

Independent

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Elections 2024:

Cabinet approves deployment of Pak army, civil armed forces

Forces will perform duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations, and will also act as a rapid response force

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Cabinet on Tuesday approved the deployment of Pakistan army and the civil armed forces to ensure the peaceful conduct of general elections across the country.

These forces will perform duties at sensitive constituencies and polling stations, and will also act as a rapid response force.

The decision came following the submission of a summary by the federal Interior Ministry in the meeting.

The cabinet which met here under the chairmanship of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, also discussed in detail the recommendation with re-

spect to the digitization and restructuring of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

After a thorough discussion of the proposals made in light of the opinions of the cabinet members regarding the restructuring and digitization of the FBR, the prime minister directed to establish an inter-ministerial committee under the supervision of the caretaker finance minister.

Other members of the committee will include federal ministers for privatisation, foreign affairs, commerce, energy, law and justice and information technology.

The committee will present its recommendations regarding these pro-

posals in the next meeting of the federal cabinet.

The cabinet appreciated the efforts of Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar in increasing the tax revenue and improving the tax-GDP ratio. The cabinet also admired the finance minister for presenting detailed proposals regarding the administrative structure of the FBR.

The prime minister and all members of the cabinet unanimously supported the proposals regarding the FBR reforms and reiterated that the caretaker government should play its due role in concluding the FBR reform agenda.



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

No citizen should feel like a minority on account of religion: CM

KARACHI (APP): The Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice @ Maqbool Baqar speaking at a conference for Minority Rights said that no citizen should feel like a minority in their own country on account of religion.

The CM said that he has always believed that confronting uncomfortable truths and introspection is the key to a better future. He added that conferences like these also have another crucial function: they reiterate our commitment to upholding the rights of non-Muslim citizens, particularly their right to freely profess, practice, and propagate their faith.

The conference was organized by the Department for Minorities Affairs in collaboration with the Pakistan Arts Council at its auditorium on Tuesday.

Today, fundamental rights and civil liberties are in jeopardy throughout the world as right-wing regimes attempt to further marginalize vulnerable communities, the CM said and added that the Indian Supreme Court validated

the regime's decision to build a temple on the site of the Babri mosque. "At the same time, courts throughout Pakistan have done well to uphold religious liberties," he said.

Baqar said that in 2014, the Supreme Court took suo motu cognizance of an attack on a church in Peshawar. While laying down clear directions for the protection of religious sites, the Supreme Court held that "We are all members of one race of humans with common challenges, and we cannot confront these challenges without forging a common alliance. This paradigm shift in the world around us can be achieved at the international and domestic levels only by discouraging sectarian, racial and ethnic biases which are violative of shared values and fundamental rights, and by the promotion of and strict compliance with these values and rights." The CM said that in Salamat Mansha's case, the Supreme Court granted bail to a person accused of offences against religion.

Maqbool Baqar said that the Supreme Court in

Salamat Mansha's case also highlighted how such allegations were often levelled to settle personal scores and the tendency of violent mobs to pronounce judgments before the courts of law have declared a person guilty. "The significance of these judgments however exceeds their jurisprudential value," he said and added that to the contrary, their significance was underscored by the Court refusing to be swayed by the prevailing winds of extremism. Furthermore, judgments like these are also significant in assuring citizens that their rights do not rest on tenuous footings.

Baqar said that unfortunately, extremism and bigotry have seeped across large segments of our population. He said that concerted efforts and forging alliances with progressives would allow us to reverse the tide of violent extremism.

The CM said that as a signatory to international conventions such as the ICCPR, we must take concrete steps towards broadening the frontiers of religious freedom.

PPP to end politics of hatred: Bilawal

CHINIOT/FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that his party has jumped into the political arena to weed out the politics of hatred and division of the masses.

Addressing a public gathering in Chiniot on Tuesday, he said, "We are not interested in aggravating the political and economic situation while promoting political differences into political enmity. The PPP has never been involved in the politics of victimization rather we want to live and let others live."

He said that the PPP had floated a unique manifesto of 10 points for eradication of poverty and improve lifestyle of the masses. He said that provision of free electricity up to 300 units was the top priority the PPP after coming to power whereas the people belonging to the low strata of life would also be facilitated with 3 million houses along with their ownership rights.

He said that the PPP had initiated a program of 2 million houses for flood-stricken people in Sindh and such projects would also be launched in other parts of the country. "The PPP will also increase the amount of Benazir Income Support Program while women would be provided with interest-free loans to start their own business."

The PPP also planned to issue Kisan Cards for providing direct subsidy to farmers on agriculture equipment whereas Youth Cards would be issued to the young generation and they would be facilitated with vocational training and employment opportunities," he added.



CHINIOT: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public gathering at Hockey Stadium.

Shamshad lauds SECP's efforts in promoting sustainable business practices

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue and Economic Affairs, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar has commended the efforts of Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in promoting sustainable business practices in the corporate sector of Pakistan.

Addressing the participants, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar also appreciated the active involvement of UN Women Pakistan in promoting gender inclusive interventions and enabling constructive deliberations. She elaborated on commitment of government of Pakistan in addressing climate change related focusing on developing a green taxonomy, strengthening disclosure guidelines, establishing a blended agriculture finance fund, and collaborating with global re-insurers for disaster risk financing.

The finance minister emphasized the importance of accountability, transparency, and sustainability-linked products, highlighting the private sector's role in climate investments. She appreciated SECP's initiatives, including the ESG Guidelines, ESG Sustain portal and collaborations with ICAP, PICG and PSX for capacity as steps in right direction.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Minister for Health, Social Welfare and Public Health Engineering, Dr. Saad Khalid Niaz along with others addresses to media persons during press conference held at EPI Headquarters building in Karachi.

Arshad Wali says Sindh set to host 1st Thar off-road bike rally from February 1st to 5th

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Baloch protesters, who had been staging a sit-in outside Islamabad's National Press Club (NPC) since December, called off their demonstration on Tuesday.

This decision followed a letter from the NPC to Islamabad police requesting the removal of the Baloch rights camp, a request that was retracted after facing widespread criticism, including from journalists.

As per details, the deadly collision took place in Madeji between a passenger van and a rickshaw due to dense fog. As a result, four women were killed, while two other people sustained injuries. The bodies and injured were moved to the hospital. In a separate incident, last week, three people died after a passenger bus plunged into the river in Bahawalpur. According to the rescue officials, the accident took place near Nowshera Jadede, Bahawalpur, where an over-speeding passenger bus overturned and plunged into the river leaving three killed and 17 others injured.



KARACHI: Consul General of South Korea Yi Sung Ho meeting with Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori

49 foreign journalists issued visas so far for coverage of upcoming elections: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Tuesday that certain elements were just harping on the rumours that "no foreign journalists and observers would be arriving Pakistan for coverage of upcoming general elections" which was contrary to facts.

He was addressing a press conference flanked by Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid, Executive Director General External Publicity Wing Amreen Jan, Principal Information Officer Dr Tariq Mehmood and Director General Radio Pakistan Saeed Sheikh.

Many international media persons had applied

for visas to cover the elections, Murtaza Solangi said adding that 49 visas (for Islamabad Lahore and Karachi) had been issued as of today while 32 requests were under process with many other requests were still being received from different stations of the world.

He said that so far 174 requests for ECP Accreditation Cards had been received and processed for foreign media representatives and their associated Pakistani staff who were based in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Murtaza Solangi addressing a press conference at PTV Headquarters.

Mayor Karachi lays foundation stone of construction of girls college in Korangi

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday said that the construction of a girl's college in Korangi will provide facilities to the girl students of the area and such steps need to be taken to educate the girls.

He said this while addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the construction of a girl's college in Allahwala Town Korangi on Tuesday.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Town Chairman Muhammad Naeem Sheikh, Vice Chairman Zareen Awan, Dr Tahir Khan, Jani Memon, Ahmed Raza, Naveed Munna, Tanveer and other public representatives were also present on the occasion.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that with the construction of the girls' college, this land was saved from grabbing, now a good educational institution is being built for our girls students. The secondary school will also be included in this college, which will facilitate the students living in Korangi to get higher education near their residence, he said.

He said that today, our presence here is proof that one can work if they want to, Korangi is a stronghold of the PPP, it is our responsibility to provide basic necessities to the citizens and the restoration work of Korangi's infrastructure, parks and stormwater drains is going on.

Pakistan is brother, friend and neighboring country: Iranian envoy

Islamabad (Online): Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghaddam said that Pakistan and Iran are two brother, friend and neighboring countries. Both have supported each other in different fields of history and in difficult situations.

In a statement on X, Iranian Ambassador said that historical and deep rooted relations between the brotherly countries provide a basis for resolving the issues that plague the relationship.

The friendship between the two countries deepened due to the recent shared threat of terrorism. Hopefully we will fight terrorism with mutual cooperation.

OIC condemns opening of "Ram Temple" on demolished Babri Mosque

ISLAMABAD (APP): The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Tuesday expressed grave concern over the recent construction and inauguration of "Ram Temple" at the site of the previously demolished Babri Mosque, located in the Indian city of Ayodhya.

In line with the OIC position expressed by the Council of Foreign Ministers in its previous sessions, the General Secretariat denounced these actions aimed at obliterating the Islamic landmarks represented by the Babri Mosque, which has stood tall in the exact location for five centuries, a statement issued by the OIC General Secretariat said.

SC summons Qasim Suri in election rigging case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Tuesday summoned former deputy speaker national assembly and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI) leader Qasim Suri in person next month in an appeal against orders of re-election in NA-265.

The court sought a report from the Registrar's Office within three weeks on non-fixation of Qasim Suri's case for long time after the issuance of a stay order against the verdict of the election tribunal.

The bench also served notices to Lashkrai Raisani and summoned him on the next date. A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa heard the appeal of Qasim Suri challenging the decision of the election.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Communications Shahid Ashraf Tarar chairs a meeting of Election Committee to review security arrangements for upcoming General Elections 2024 at Sindh Secretariat.

Shahid Ashraf Tarar reviews arrangements for upcoming polls

Independent Report KARACHI: Federal Minister for Communications, Railways and Maritime Affairs Shahid Ashraf Tarar on Tuesday, called for thorough compliance with directives of the Election Commission of Pakistan to ensure free, fair and transparent polls in a secure and organized manner.

He was presiding over a meeting of a high-level committee to oversee security for the upcoming general elections scheduled on February 8, 2024.

The committee was constituted by the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar to ensure the security and peaceful conduct of the 2024 general elections, said a statement issued here.

Chief Secretary

Sindh, Dr. Muhammad Fakhr e Alam, caretaker Provincial Home Minister Brigadier (ret'd) Harris Nawaz, Additional Chief Secretary Home Muhammad Iqbal Memon, Director General Pakistan Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas, Inspector General Police Riffat Mukhtar Raja, and representatives of Pakistan Army attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed in detail overall arrangements particularly security measures envisaged for the upcoming general elections. Sindh CS briefed the meeting on administrative measures while DG Rangers and IG Sindh provided insights into the security situation and preparedness.



KARACHI: Markazi Muslim League Vice President, Faisal Nadeem along with Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Senior Deputy Convener, Mustafa Kamal addressing to media persons during press conference after meeting regarding upcoming General Election 2024, held at PMML Office in Karachi.

Baloch protesters call off Islamabad sit-in

ISLAMABAD (INP) - The Baloch protesters, who had been staging a sit-in outside Islamabad's National Press Club (NPC) since December, called off their demonstration on Tuesday.

This decision followed a letter from the NPC to Islamabad police requesting the removal of the Baloch rights camp, a request that was retracted after facing widespread criticism, including from journalists.

Four women killed, two injured in Shikarpur road accident

SHIKARPURA (INP): In a horrific incident, four women were killed and two were injured in a road accident in Shikarpur.

As per details, the deadly collision took place in Madeji between a passenger van and a rickshaw due to dense fog. As a result, four women were killed, while two other people sustained injuries. The bodies and injured were moved to the hospital. In a separate incident, last week, three people died after a passenger bus plunged into the river in Bahawalpur. According to the rescue officials, the accident took place near Nowshera Jadede, Bahawalpur, where an over-speeding passenger bus overturned and plunged into the river leaving three killed and 17 others injured.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Our 'free' media

Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar told a CNBC interviewer during his recent trip to Davos that the media in Pakistan was "freer than in the West", while arguing that Western media operates under far more regulations compared to the media in Pakistan.

Mr Kakar's words brought to mind a similar statement made by former prime minister Imran Khan during his tenure, when he had made the same appraisal of press freedoms in Pakistan in response to a probing question by a foreign interviewer.

The answer had been as scandalising to practising journalists then as it is now. Taken without context, their words seemed to suggest that the relative lack of formal regulatory oversight gives Pakistani media some sort of qualitative edge. Anyone familiar with the country and its media landscape knows that this is clearly not the case.

The truth is that whenever the Pakistani media and working journalists have attempted to assert their freedoms in recent years, they have invariably been made to pay a very heavy price for it.

Starting from the days when Nawaz Sharif last fell out of favour with the establishment, powerful operators acting behind the scenes have used progressively coercive means to whip the media into lining up with their narratives. This publication is among those that were made to suffer the worst of such practices.

So weary have media practitioners now become of the sword constantly hanging above their necks that various journalists' and media workers' representative bodies resolved this past weekend to begin pushing back against it.

The Coalition for Free Media, as it is being called, is a welcome effort that had been long awaited. It is hoped it will be able to wrest back a modicum of the independence Pakistani media has been gradually deprived of over the last decade.

From high-profile abductions that have gone unquestioned to unresolved murders of journalists, the Pakistani media fraternity has suffered much in silence, while being forced to cede more and more control over editorial decision-making to unaccountable individuals.

Press 'advisories', a relic of the Zia era, now seem to be issued every week. Both overt and veiled threats are issued periodically, ensuring that few dare question the state's diktats.

There is a growing realisation that protecting press freedoms is no longer a question of self-preservation or interest: it is clear that the Fourth Estate cannot continue to watch out for the public interest and fulfil its duty to speak truth to power if it allows itself to continue to be divided and exploited by a predatory state.

In this suffocating environment, more and more journalists and media practitioners are realising that their safety is in presenting a united front. More power to those leading the change.

Winners and losers

Dr Niaz Murtaza

Who will the winners and losers be in the 2024 polls? Some jokingly say that even though the polls themselves are not certain, the winner is.

But if a (favourable) winner is certain, why would anyone try to delay them, especially as the US may link a critical new IMF loan to polls? So, barring a national calamity, polls on Feb 8 look certain, still months late constitutionally. And yet there is doubt.

There is often uncertainty even in the US despite credible opinion and actual polls. In our context, a recent poll shows the PTI and PML-N close in Punjab. But are our opinion polls reliable? The 2013 and 2018 ones were reasonably so. Such polls take national or provincial samples and not constituency ones. So, they predict the vote ratios of parties overall but not their number of seats.

The average of four polls (Gallup, Pulse, IPOR and SDPI) completed within two months of the 2018 polls had the PTI, PML-N and the PPP getting 28.3 per cent, 27.5pc and 16.5pc votes respectively. They actually got 31.8pc, 24.4pc and 13pc. So, they erred from the actual ratios by less than 4pc, which is common even in the US.

In 2013, the average of two polls (Gallup and IRI) showed the PML-N, PPP and the PTI getting 36pc, 15.5pc and 16pc of the votes, even closer to the 33pc, 15pc and 17pc actual ratios. So, the polls of such firms can't be rejected outright as biased or unscientific, despite the many constraints in carrying out accurate surveys in Pakistan.

But how did the vote ratios translate into

seats? The party with the highest actual vote ratio got 10-15pc more seats: the PTI 43pc seats in 2018 and PML-N 46pc in 2013 but the PPP got only 2pc more in 2008.

What can we expect in 2024? Gallup has withheld national results this time. But its recent poll shows the PTI at 34pc and PML-N at 32pc in all-crucial Punjab, ie, close as in 2018 nationally. Given the 2013 and 2018 trends, the PTI may win 40-45pc of seats there.

The PTI got 45pc support in KP (the PML-N and JUI-F together got 24pc) and 19pc in Sindh (PPP got 42pc) in this poll. It would suggest a PTI set-up nationally and in Punjab and KP, a PPP one in Sindh, with Balochistan unclear.

There are two big caveats though. Polling over the months in 2018 had shown the PTI's vote ratio increasing but PML-N's falling. Gallup polls over the months in Punjab now show the reverse. This momentum may mean a PML-N win. But both trends are odd. In 2017-18, the PML-N had given 6pc growth, low inflation, CPEC and a cut in terrorism and power outages. In 2022-23, it gave near-zero growth and record inflation. So, neither trend reflects party outcomes. But the commonality is that in 2018, the PML-N faced the establishment's wrath which now PTI faces even more. This may have played a key role in changing the choices of voter blocs watching for such signals.

The bigger caveat is there is no PTI in the polls, unfairly removed by the party symbol case verdict. No law allows the Election Commission of Pakistan to reject party poll results. But it did so twice with the PTI. Laws allow the ECP to handle national

polls disputes via tribunals run by judges, as it isn't a judicial body. Arguably, the ECP nixed the PTI's party polls without law and capacity. PTI horses must run as independents though it's unclear if any law says so.

Party symbols don't represent their registration but are given in elections due to illiteracy. The ECP says PTI is still registered with it. So, its winners must be treated as its assembly representatives, subject to party loyalty laws, even if the PTI's symbol doesn't appear on ballots. Forcing them to run as independents may confuse voters, and more critically, make PTI winners open to poaching by others waiting with their nets. It all appears designed. It follows the imprisonment of the PTI's top leaders, forced desertion and rally bans. More novel ploys may emerge to undercut the party until and after polls.

All this may make 2024 polls more rigged than the 2018 and 1990s ones and on a par with those held in 1985 and 2002 by unconstitutional regimes. Similar rigging can apparently happen even under constitutional rule.

This may usher in an inept and weak PML-N regime reliant on small parties, more so than the PTI in 2018. Even if the PTI wins by magic, we will still have an inept set-up with uneasy ties with all key internal and external forces.

The only (tiny) hope is if the winner is allowed to appoint a competent cabinet, letting the Sharifs or Imran Khan run the parties, as Congress did after Rajiv Gandhi's death to usher in India's progress under Manmohan Singh. Otherwise, even if the winners are not certain, the losers are the masses. -- Courtesy Dawn

Blinding rage

Shahzad Sharjeel

Blinding pretenders to the throne has been an age-old favourite in our part of the world. In addition to making the aspirant an example for other external adventurists and curbing in-house ambition, the injury also added to the challenge of running chaotic kingdoms that frequently experienced uprisings the monarch usually had to quell, leading the forces at the empire's disposal personally in the battlefield.

Lest anyone assume that the despicable practice was limited to kings and their sons or brothers, in the 16th century, Mallu Adil Shah of Bijapur was blinded on his Maratha grandmother's orders to promote another brother in the line of succession.

In an age when physical prowess was at least as much, if not more, important than the intellectual capacity to mount a credible challenge, blinding an opponent must have appeared as sufficient a minimisation of future risk as possible, short of outright extermination. Maybe, in their sick minds, they occupied a status one rung higher than those of murderers.

In the Bhagalpur district of Bihar in 1980, police officials, with the knowledge of at least one minister and active indifference of officers as senior as DIG and IG, went about blinding as many as 87 suspects in custody over a nine-month period. They claimed this was the only way to stem the tide of criminal activities in the area. The readers shall be spared the gruesome details of how these protectors of life and honour went about their gory business. It

took some brilliant and courageous investigative reporting to expose the case. Inquiries were initiated, and 15 police officials, including the superintendent of Bhagalpur Central Prison, were suspended.

The superintendent, who had forwarded the victims' petitions for relief to the chief judicial magistrate, along with his forwarding letter, was accused of failing to record and report the undertrials' condition upon receiving their custody at the jail. The paity bhais (people wearing the same belt/badge) closed ranks and claimed that enraged mobs handled all the victims and that they were brought to the police stations already blinded.

The Indian supreme court heard the matter for three years. It used 'grandiloquent' language to express its anguish, as Arun Shourie, former editor of the Indian Express, puts it in his book The Commissioner For Lost Causes. However, the court did little by way of punishing the policemen whose suspensions were, one by one, revoked, and some were even promoted to more important positions.

Those victims who survived the ordeal got Rs30,000 deposited in their bank accounts as compensation to live off its interest, a grand amount of Rs750 a month at its highest point before it was discontinued altogether in 2019.

Recently, the caretaker chief minister of Punjab approved action against 18 Directorate of Drug Control officials in the Avastin eye injection case. More than 60 people have lost their vision completely or partially

because of the administration, without consent, of apparently contaminated supplies of the drug. The inspectors were responsible for ensuring safety standards.

Some people would consider it unfair to equate the Bhagalpur atrocity with Punjab officialdom's failure. Consider that expired stents were put in people's hearts not too long ago. Technicians and, in one case, a security guard were found to be performing surgeries. According to media reports, a doctor and a motor mechanic were running a kidney transplant racket. Inquiries and 'action' will be initiated; however, 'gown brothers,' too, have each other's back. Even if the culprits are apprehended, tried, and punished, how do you bring back the dead or compensate for a limb or an organ?

The days of absolute monarchs and tyrants may have been over, and the modern state guarantees rights and protections to its citizens. However, in the absence of constant vigilance, accountability, and timely justice, tiny state officials and common criminals can turn diabolical. One is reminded of Iqbal's poem Ghulam Qadir Rohilla, in which he laments the brutality of the invader who gouged out Mughal emperor Shah Alam II's eyes upon overthrowing him. The Rohilla at least had an old grouse to hide behind, as his erstwhile retainer had purportedly gotten him castrated in childhood to serve inside the royal harem. What harm did Punjab's hapless citizens bring the health officials to deprive them of their sight? -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

BOI assures support for transferring of 'Nantong HiTide Biotechnology'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Board of Investment, Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput on Tuesday assured full support for the establishment and transfer of Nantong HiTide Biotechnology's to Pakistan.

Secretary Board of Investment, Dr. Muhammad Sohail Rajput, hosted a distinguished delegation led by Lin Xuyue, President of Nantong HiTide Biotechnology, in a productive meeting at his office, said a press release issued here.

Nantong HiTide, Biotechnology is engaged in Veterinary bio-product manufacturing and supply. There is an emphasis on innovation and R&D other than production, sales, technology consultation, and service of biological solutions for

animal disease control. Their commitment to providing safe and high-quality products aligns with their dedication to serving farmers in addressing animal health challenges.

The discussions during the meeting centered around a potential collaboration for the development of a foot and mouth disease vaccine in Pakistan.

The proposed collaboration includes potential avenues such as establishing a lab in Pakistan, joint ventures, and research and development partnerships.

Nantong HiTide Biotechnology aims to bring its advanced technology and personalized support to Pakistan's agriculture and livestock sector.

Chen Shang, a Board

Member of HiTide Biotechnology, highlighted the effectiveness and affordability of their vaccines, aiming to enhance animal health for farmers in Pakistan.

The company plans to establish a new facility in Pakistan, focusing on the development and production of high-quality vaccines for cattle, pigs, poultry, and other animals.

The company will establish its lab in Pakistan and transfer technology. Nantong HiTide Biotechnology was established in 2017 by Dr. Lin Xuyue, the company stands as a leading private high-tech enterprise, specializing in animal vaccines and adjuvants. Notably, some of the company's products have outperformed industry giants like Pfizer and Boehringer Ingelheim.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Ener Tech Abdullah al-Mutairi called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Pakistan to facilitate Chinese companies in field of smart city construction

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan is actively promoting digitization and embracing new technologies and industries to foster comprehensive economic and social development.

"The Pakistan Embassy in China will continue to provide comprehensive support and assistance to Chinese companies, including Beijing Urban Construction Intelligent Control (BUCIC), in facilitating the implementation of big data projects in Pakistan and promoting cooperation

between China and Pakistan in the field of smart city construction," said Aslam Chaudhary, Economic Minister in Pakistan Embassy in Beijing.

Aslam Chaudhary led a delegation to BUCIC to enhance bilateral cooperation in the field of digital city development. During the visit, the delegation toured BUCIC's state-of-the-art facilities, which encompassed the Digital Experience Center and the Urban Rail Transit Cloud Intelligent IoT

Laboratory. They were highly impressed by the digital transportation and smart city-related products, with a special focus on the integrated intelligent control center.

The integrated control center incorporates a range of facilities and functions, such as station control rooms, customer service centers, fire control rooms and ticket booths, contributing to intelligent operation and maintenance. China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday.

Vegetable dehydration initiative can help generate handsome income

MULTAN (APP): The National Productivity Organization (NPO) arranged an awareness session on vegetable dehydration to improve farmers' income and improve exports.

General Manager NPO Wajeeha Ahmed Abbasi while addressing the participants at Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) remarked that NPO was

imparting information about vegetable dehydration across the country.

The government is committed to enhancing vegetable exports, she added.

President Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Rashid Iqbal stated that there were immense opportunities in foreign markets for vegetable export.

Gold up by Rs.500

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.500 and was sold at Rs.215,200 on Tuesday compared to its sale at Rs.214,700 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.429 to Rs.184,500 from Rs.184,071 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.169,124 from Rs.168,731, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

Sauqib Fayyaz says: FPCCI to support look Africa initiative & FTAs

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has stressed that the absence of free trade agreements (FTAs) with the African nations should be addressed; which, in turn, has limited our trade volume with a huge continent comprising of 54 countries. There are significant economies in Africa with whom we can multiply our trade volumes within years – both bilaterally & exports to the region cumulatively, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz



Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, maintained that the apex body will fully support Look Africa Policy Initiative of the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan; and, will advocate signing of free trade agreements (FTAs) with the African nations. He specifically emphasized to have bilateral FTAs with the

top 7 economies of Africa; i.e. Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Ethiopia, Morocco and Kenya – accounting for approximately 78 percent of the total GDP of Africa; with each having country GDP in upwards of \$100 billion.

It is pertinent to note that The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and Pan African Chambers of Commerce & Industry (PACCI) have held a high-profile interactive session to identify and explore the areas of mutual interests:

trade promotion activities; chamber-to-chamber linkages; investments & JVs; business tourism and economic cooperation.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, apprised that Pakistan's exports to Africa, as a whole, demonstrated stagnation at around \$1,500 million in 2022.

POL import bill declines by 13.78% in 1st half of FY 2023-24

ISLAMABAD (APP): The imports of the overall petroleum group contracted by 13.78 per cent during the first six months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The total imports of the petroleum group during July-December (2023-24) stood at \$ 8,005.784 million against the imports of \$9,285.522 million during the same

period of last year. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 24 per cent, from \$ 4,202.185 million last year to \$3,193,849 million during the period under review. Likewise, the imports of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) declined by 4.96 per cent from \$1,949.704 million last year to \$ 1,852.996 million this year whereas petroleum crude dipped by 5.94 per cent from \$ 2,776.186 million.

Sargodha Citrus Fest kicks off in Federal capital

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The first-ever two-day 'Sargodha Citrus Fest' kicked off at COMSTECH on Tuesday displaying around 45 varieties of citrus fruit and its products attracting a large number of visitors.

The fest is being organized by the University of Sargodha and COMSTECH jointly where the visitors enjoy the products, especially citrus fruit-made cakes, juices, desserts, candies and green tea besides a variety of citrus fruit.

The varieties of citrus fruit including Rangpur Lime, Carrizo Citrage, Gada Dahi, Rangpur, Gilgil, Miha, Pishawari Mittha, Kinnow, Seedless Lemon, Jati Khati, Bara Masii, Ornad Blood, Mosambi, Murcott and many others were exhibited through several stalls. The citrus fest is set

to captivate visitors especially fruit enthusiasts of all ages on Wednesday too offering citrus-infused culinary delights and interactive exhibits.

The staff of the University of Sargodha briefed the visitors about the products made from citrus fruit and offered them to taste.

Speaking on the occasion, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha, Prof. Dr. Qaisar Abbas welcomed the participants of the inaugural ceremony and said that this is a first-ever citrus exhibition being organized in Islamabad.

Prof. Qaisar Abbas shed light on the brief history of the University of Sargodha and said that the uniqueness of this university is that it has faculties of both medical and agriculture.

PSX stays bullish, gains 514 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Tuesday, gaining 514.81 points, a positive change of 0.81 percent, closing at 64,454.22 points against 63,939.41 points the previous trading day.

A total of 425,709,896 shares valuing Rs.24,995 billion were traded during the day as compared to 298,699,061 shares valuing Rs.12,515 billion the last day.

Some 354 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 209 of them recorded gains and 127 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 18 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were Oil and Gas Development with 52,947,125 shares at Rs.136.50 per share, Fauji Foods Ltd with 44,935,382 shares.

Governor emphasizes importance of alternative medicine in Punjab

Independent Report
LAHORE: Federal Health Minister Nadeem Jan called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held about the measures taken in the health sector. Punjab Governor appreciated the services rendered by Federal Health Minister and gave suggestions for reforming the system in view of misuse of health card in the past. Governor Punjab also emphasized the importance of alternative medicine.

due to the measures taken in the health sector. He said that Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) should also pay special attention to the cleanliness of infrastructure, kitchens, and washrooms of medical colleges, hospitals and student hostels.

On this occasion, Federal Health Minister Nadeem Jan informed Governor Punjab about the measures taken in the health sector. He said that revolutionary measures are being taken along with the policy of producing the basic ingredients of medicines at the local level in Pakistan.

Later, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman/Chancellor presided over the 19th Convocation of Lahore College for Women University. Speaking on this

occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that our religion has laid great emphasis on education. The first word revealed to our last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) from Allah Almighty was Iqra, which means to read, to seek knowledge. Governor Punjab urged the students to develop a penchant for knowledge.

Governor Punjab said that education provides opportunities to get a job, but the real success is one's character that guarantees success in life and hereafter. He said that the students should develop qualities like truthfulness, honesty, and tolerance in their character. Governor Punjab said that there are many positive things in our, we should look at the positive aspects of society.



LAHORE: Federal Health Minister Nadeem Jan called on Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

KP Governor writes to caretaker CM for provision of medicines to hospitals

Independent Report
PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Ghulam Ali has written a letter to the interim Chief Minister Arshad Hussain Shah here urging immediate provision of essential and emergency medicines to government hospitals.

Drawing the attention of the KP CM to the issue, the Governor said that the shortage of emergency medicines including life-saving drugs, anti-rabies vaccines and immunoglobulins in the government hospitals was a matter

of grave concern and posing a threat to the poor and vulnerable population of the province.

He said the issue was also highlighted by the leading newspapers and needed decisive action and intervention

of the interim CM as the issue was tarnishing the public image of the caretaker set up.

The Governor urged the caretaker CM to take prompt action and ensure the provision of emergency and essential medicines in the government hospitals.

ANF seizes 190 kg drugs in six operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) in its crackdown against drug traffickers managed to recover over 190 kg drugs and arrested seven accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday.

He informed that 3 kg Ice drug was recovered from three Doha-bound passengers in two different operations at Islamabad Airport. 500 grams heroin was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Bacha Khan Airport.

52 heroin-filled capsules were recovered from the stomach of a passenger going to Doha at Allama Iqbal Airport.

Launches Bannu Economic Zone Caretaker CM vows zero tolerance for corruption

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah, has taken notice of complaints regarding undue problems in the Inteqal of land (land transfer deeds).

He has directed the Board of Revenue Land to obtain records of land Inteqal deeds from the last four months.

The Chief Minister has instructed the records to be scrutinized in the CM Complaint Cell, and individuals should be contacted by telephone to ensure that no additional amounts were wrongfully taken from them during the Inteqal of land process.

He announced a zero-

tolerance policy of the government against corruption and warned of strict action against officials involved in corrupt practices.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah formally launched the Bannu Economic Zone here on Tuesday.

The launching ceremony was held here in the Chief Minister's Secretariat wherein the Caretaker Chief Minister also distributed plot allotment letters among intending investors. Bannu Economic Zone is 14th zone of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi along with Inspector General Police Punjab inspecting latest Security Cameras after inaugurating Special Protection Unit (Special Operation Room) at city traffic Police Lines Manawa.

Naqvi inspects public welfare projects

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi inspected Lahore Ring Road's southern loop-III, Babu Sabu toll plaza, Liberty's Capri cinema and inaugurated the SPU's operations room at city traffic police lines at Manawan.

The CM conducted a detailed visit of 8-KM long LRR's SL-III from Maraka to Adda Plot to check the progress, said a handout issued here on Tuesday.

He checked the quality of asphalt work at various locations. Expressing optimism, he anticipated the project's swift completion, ensuring seamless traffic flow, given the accomplishment of both major and minor structures.

In a related development, the Babu Sabu toll plaza is set to undergo enhancements aimed at improving accessibility and minimizing vehicle queues.

Ombudsman Punjab takes 26 notices, resolves public issues

LAHORE (APP): In response to 126 notices taken by Ombudsman Punjab Maj (ret) Azam Suleman Khan in December to provide relief to the general public by resolving collective public problems at the grassroots, the administration of respective districts spent a total of Rs 257.3 million to resolve 26 problems.

However, 100 other public issues did not incur any government expenditures for the actions taken by the relevant departments.

The spokesman for the office of the Ombudsman Punjab shared the financial breakdown of the actions taken. Rs 339,500 were spent to address three complaints related to sewerage lines repair, Rs 5,722,500 were spent to address four complaints

related to cover open manholes.

A significant amount of Rs 60,000 was invested in resolving three complaints regarding waste disposal and Rs 247,769,000 was spent in resolving ten complaints regarding repair and cleanliness of streets and roads across different districts.

Additionally, Rs 3,465,180 was utilized to attend six complaints, linked to the repair of street lights and maintenance of water filtration plants, ensuring access to clean drinking water for the public, the spokesman stated.

Notably, the concerned administration and government departments also successfully addressed 26 notices for the restoration of sewerage lines.

Efforts to be made to regularize slums: Alwari

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Renowned intellectual, parliamentarian and candidate for NA-168, Syed Tabish Alwari has said that he would make serious efforts for the regularization of slums in Bahawalpur.

He said this during his meeting with the Christian community in Islamic Colony Bahawalpur here. He said that tens of thousands of poor people used to live in slums. He emphasized the need for practical measures should be taken to regularize slums.

He said that if he won the general elections from NA-168, he would make serious efforts for the regularization of slums. He further said that people should vote for honest candidates who were sincere to resolve their issues.

Work is in progress on Orange train to solar power: Hasan Murad

Independent Report
LAHORE: Provincial Transport Minister Ibrahim Hasan Murad said in a statement that on the instructions of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the work on the project to shift the Orange train to solar in Lahore in the first phase is going on rapidly.

The provincial minister said that on the recommendation of the Energy Department, the talks with NESPAK have entered the final stages, but after signing the agreement with NESPAK, the study

will be completed within 3 months and after the study, the solarization project will be started.

The provincial minister further said that solar panels will be installed at Depots, stabling yards and stations of Orange train while solar grid stations will be constructed at stabling yards and orange train Depots.

Ibrahim Hasan Murad said that along with the Orange train, the stations will also be transferred to solar energy.

Interim bail of PTI leaders extended

PESHAWAR (APP): The interim bail of PTI's former Deputy Speaker Mehmood Jan, cabinet members and MPAs in corruption and illegal appointments cases was extended till February 13.

PTI's former Deputy Speaker Mehmood Jan, Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Fazal Elahi, Kamran Bangash and Muhammad Asif, MPAs Ajmal Khan, Guldad Khan and Aftab Alam were having allegations of corruption and illegal appointments in different districts.

International News

At least 50 injured in major earthquake on China-Kyrgyzstan border

ALMATY (AFP/APP): At least fifty people were injured after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck along the mountainous China-Kyrgyzstan border on Tuesday, authorities said.

The major quake was registered just after 2:00 am (1800 GMT Monday) at a depth of 13 kilometres in China's Xinjiang region, about 140 kilometres (85 miles) west of the city of Aksu.

Local authorities dispatched a team to the quake's epicentre, Beijing's Xinhua state news agency said, while around 800 people were on standby for any large disaster relief mission.

The health ministry

in Kazakhstan said that 44 people suffering "various" injuries had sought medical help in the city of Almaty, the country's largest city.

Images posted on social media and by local news outlets showed citizens streaming outside following the quake.

In China's Akqi County, six people suffered injuries—two of which were "serious"—according to a Weibo post by a Xinjiang government media account.

A total of 47 buildings in the county collapsed, while a further 78 were damaged, the post said.

Two residential houses and livestock sheds

collapsed in the area near the epicentre, in rural Wushi County, Xinhua reported, while electricity was temporarily knocked out.

Video circulating on Chinese social media showed household appliances crashing to the floor as wild shaking rocked homes.

More footage shared by state broadcaster CCTV showed firemen entering a damaged building with cracked walls and police helping an injured local.

Local TV channels in the Indian capital New Delhi reported strong tremors in the city, about 1,400 kilometres away.



Russian President Vladimir Putin takes part in the official ceremony for pouring the first concrete into the foundation of power unit 4 at Egypt's El-Dabaa Nuclear Power Plant with the participation of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, via video link at the Kremlin in Moscow, Russia.

US, Britain hit targets in Yemen as Huthis vow to strike back

SANAA (AFP/APP): The United States and Britain launched a second round of joint military strikes on Yemen's Huthis on Tuesday over their attacks on Red Sea shipping, as the rebels vowed to hit back.

The latest raids, heard by residents of the rebel-held capital Sanaa around midnight (2100 GMT), hit eight Huthi targets, a joint US-UK statement said, while the Huthis listed 18 strikes across their territory.

US and British forces carried out a first wave of strikes against the rebel group earlier this month, and the United States launched further air raids against missiles that Washington said posed imminent threats to both civilian and military vessels.

The latest US-UK strikes were against "eight Huthi targets in Yemen in response to the Huthis' continued attacks against international and commercial shipping as well as naval vessels transiting the Red Sea".

Russian strikes kill four, wound dozens across Ukraine

KYIV (AFP/APP): Dozens of people were injured and at least four killed after a wave of Russian missiles targeted Kyiv and other cities across Ukraine, setting residential buildings ablaze and reducing others to rubble. Rescue workers in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near Russia's border, hauled injured residents from the scene of an attack where smoke rose from smouldering piles of rubble, AFP journalists reported.

The regional governor said three residents were killed in the overnight barrage.

Biden, Harris blast 'extremist' Republicans in abortion vote battle

BIG BEND (AFP/APP): US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris put abortion rights at the center of their reelection campaign Monday, attacking Republicans over an issue that Democrats see as a powerful vote winner against Donald Trump.

"How dare he?" Harris said of former president Trump—who has boasted of his role in overturning the constitutional, federal right to abortion—as she traveled to Wisconsin at the start of a nationwide tour on the issue.

Biden meanwhile railed at "extremist" and "cruel" Republicans in a speech at the White House marking the 51st anniversary of Roe v Wade, the landmark judg-

ment legalizing abortion that the conservative-leaning US Supreme Court then stunningly overturned in 2022. Harris and Biden warned that Republicans will impose a nationwide abortion ban if the party wins the November presidential election.

Already, 21 states have brought in full or partial bans since the Supreme Court—where three Trump-appointed justices tilted the balance sharply to the right—issued its ruling.

"These extremists are trying to take us backwards. We are not having it," Harris said to a cheering crowd in Big Bend in Wisconsin, which is expected to be one of the most closely fought states in this year's election.

WHO chief warns pandemic accord hangs in the balance

Monitoring Desk
GENEVA: The World Health Organisation chief fears plans for a global pandemic preparedness agreement will fall apart amid wrangling and disinformation, warning on Monday that future generations "may not forgive us".

Shaken by the Covid-19 pandemic, the WHO's 194 member states decided more than two years ago to start negotiating an international accord aimed at ensuring countries are better equipped to deal with the next health catastrophe, or to prevent it altogether.

The plan was to seal the agreement at the 2024 World Health Assembly, the WHO's decision-making body, which convenes on May 27. But WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the momentum had been slowed down by entrenched positions and "a torrent of fake news, lies, and conspiracy theories".

And he warned that if nobody is prepared to seize the initiative or give

ground, the whole project risks going nowhere. "Time is very short. And there are several outstanding issues that remain to be resolved," Tedros told the WHO's executive board in Geneva.

Failure to strike an agreement would be "a missed opportunity for which future generations may not forgive us," he said. Tedros said all countries needed the capacity to detect and share pathogens presenting a risk, and timely access to tests, treatments and vaccines.

He called for a "strong agreement that will help to protect our children and grandchildren from future pandemics".

Tedros said claims that the accord would cede sovereignty to the WHO or give it the power to impose lockdowns and vaccine mandates were "completely false". "We cannot allow this historic agreement, this milestone in global health, to be sabotaged."

Yemen's Huthis say hit US ship, Washington denies attack

SANAA (AFP/APP): Britain and the United States have carried out strikes on the Yemeni capital Sanaa, the news agency of the Huthi rebels said Tuesday, after the group claimed to have hit a US military cargo ship. The official Saba news agency said that "American-British forces are launching raids on the capital of Sanaa" and several other parts of Yemen, while Huthi TV outlet al-Masirah said four strikes targeted the Al-Dailami military base north of the capital, which is under rebel control.

Earlier on Monday, Huthi rebels claimed they had hit a US military cargo ship off the coast of Yemen—although the United States denied an attack had taken place.

The Yemeni rebels began striking Red Sea shipping in November, saying they were hitting Israeli-linked vessels in support of Palestinians in Gaza, which has been ravaged by fighting amid the Hamas-Israeli war.

12 injured as Myanmar military plane overshoots India runway

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: Twelve people were injured on Tuesday when a Myanmar military plane overshoot a runway while landing in India to collect soldiers who had fled armed insurgents fighting their country's junta.

The Chinese-made Shaanxi Y-8 turboprop skidded off the tarmac shortly before midday at Lengpui, the main airport of India's Mizoram state.

An Airport Authority of India (AAI) official at

Lengpui told AFP that the flight was collecting 92 soldiers who had crossed into India from neighbouring Myanmar last week. Of the 12 injured, "four are stated to be serious," added the official, who requested anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Footage of the crash's aftermath aired by local broadcasters showed the bent fuselage of the transport plane, which had cut a swath through tall grass after sliding down an embankment.

New ambassadors present credentials to Turkish President Erdogan

WASHINGTON (AA/APP): Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan received letters of credentials on Tuesday from the new ambassadors of four countries.

At the presidential complex in the capital Ankara, Erdogan separately welcomed Gabriele Jen of Austria, Ahmed Ben Sghaier of Tunisia, Kok Li Peng of Singapore, and Maria Virginia Mendes Da Silva Pina of Portugal.

Blinken sees Ivory Coast model on extremism on Africa tour

ABIDJAN (AFP/APP): US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday praised Ivory Coast for choosing a less militarised approach to security, on a tour to rally African democracies as crises engulf the region and world.

Blinken was meeting separately with two key leaders on the same day—Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara, a veteran leader who has won US praise for consolidating democracy, before heading to Abuja to see Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, elected last year on a platform of economic reforms.

In Abidjan, Blinken hailed Ivory Coast's stand against last year's coup in Niger and its approach of "building security together" by investing economically to combat extremism in northern areas bordering Mali and Burkina Faso.

"I have to applaud the approach that's been taken by Cote d'Ivoire—working with communities, listening to commu-

nities, making sure that their security forces understand the needs, the concerns of communities," Blinken said alongside Ouattara. "I think that can serve as a very powerful model for other countries," he said.

Ivory Coast has not experienced a major terrorist attack for some two years, despite its troubled neighbourhood. Blinken nonetheless promised to boost cooperation on the ground with Ivory Coast, largely training of security forces.

He said that the United States would provide an additional \$45 million to West African nations as part of a plan to battle instability, bringing total funding under the year-old programme to nearly \$300 million.

Ouattara expressed appreciation for the US assistance and voiced alarm over a spate of coups in West Africa.

"Like the United States, we are very committed to democracy and justice."

Seerat Conference for promotion of values of forgiveness, tolerance

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed has stressed the need to promote Islamic teachings of forgiveness and tolerance to make society beautiful and peaceful.

He said this while addressing the 10th International Seerat-ul-Nabi Conference that was organized by Seerat Chair Faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur at Bahdad-ul-Jadeed Campus here on Tuesday.

The conference focused on human values and their impact on societies in the light of Seerat ul Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) was inaugurated by the Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed, while presided over by the Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur Prof. Dr. Naveed Akhtar.

Prof. Dr. Saleem Tariq Khan, former Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur was the guest of honour. Prof. Dr. Ahmed Mohammad Al-Sharkavi Salem, Chairman of the Department of Quranic Studies, Jamia Azhar Egypt and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saad Siddiqui, Jamia Punjab also addressed it.

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed said that values are a very important subject in Islam. "The last Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) said that the religion was complete and final guidance for the whole of humanity," he said adding that on the occasion of the conquest of Makkah in 8th Hijri, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) displayed the excellent human values of forgiveness and tolerance.



KARACHI: Chief Minister of Balochistan Ali Mardan Khan Domki and Ambassador of United States to Pakistan Donald Blome launching the Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) first-ever project in Balochistan

PPP's 10-point election agenda road-map to public prosperity: Sherry

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) senior leader Sherry Rehman on Tuesday described the 10-point election agenda of her party to address the concerns of the working class and marginalized communities in the country.

The PPP leader, in an interview with a private news channel, emphasized that her party chairman, Bilawal Bhutto, in his recent address at a public rally in Sahiwal, focused on ending the politics of hatred and division and advocated for solutions to economic crises.

Rehman highlighted that Bilawal was committed to addressing the issues faced by the public rather than engaging in divisive politics.

She emphasized that the PPP was dedicated to resolving the problems of the people through hard work and dedication.

Murtaza Bhutto Murder Case: SHC adjourns hearing of appeals for 4 weeks

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Tuesday adjourned hearing of appeals against acquittal of police officers in Murtaza Bhutto murder case for four weeks.

The court was approached by Zaulfiqar Ali Bhutto Junior s/o Murtaza Bhutto for hearing of the murder case.

Former DIG Shoaib Suddle, Rai Tahir and some other accused of the incident and lawyers appeared in the hearing of the high court appeal.

It should be mentioned here that former president Asif Ali Zardari has not been made a party in the appeal.

Former police officer Rai Tahir's lawyer pleaded to the court that the Supreme Court has decided to hear the Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto presidential reference after the election, this case should also be heard after the polls. Another former police officer Wajid Durrani's counsel said that his client has been ailing and requested his permanent exemption from the court hearing.

The bench issued notices to parties over the plea of Wajid Durrani. The court also given accused police officer Rai Tahir and others exemption from hearing.

The lawyers of accused said that their clients will appear when the court demands their presence.



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.

VC SU inaugurates Thesis Show in Institute of Art, Design

HYDERABAD (APP): The Thesis Show 2024 has commenced in the Institute of Art and Design of Sindh University Jamshoro, in which the projects of the students of the final year were exhibited. Various colorful samples of art and design including paintings, textile designs were kept in the exhibition.

The Vice-Chancellor of Sindh University Prof. (Meritorious) Dr. Muhammad Siddique Kalhoro inaugurated the show and saw the art and design work decorated by the students in various galleries and appreciated the wonderful projects. The students who worked on the projects provided detailed briefings to the Vice-Chancellor about their completed endeavours.

Dr. Kalhoro expressed that the Institute of Art and Design at Sindh University was a unique institution where education was being provided under the supervision of capable and renowned artists and professors.

He said that the students of the institute can earn good income by offering their services to the companies related to the textile industry. He encouraged them to showcase their paintings and textile designs at an international level, paving the way for successful careers.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi addressing the inaugural session of the Regional Dialogue 2024 on "Climate Crisis: Shaping South Asia's Resilience" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies.

Modern agri technology, effective decision making vital to cope with climate change challenge: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday citing the abundance of natural resources, said that adopting modern agricultural technology and effective decision-making were inevitable for Pakistan to cope with the challenge of climate change.

The president, in his inaugural address at the Regional Dialogue 2024 on "Climate Crisis: Shaping South Asia's Resilience" arranged by the Institute of Regional Studies, said that Pakistan was rich in water, renewable energy potential and other resources but it direly needed a driving force to implement the decisions and make it compete with the world. He told the gathering of former diplomats, academicians and researchers that Pakistan had around 150 million acre-feet of water which

was sufficient to meet its needs if modern agriculture techniques like spray and drip irrigation were adopted and flood irrigation was done away with.

Emphasising the implementation of national water policy and other relevant legislation, he said a pricing mechanism could also lead to water conservation.

He said around 400 million gallons per day of water in Karachi was drained into the sea through sewerage which was a criminality. He also highlighted the use of prohibited nets by the fishermen which also swept small fish resulting in a huge loss of marine life. He said due to the very reasons, Europe was not allowing fish import from Pakistan.

The president exemplified the Netherlands

which was the second largest food supplier on earth despite being 19 times smaller in size than Pakistan and not having such an abundance of water similar to Pakistan. Similarly, Vietnam has taken its fishery exports to around \$10 billion per annum by adopting international standards and techniques, he added.

He said by pushing the farmers to adopt modern agriculture technology, Pakistan could also feed the world. He recalled Pakistan's successes in fighting COVID-19 through a data-based approach and national unity and said that the world would follow its footprints if the country set such an example as it had also achieved recognition through massive tree plantation.

He said the energy the sun provided to the earth every day was many times

higher than the world's annual production.

The president lauded the role of think tanks in carrying out research works but urged them to market their products to make the policymaker benefit from them.

He said that technology was achieving unprecedented progress while human intellectual power was on the decline. The world was being run by vested interests, making humanitarianism the biggest victim, he added.

Earlier, the IRS President Ambassador Nadeem Riaz in his introductory remarks, said the Regional Dialogue was the annual flagship event of the Institute which attracted ambassadors, policymakers, researchers, strategists and academicians from Pakistan and abroad.

IPP to exhibit its election preparations via public gathering in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): The Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) has announced to exhibit its preparations regarding February 8, 2024 general elections by holding a public gathering in Karachi.

In a statement on Tuesday, President IPP Sindh, Mahmood Moulvi said that the party's patron-in-chief Jahangir Khan Tareen and President Aleem Khan will address the gathering to be held at Nishtar Park. He said that the power show will prove IPP's majority in Karachi.

He said, "Win or less does not matter, IPP stands with the people of Karachi."

Mahmood Moulvi said that no party will be able to form the government alone after the 2024 general elections and a coalition government will be formed that will take the country out of crises.

He said that the people of Karachi will not be satisfied just with slogans. "We will not let monopoly in Karachi anymore," the IPP Sindh chief said.

Two shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Two armed men were shot dead by unidentified armed men here in the metropolis on Tuesday, police said. According to details, the incident took place in Mobina Town of Karachi where unknown gunmen sprayed bullets at two people present on a milk shop.

As a result of firing, both people were critically injured and assailants sped the scene of crime. The injured including Muhammad Ayub and Abdul Bari were shifted to local hospital where they succumbed to their wounds during treatment.

Police said that the incident seems to be outcome of personal enmity as the attackers haven't looted or snatched anything. A case was registered into the dual murder at respective police station and investigations were kicked off.

Police organize training workshops for election security

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sanghar district police was conducting training workshops for the personnel performing security duties in connection with upcoming general elections, and 6 centers were established across the district for two-day training sessions.

According to the details, as per the directives of IG Sindh Police, the training sessions of police personnel have been organized to perform security duty in Sanghar district regarding "General Election 2024".

Bloomberg report PML-N tops economic management over past 3 decades

ISLAMABAD (INP) The PML-N has demonstrated the "best performance in managing the economy over the past three decades" in comparison to its political counterparts, reported Bloomberg Economics. The report, released just a day ago, highlighted that the PML-N outperformed the PTI and the PPP when evaluating a combination of unemployment and inflation data known as the misery index.

Utilising the average index values during the respective periods when each party held power, the report indicated that a higher value represented greater economic hardship for citizens.

While acknowledging the PTI chairman's legal challenges and his party's predicament without its election symbol, the report suggested that PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif is poised to reclaim power following the Feb 8 polls.

However, it noted that the PTI chief remains the most popular politician, boasting a 57% approval rating according to a recent Gallup opinion poll, while Nawaz's ratings have risen from 36% to 52% in the past six months.

Shoro campaigns for PPP candidates in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD (APP): The former Sindh irrigation minister and the candidate of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for PS-60 Jam Khan Shoro visited localities in Town Municipal Corporation (TMC) Nerunkot to campaign for the party's candidates for NA-220 and PS-65.

Accompanied by the candidates of NA-220 Waseem Rajput and of PS-65 Fareed Qureshi, Shoro was welcomed in village Khuda Bux Gopang and in Ghangra Mori areas.

Addressing the local people, Shoro recalled the services provided to the citizens by the former government of the PPP in Sindh.

He appealed to the people to exercise their right to vote and elect the candidates of the PPP on February 8.

Dr. Saqib Shaikh to assume charge as Director Health Services Karachi

KARACHI (APP): Dr. Saqib Ali Shaikh, Health Management Cadre Officer (BPS-19), Additional Director Preventive, Directorate of Health Services Karachi, is allowed to hold additional charge of the post of Director (BPS-20), Health Services, Karachi Division, in addition to his own duties, as a stop-gap arrangement.

This was stated in a notification here on Tuesday.

Sindh Premier League to begin from Jan 25

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Sindh Minister for Sports and Culture Syed Junaid Ali Shah and Minister for Information, Minority Affairs and Social Protection Ahmed Shah announced that the Sindh Premier League (SPL) 2024 would be commenced on January 25.

Addressing a press conference at the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, the ministers said that the SPL would continue till February 05 at National Bank Stadium Karachi. SPL President Arif Malik, and renowned cricketers Abdul Razaq and Chaudhry Shehzad were also present on the occasion.

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, Hyderabad, Mohenjodaro, Sukkur, Larkana, Dadu, Ghotki, Khairpur, Kashmore and Padidan.

Mainly, cold and dry weather is likely to prevail in the province.

Fortification of wheat flour is to combat malnutrition. DG Agha Fakhur Hussain

Independent Report

KARACHI: Director General Sindh Food Authority Agha Fakhur Hussain visited the plants along with SFA's technical team and the Provincial Manager (WFF) of Nutrition International Hafeezullah Ghambhiri. NI has been supporting SFA and industry in food fortification all over Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion DG SFA Agha Fakhur Hussain said that the fortification of wheat flour in Sindh was the part of a national strategy to combat malnutrition.



HYDERABAD: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-N) Leader, Rauf Siddiqui along with Candidates of National and Provincial Assemblies addressing a press conference, at Qilla Ground in Hyderabad.

Two shot dead in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): Two armed men were shot dead by unidentified armed men here in the metropolis on Tuesday, police said. According to details, the incident took place in Mobina Town of Karachi where unknown gunmen sprayed bullets at two people present on a milk shop.

As a result of firing, both people were critically injured and assailants sped the scene of crime. The injured including Muhammad Ayub and Abdul Bari were shifted to local hospital where they succumbed to their wounds during treatment.

Police said that the incident seems to be outcome of personal enmity as the attackers haven't looted or snatched anything. A case was registered into the dual murder at respective police station and investigations were kicked off.

Police organize training workshops for election security

HYDERABAD (APP): The Sanghar district police was conducting training workshops for the personnel performing security duties in connection with upcoming general elections, and 6 centers were established across the district for two-day training sessions.

According to the details, as per the directives of IG Sindh Police, the training sessions of police personnel have been organized to perform security duty in Sanghar district regarding "General Election 2024".

75th anniversary of Pak-Netherlands diplomatic relations celebrated

KARACHI (APP): The 75th anniversary of the enduring diplomatic relationship between the Netherlands and Pakistan was celebrated with great enthusiasm and fervor at the historic Mohatta Palace here the other day.

The event, organized with the generous support of the Consulate General of Karachi, Tarek Khan, witnessed the gathering of esteemed guests, including the Sindh Caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar and the Governor Kamran Tessori, alongside other dignitaries and community members.

Commenting on the occasion, Ambassador Henny de Vries expressed her gratitude for the support and participation of all the distinguished guests and reiterated the importance of fostering and nurturing the enduring bonds between the Netherlands and Pakistan.

She further added, "This celebration not only highlights the depth of the partnership between our two countries, but also serves as a testament to the power of collaboration and friendship. Together, we will work towards promoting sustainable development, addressing climate change and fostering innovation."

Our shared values of peace, prosperity and progress will guide us, as we embark on this journey, paving the way for an even stronger and more prosperous future, Henny added.

The caretaker Chief Minister Justice (ret'd) Maqbool Baqar said "The Netherlands has been a long-standing partner of sustainable trade and investment in Pakistan, particularly in the dairy and poultry sectors."

He said that the ports and shipping sector had greatly benefited from Dutch technology – with the Netherlands providing some of the best-in-class chemical storage terminals, dredging equipment and tugging solutions for large vessels."



LAHORE: Peoples Party (PPP) leader, Aseefa Bhutto Zardari interacts with supporters during public gathering meeting regarding the election campaign in connection of the General Election 2024, held at NA-127 Constituency in Lahore.

Sharjeel Memon says PPP's relation with people not limited to election campaign

HYDERABAD (APP): The candidate of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for PS-61 Sharjeel Inam Memon, who is also former Sindh Information Minister, has said his party's relation with the public is not limited to the general or local government elections.

Addressing the party's workers and supporters during his election campaign here on Tuesday, Memon added that the PPP appealed to the public to entrust their vote on the party's candidates against the services which the party's government provided to the people.

He recalled that during the catastrophic rains and floods in 2022 and before, the PPP's provincial government worked day and night to prevent submergence of the villages and drained the accumulated rainwater to protect the people and their assets.

Memon expressed gratitude to the public for reposing trust on him by electing him as their MPA in 2018 general elections at a time when he was in jail, facing a corruption reference which was filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Kazi urges global vigilance as over 60 nations gear up for historic elections in 2024

KARACHI (APP): Former Pakistani Ambassador Mustafa Kamal Kazi, who served in Russia, Netherlands, Indonesia, Iraq, and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the OPCW, highlighted that more than 60 countries are gearing up for national elections this year, witnessing a historic surge in voter participation.

Speaking at the "Election Year 2024: Implications for the International Community" seminar organized by the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Kazi emphasized the far-reaching consequences of these polls, noting that they could potentially bolster leaders with authoritarian tendencies.

Kazi underscored the significance of these elections, emphasizing their impact on global economies, international relations, and the prospects for peace in an increasingly volatile world. While elections are often perceived as symbols of self-governance from a distance, Kazi cautioned that a closer examination reveals a more complex reality.



LARKANA: Regional Director Ombudsman Larkana, Ali Akbar Jagirani listening the problems of citizens during open court program held at District Accounts Office in Larkana.

Pre-Departure Briefing Program at PE offices launched

KARACHI (APP): Executive Director of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Akhtar Javed and Director General, Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) Akram Ali Khawaja jointly launched the Pre-Departure Briefing Program for outgoing workers.

The program will be organized in all Protectorate of Emigrants (PE) Offices across Pakistan.

According to a press release, the launch event was attended by the senior officials of SBP, PRI, BE&OE and representatives of the large remittance mobilizing banks.

The Pre-Departure Briefing Program has been developed by Pakistan Remittance Initiative (PRI) in collaboration with the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment (BE&OE) and banks.

The program is the key initiative for domestic outreach for educating outgoing workers to use formal channels for sending home remittances. As the outgoing workers are required to register with PE Offices across Pakistan; therefore, the program presents an excellent opportunity, on an ongoing basis, to educate outgoing workers for using formal channels for sending remittances back home and opening their own and their beneficiary's bank accounts.