via the Red Sea although production continues, a source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters on Monday.

At least four tankers used to carry Qatari LNG were held up over the weekend after US and British forces carried out air and sea strikes on Yemen in response to Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea, part of a route that accounts for about 15% of the world's shipping traffic.

The Al Ghariya, Al Huwaila and Al Nuaman had loaded LNG at Ras Laffan in Qatar and were supposed to head to the Suez Canal but stopped off the coast of Oman on Jan. 14, according to LSEG shiptracking data. The Al Rekayyat, which was heading back to Qatar, stopped along its route on Jan. 13 in the Red Sea.

"It is a pause to get security advice, if passing (through the) Red Sea remains unsafe we will go via the Cape," said a source with direct knowledge of the matter, referring to the considerably longer route round the Cape of Good Hope at Africa's southern tip.

The Qatari government's International Media Office and QatarEnergy did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Shipowners and managers of the four vessels including Teekay Shipping Glasgow, Pronav Ship Management, Nakilat Shipping Qatar Ltd and Shell's shipping and chartering arm STASCO also did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Qatar, the world's second largest exporter of LNG, shipped more than 75 million metric tons of the fuel in 2023.



Britain's Secretary of State for Defence Grant Shapps gives a speech at Lancaster House, in London, Britain.

Five die trying to cross Channel to UK in freezing cold

Monitoring Desk
CALAIS: Five migrants died and a sixth was in critical condition on Sunday after trying to reach Britain from northern France in freezing temperatures, the French maritime authority said.

The crew of a French tow vessel, the Abeille Normandie, went to the rescue and spotted "unconscious and lifeless people" in the water, an official said, estimating the water temperature at nine degrees Celsius.

Along the Wimereux embankment a journalist saw items of clothing and shoes abandoned by the migrants.

tempting to reach a vessel off the resort town of Wimereux when their small boat got into difficulty around two am, the maritime prefecture said.

More than 30 people were rescued, the maritime prefecture said in a statement. The fatalities were the first reported migrant deaths on the Channel in 2024. Authorities said four migrants died overnight, while a fifth body was found later on the beach.

The group was at-

China warns against bids to 'split apart' its territory

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said Taiwan's election, irrespective of its outcome, can never change the mere fact that there is only one China and Taiwan is a part of it.

"Taiwan has never been a country. It wasn't in the past, and it certainly won't be in the future," Wang Yi said in a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry in Cairo.

Any effort to that end, Wang warned, "seriously threatens the well-being of Taiwan compatriots, seriously harms the fundamental interests of the Chinese nation, and seriously jeopardises peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait region". Anyone trying to split apart China's territory would be "harshly punished", he warned, after the island chose Lai Ching-te, seen as a dangerous ally by ruling Communist Party, as president. Beijing claims Taiwan as its territory but has never renounced force to bring it under its control responded to Lai's election.

War on Gazans rages amid calls for ceasefire

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israeli tanks and aircraft hit areas in central and southern Gaza on Sunday, the 100th day of the ongoing aggression that has claimed a surging civilian death toll and ravaged the besieged Palestinian territory.

The conflict has created a dire humanitarian crisis for the 2.4 million people in Hamas-ruled Gaza, the United Nations and aid groups warn, and reduced much of the coastal strip to rubble. According to the health ministry in Gaza, at least 23,968 people have been killed, the majority of them women and children.

On the other hand, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in a press conference with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry called for a ceasefire in Gaza and the restoration of Palestinian statehood.

"It is necessary to insist on the establishment of an independent, fully sovereign state of Palestine on the 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital."

A joint statement from the two ministers urged an immediate end "to all acts of violence, killing and targeting of civilians and civilian establishments".

Putin and India's Modi discuss Ukraine, wish each other well in elections - Kremlin

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin held a phone call on Monday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, discussing Ukraine and wishing each other well in upcoming elections, the Kremlin said. The two leaders "expressed interest in further intensifying mutually beneficial bilateral ties" and touched upon "the situation in Ukraine".

Mexico sent 25,000 troops to Acapulco after Hurricane Otis. But it hasn't stopped the violence

Monitoring Desk
MEXICO CITY: The Mexican government sent 25,000 troops to Acapulco after the resort was hit by Hurricane Otis on Oct. 25, but apparently that hasn't stopped the violence this week.

The main Acapulco business chamber reported that gang threats and attacks have caused about 90% of the city's passenger vans to stop running, affecting the resort's main form of transport. The chamber said the violence was forcing businesses to close early on Thursday and Friday.

"Organized groups of people who have no conscience or commitment to Acapulco have committed criminal acts in broad daylight, threatening civilians with direct armed attacks, and this caused 90% of public transportation to shut down," wrote Alejandro Martinez Sidney, president of the National Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Services in Acapulco.

"If this situation continues, we will be forced to close businesses," he wrote in a statement Thursday. The problem continued into Friday, with few vans or buses seen in the streets.

Martinez Sidney was apparently referring to attacks on the privately-owned and operate passenger vans in recent days. Local media reported that at least three vans had been burned, a practice that gangs often use to enforce extortion demands for daily protection payments from van drivers.

The Category 5 hurricane killed 52 people and left 32 missing, and severely damaged almost all of the resort's hotels.

AJK President rejects India's protest over British envoy's visit to Mirpur-AJK

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on Monday rejected India's protest against the recent visit to Mirpur by British High Commissioner Jane Marriot, termed the Indian government's contention on the matter as highly ridiculous.

According to AJK officials, Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry said that the Indian government who hosted G20 summit events

in occupied Kashmir last year has no moral or legal justification to lodge a protest over the UK envoy's visit to Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

"India has no moral or legal justification to raise objections over foreign diplomats visiting Azad Kashmir", he added.

He further said that envoys of different countries have visited the region (Azad Kashmir) before, and they will continue to do so in the future.

Terming Indian ille-

gally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJ&K) as an internationally recognized disputed territory, the AJK President said that Kashmir has never been a part of India. He said that India should refrain from its expansionist designs and realize the ground reality that it could no longer hold Kashmiris hostage by the dint of force.

He said that the political and human rights situation in IOJ&K was further worsened since August 5, 2019.

Barrister Sultan said that the international community should take notice of the fast-deteriorating political and human rights situation in the region.

"The international community should take notice of the crimes committed against Kashmiris by the Indian occupation forces", Sultan urged adding that it was high time that the influential world governments should play their role to help stop bloodshed and violence in IOJ&K.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Interior, Aftab Akbar Durrani in a meeting with the 2nd Permanent Secretary of British Home Office Simon Ridley.



TEHRAN: Group photo of Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood and others in the delegation that visited Al-Zahra Women University under the leadership of Chairman HEC.

PPP presented people friendly manifesto: Gilani

MULTAN (APP): Former Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said that Pakistan People's Party presented masses-friendly manifesto to resolve issues at the gross root level.

While addressing party workers, Gilani remarked that PPP ensured record development projects in south Punjab. He added if PPP voted to

power, it would initiate and complete some other mega projects in the region.

Gilani observed that he took various initiatives for the uplift of the region. For the matchless progress of the region, the establishment of a province was of vital importance. When the region has its own province, then it would have representation in the Senate also.

Commissioner inspects ongoing lining work of Nasrat Cannal

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Syed Muhammad Sajjad Haider and Deputy Commissioner Zahid Hussain Rind visited the RD-249 site of Nasrat Canal near 68 Mile and inspected the lining work of the Cross Regulator.

On the occasion, XEN Irrigation Nasrat Division

Atta Muhammad Chajro and NESPAD Consultant briefed them about the regulator's ongoing lining work.

XEN informed that during the canal closure period the work of silt cleaning, necessary repairs and lining work was initiated to bring improvement in water flow.

HESCO anti-theft crackdown continues, 260 more connections identified

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) has identified 260 more connections involved in electricity theft during the last 24 hours including 3 commercial, one industrial and 256 residential connections.

According to the HESCO spokesperson, all apprehended connections have been disconnected, and detection bills of 157,262 units were issued to them valued at 3.916 million rupees.

The HESCO officials

have submitted letters for registration of cases against 228 consumers in different police stations for electricity theft under which 09 RIRs were lodged.

A total of more than 10,118.9 million rupees has been recovered during this 131-day operation by HESCO and so far 2220 accused have been found involved in electricity theft and 192 suspects have been arrested and one employee was terminated, three employees have been arrested, and 41 employees suspended during this campaign.



KARACHI: Jamat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi Chief, Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman addresses to media persons during press conference, at Idara-e-Noor-ul-Haq in Karachi.

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture urges fair sale of imported fertilizer on authorized rates

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA), a farmers' lobbying group, has demanded just distribution of imported fertilizer in all districts of Sindh as per the authorized rates.

Chairing a meeting of the chamber here on Monday its President Syed Meeran Muhammad Shah also sought action against the black marketing of fertilizer which had resulted in inflated prices.

According to him, the price of a urea bag was 3,600 but it was being sold at between Rs6,500 to Rs7,000 per bag at a price which the small farmers could not afford. He maintained that the wheat crop required one

more dose of fertilizer which required immediate start of the sale of imported wheat at the authorized rates in all districts of Sindh.

Shah urged the caretaker Sindh Chief Minister justice @Maqbool Baqar to ensure that the imported fertilizer was made available to farmers in the province.

The Chamber's President recalled that in 2023 the Sindh Government had fixed the wheat procurement rate at Rs4,000 per 40 kilogram. However, the cost of cultivation had enhanced by around 40 per cent in 2023-24 and that necessitated that the procurement price should be increased to Rs5,000 per 40 kg, he added.

Efforts afoot to control street crime in Sindh: Tessori

KARACHI (INP): Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori has said that steps are being taken by the government to control street crime in the province particularly in Karachi.

Talking to the media in Karachi, he said the government is taking steps to curb such crimes to ensure protection of the citizens. He announced that motorcycles and smartphones will be provided to those people by the Governor house whose motorcycles and mobile phones have been snatched or stolen in the city.

234 illegal profiteers receive fines of Rs.1.39 million

KARACHI (APP): City administration has imposed fines of over Rs.1390000 on 234 shopkeepers, vendors, and whole sellers found involved in the overpricing of essential items during the ongoing campaign against illegal profiteering and hoarding.

On directives of Commissioner Karachi, Muhammad Saleem Rajput, the campaign against illegal profiteers and hoarders has been further accelerated to ensure implementation on rates of essential items of daily use notified by the administration, according to a statement issued here on Monday.

Assistant commissioners of different towns and sub-divisions of Karachi visited various markets to check prices of items of daily use and inspected shops for grocery, meat, milk, poultry, vegetables, and fruits.

According to the district-wise reports submitted to the commissioner's office, fines of Rs.336500 were imposed on 40 illegal profiteers in district South.

Robbers took cash, mobiles worth millions from shop in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): A robbery incident was reported from Karachi in which the bandits looted the cash and box-packed mobile phones from a shop located in the Z-2 area of Gulshan-e-Maymar.

The CCTV footage of the incident came to light in which the armed bandits can be seen arriving at the shop in the guise of customers and looted the cash, and goods worth millions. During the robbery, a culprit on the other side of the counter can be seen engaged in a 'friendly' conversation with the shop owner.

The suspect asked for a shopping bag from the shopkeeper in a friendly manner to take the looted goods. The shopkeeper not only handed over stolen goods to the suspects but also provided them with bags to conceal the items. Earlier this month, a young boy was reportedly shot dead by culprits for resisting a robbery bid in Karachi's Surjani town area.

British Home Office delegation meets Interior Secretary

ISLAMABAD (APP): A delegation from the British Home Office headed by Simon Ridley met Interior Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani to discuss issues of mutual interest.

British High Commissioner Jane Marriot also participated in the meeting.

It was agreed in the meeting to further promote cooperation for the prevention of counter-terrorism and human trafficking.

It was also agreed to further increase the cooperation between the law enforcement agencies of the two countries.

The meeting also reviewed the progress on extradition agreements between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Simon Ridley informed the Interior Secretary about fake universities in the UK and discouraging people staying illegally on student visas in the United Kingdom.

The visa system for Pakistani nationals was being fully digitalised, whereby the visa acquisitions would become easier, he added.

Aftab Akbar Durrani said that Pakistan was providing all possible facilities for the transfer of Afghan refugees to Britain.

He informed the delegation that the government recently reduced the fee for

Candidates advised to strictly adhere to ECP code of conduct

HYDERABAD (APP): Deputy Commissioner/District Returning Officer Sanghar Dr Imran-ul-Hasan Khawaja held a meeting with provincial and national assembly candidates in his office regarding the code of conduct for the general elections 2024.

During the meeting, District Election Commissioner Shah Nawaz Brohi briefed all candidates from various political parties about the code of conduct, emphasizing that no political party flags or banners should be displayed on any government property or electric pole. The display of weapons or aerial firing will be considered a crime. Additionally, the use of local government or government machinery will also be restricted.

He stated that meetings or corner gatherings should be held at designated locations, and prior information should be provided to the district administration and police to ensure no security issues arise. Political leaders or candidates are not allowed to make statements that harm religious or political dignity, he added.

PARCO reports another oil theft incident from Bin Qasim

KARACHI (INP): Following a police complaint by Pak-Arab Refinery Company (PARCO), another incident of oil theft from a government pipeline has been reported from Karachi's Bin Qasim area on Monday.

Following a complaint by a PARCO employee, a case has been registered at the Bin Qasim police station against three individuals for allegedly stealing oil from the petroleum line of PARCO.

The three accused identified as Abdul Wahab, Javed, and Hasan Jatoti were named in the FIR for allegedly stealing oil from the PARCO pipeline for

diesel theft. The police officials stated that there is no arrests have been made in connection with the incident so far.

The police officials recalled that the cases of oil theft from government lines were also registered last year, however, the ring-leader of the group involved in stealing oil could not be arrested.

The investigations into the oil theft from the PARCO pipeline were underway when another incident of oil theft was reported in the vicinity of Steel Town.

On the complaint of PARCO Assistant Security Officer Rafiq, a case has been registered at Steel Town police station against an unknown accused for an attempt to steal oil.

According to police officials, a 52-year-old resident of Rahim Yar Khan, Muhammad Sohail was found dead at the hotel, who was set to fly to Malaysia tomorrow. A Dubai card was also found from the body, the police said.

They further said no torture marks were found on the deceased's body, while the cause of the death will come to light after the postmortem report.

According to the family, the deceased was suffering from respiratory and heart disease.

Courts not to compromise in dispensing justice to masses: AJK CJ

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chief Justice (CJ) Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan on Monday said that the superior courts will never compromise on their dignity in dispensing justice to the masses.

Addressing the 11th Judicial Conference under the auspices of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir here on Monday as chief guest, he pointed out that administrative injustice was the biggest reason behind increasing litigations in the courts that have to intervene to provide remedy to the sufferers and also stressed the lawyers participating in the conference to ensure implementations of the courts' orders

rather defying in the interest of clients.

The conference was presided over by Chief Justice High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Raja Sadaqat Hussain Khan and was participated by Judges of the higher judiciary, subordinate courts, Minister Law and Parliamentary Affairs Mian Abdul Waheed, Secretary Law Idress Abbasi, Law officers and a large number of lawyers including senior lawyers of the Supreme court.

The conference titled "Responsibility of Judiciary, Government, Lawyers and Litigants in the Dispensation of Justice" was held by the additional registrar of the high court

in his presentation that all the cases of 2018 and earlier had been disposed of by the High Court and subordinate district courts due to the specific administrative measures taken by the Chief Justice of High Court during the last two years.

Senior advocate and President Supreme Court Bar Association Raja Sajjad Ahmad, Sardar Hamid Raza Khan, President High Court Bar Association and Secretary Law Idress Abbasi presented their keynote thesis on the subject at the conference pointing out the hindrances in the dispensation of justice including bad governance, non-cooperation of the lawyers and non-awareness of the litigants.

Mayor Sukkur inspects development projects

SUKKUR (APP): Mayor Sukkur Barrister Arslan Sheikh on Monday inspected the development projects in several roads of Sukkur city.

He shook hands with the labourers busy doing piling, drilling work and commended them on working diligently on the public welfare project in a cold weather in the early morning.

The Mayor directed to utilise all the necessary resources for early construction of the Military road, saying that piling work should be moved forward swiftly along with accelerating pace of work.

3 bogies of Shalimar Express train derailed in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Three bogies of Shalimar Express on Monday derailed from the tracks near Bin Qasim Railway Station in Karachi, Railway spokesperson said.

According to the railway administration, a bogie of Lahore-bound Shalimar Express coming from Karachi derailed from the tracks near Bin Qasim Railway Station, private news channels reported. Authorities have said that rescue operations have been initiated, and the main track will be restored soon.

According to the railway administration, a bogie of Lahore-bound Shalimar Express coming from Karachi derailed from the tracks near Bin Qasim Railway Station, private news channels reported. Authorities have said that rescue operations have been initiated, and the main track will be restored soon.

Man's body found in Karachi hotel

KARACHI (INP): A man's body was found at a hotel located at Karachi's Shahr-e-Faisal on police said Monday.

According to police officials, a 52-year-old resident of Rahim Yar Khan, Muhammad Sohail was found dead at the hotel, who was set to fly to Malaysia tomorrow. A Dubai card was also found from the body, the police said.

They further said no torture marks were found on the deceased's body, while the cause of the death will come to light after the postmortem report.

According to the family, the deceased was suffering from respiratory and heart disease.

Business community calls for maximum cooperation with China in agriculture sector

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan can strengthen agricultural and food cooperation with China to maximize its export contribution. These collaborations can focus on niche products, partner on climate-resilient crops and drought-resistant technology, agritourism, private sector collaboration, which will deepen ties, diversify exports, and ensure long-term food security for both nations.

This was stated by Rafique Suleman, Convener FPCCI Rice Export Committee 2022-2023 and Ex Chairman, Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan.

In an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro recently, Rafique Suleman pointed out that China and Pakistan boast of strong cooperation in agriculture

and food, focusing on technology transfer, joint ventures, market access, knowledge sharing, which has helped strengthen Pakistan's agricultural and food capacity and expand its exports.

The agriculture and food exports in Pakistan jumped by 64 per cent during the first half of the current fiscal year 2023-24 (FY24).

The official data showed the country's total agriculture and food exports reached \$3.847 billion during July-December 2023 against \$2.345bn in the same period last year, an increase of \$1.502bn in absolute terms.

Visibly, the country is relying more on agri-food to achieve higher growth in overall exports.



KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) leader, Sharjeel Inam Memon addresses to media persons during press conference held at Bilawal House PPP Media Cell in Karachi.

Judo trials commenced at SAU under the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Programme

HYDERABAD (APP): The Judo trials commenced at Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam, under the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Programme.

The inauguration took place with the ribbon-cutting by the Vice-Chancellor, SAU Dr. Fatah Mari along with the Vice-Chancellor of Government College University (GCU), Hyderabad Dr. Tayyaba Zarif.

Addressing the audience, Dr. Mari expressed that participating in sports enhances the capabilities of youth, especially their physical strength and SAU is committed to promote both education and sports activities among the youth.

The Vice Chancellor of Government College University (GCU), Hyderabad Dr. Tayyaba Zarif said "I am happy to see that Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) management is providing sports opportunities especially to female students". She added, there is a need for girls to progress in the field of sports.

Director of sports Anwar Hussain Khanzada provided details about the program, mentioning that Judo trials for Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas regions have started, with 45 female and 82 male participants. While in the second phase, the trials from Karachi, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and Larkana.