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Member APNS & CPNE

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SC expresses resolve to end enforced disappearances once and for all

CJP says matter of missing persons is of serious nature; Says every institution should remain within its limits; We cannot order Parliament to legislate

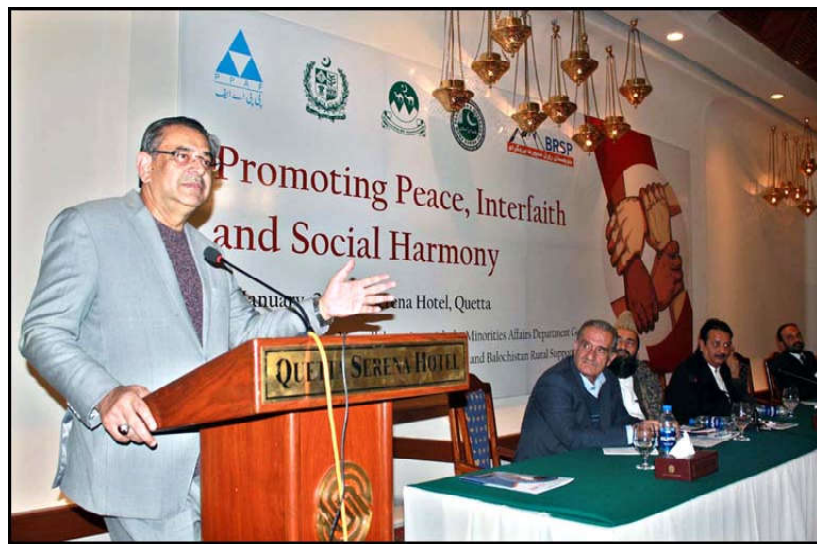
ISLAMABAD (INP): Let's make Pakistan strong from within. If Pakistan is strong from within, no outside forces can touch it," the CJP added.

Justice Isa passed these remarks as a three-member bench comprising the CJP, Justice Musarrat Hilaal and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar heard a set of petitions against missing persons. One of the pleas included an application filed by former senator and senior

lawyer Aitzaz Ahsan. Online adds: Supreme Court (SC) while adjourning hearing of enforced disappearances and missing persons case till today (Wednesday) has sought reply from Attorney General (AG).

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked we cannot order parliament to legislate. Every institution

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QUETTA: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed addressing a seminar titled Promoting Peace, Interfaith and Social Harmony.

Aneeq advocates collective action for national interfaith harmony

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed, stressed on Tuesday stressed the need for collective efforts to promote peace and interfaith harmony in the country.

Speaking in a seminar organized by BRSP in collaboration with PPAF, Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Aneeq Ahmed, Caretaker Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Balochistan Mir Zubair Jamali, and Balochistan Minister for Education Qadir Bakhsh Baloch underscored the significance of religious scholars, federal and provincial governments, civil society, and media in advancing peace, interfaith, and social har-

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KARACHI: Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari exchanges views with Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Sindh General Secretary, Maulana Rashid Mahmood Soomro during condolence meeting on the death of his young daughter, held at his residency located on Model Colony area in Karachi.

ECP issues notices to BNP, PkMAP & JUI on violation of election Code of Conduct

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Election Commission of Pakistan has issued notices to three political parties on violation of election code of conduct.

According to the official sources, the notices were issued to Balochistan National Party, Pashtoonkhw Milli Awami Party and Jamiat Ulema Islam.

The notices were sent to the provincial heads of the parties. As per the notices,

the parties painted the street light poles with parties flags in Sariah area.

It was mentioned in the notices that the parties can't hoist their flags at the public buildings or any other properties.

It has been directed to the concerned parties to remove the colour from the poles of street light within three days.

Otherwise legal action would be taken against them, it was warned.

Security forces kill four terrorists in NW operation

RAWALPINDI (APP): Four terrorists, including a suicide bomber, were killed in an intelligence-based operation in North Waziristan on Tuesday.

During the operation, an intense exchange of fire took place between our troops and the terrorists.

According to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the slain terrorists had been actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces. They were also planning to conduct a high-profile terrorist attack, which was averted due to the proactive response by the security forces.

Arms, ammunition, and explosives were recovered from the killed terrorists.

A sanitization operation is currently underway to eliminate any other terrorists found in the area, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country.



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar in an interactive session with the students of Beaconhouse National University.

No one has impunity to spread violence; State to ensure law & order: PM Kakar

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Tuesday reiterated that the State would not allow anyone to unleash violence and kill people in the name of political, ethnic and religious divides as it was its responsibility to ensure law and order.

The prime minister, in a lengthy interaction with the students of the Beaconhouse National University, said that no one could be given a licence to kill and eliminate others on the basis of political, ethnic and religious differences.

"To maintain law and order is the responsibility of the State, and I assure you that such elements will never prevail on the State of Pakistan," he asserted.

The prime minister, elaborating his viewpoint while responding to a question, said that the one who reverted to fighting with the State and the countrymen would get the befitting re-

sponse. He said that the government would not allow terrorists and militants to kill people with impunity as they had openly declared fight against the State and the civilians in the country.

"We have accepted their challenge," he said and expressed the resolve to fully respond to all threats with full force.

To another query, he said that the government functioned primarily on revenue generation system. The country had a tax collection of over Rs 9,000 billion, but there was tax evasion of more than almost Rs 10,000 billion. The lack of effective revenue system had been a persistent problem which required effective steps to rectify.

He said that it was a consistent story with different past political set-ups and military dictators. For strengthening of economy, it was the first and foremost requirement to develop a

robust tax system, he added, citing the Scandinavian countries with the highest tax revenue figures to their GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

The caretaker prime minister said that if the interim set-up in the country could achieve the tax target, then why not an elected government! If they were not able to achieve such, then there was a serious flaw in the governance system, he opined.

He also underlined the need of improvement in the structure of bureaucracy and the governance system.

About a question related to Gaza, the caretaker prime minister said that Israel was displaying a force of brutality with impunity.

Pakistan had used the forum of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other international fora and engaging with the European, United States and

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QUETTA: A delegation of Taraqi Foundation led by Essa Khan Kakar meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Governor calls for executing dev. schemes as per public needs under comprehensive planning

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has emphasized upon executing the development schemes by the welfare organizations as per requirements of the general public under comprehensive planning so as to yield better results.

We can get better results if the development schemes are implemented to benefit large number of people instead of small schemes in different areas making them role model for other areas as well.

The Governor said that there is a need to promote sense of responsibility among masses in order to make the development process more effective and result oriented.

He was speaking to a delegation of Taraqi Foundation who called on him under leadership of ESA Khan Kakar here at the Governor House on Tuesday.

The members of delegation apprised the Governor about the performance of the Foundation.

U.S. Ambassador calls on FM Jilani

ISLAMABAD (Online): U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome met today with Caretaker Foreign Minister Jilani to discuss a wide range of important bilateral issues, including expanded diplomatic engagement, the safe and efficient processing of Afghan citizens eligible for resettlement to the United States, as well as other issues of mutual interest.

The US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Bloom, called on Foreign Minister today. Discussions focused on some major aspects of bilateral relations including the recent visit of the Chief of Army Staff to the United States.

Former FM Sartaj Aziz passes away

Monitoring Desk

Islamabad: Former federal minister for finance Sartaj Aziz passed away on Tuesday at the age of 95.

PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal shared the message on social media.

Born in 1929, Mr Aziz had a long career encompassing public office, academia, and the civil service.

He shaped economic strategies that led Pakistan through pivotal periods while holding prominent posts in the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance.

Armed forces fully prepared to thwart any aggression: COAS

Lauds operational preparedness of PAF in incorporating state-of-the-art weapon systems

RAWALPINDI (Online): An Induction and Operationalization Ceremony was held at an operational base of Pakistan Air Force, today.

General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M) Chief of Army Staff, attended the distinguished ceremony as the Chief Guest.

Upon his arrival at the base, Chief of Army Staff was received by Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force.

The ceremony showcased the newly induced weapon systems and defence assets of PAF.

Upon his arrival, a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Air Force presented Guard of Honour to the COAS.



During his speech CAS highlighted the latest inductions in the PAF's arsenal comprising of J-10C fighter jets, air mobility platforms, modern Radars, Unmanned Aerial Systems, Loitering munition capabilities and Long Range Vectors which have significantly bolstered the aerial defence capabilities of the country.

CAS also mentioned that Center of Excellence for Air Mobility & Aviation Safety, College of Air Defence and reinvigoration of Air Power Centre of Excellence alongside operationalization of National Aerospace Science and Technology Park has provided PAF the capability to stay abreast with the evolving challenges. He emphasized upon the progress achieved by PAF in the emerging domains of Cyber and Space technologies to ensure an impregnable defence of the country.

Appellate Tribunal hears appeals of candidates: Abdul Khaliq Hazara, Ahmed Nawaz, Zakir Kasi, Muhammad Hussain allowed to contest elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Appellate Tribunal has allowed candidates of different parties to contest the upcoming general elections in the Province. The Tribunal comprising the senior judge of Balochistan High Court, Mr. Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar heard the appeals of candidates against rejection of their nomination papers.

The Tribunal restored the papers of leader and candidate of Balochistan National Party, Ahmed Nawaz Baloch allowing him to contest the election.

His papers were rejected by the concerned Returning Officer from PB-44.

Similarly, the Chairman of Hazara Democratic Party, Abdul Khaliq Hazara was also allowed to contest the elections. The papers of Hazara were rejected on the basis of lack of bank statement.

As the objection was

cleared thus his papers were accepted.

Meanwhile, the Tribunal also allowed Muhammad Hussain to contest the elections from PB-42. His papers were rejected on the basis that he didn't attach the utility bill of electricity with the papers. Moreover, an independent candidate namely Zakir Hussain Kasi was allowed to contest the general elections from PB-41.

However, the Tribunal directed the BNP candidate Malik Nasser Shahwani to bring the fresh bank statement. It may be mentioned here that papers of Nasser Shahwani were rejected from PB-46. His papers were rejected by the concerned Returning Officer.

The Appellate Tribunal also restored the nomination papers of PPP leader Tahir Mehmood Khan and an independent candidate, Mufti Gulab allowing them to contest the elections.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Fahad Sulaiman Khalf Alkharusi, Ambassador of Sultanate of Oman during meeting held at Parliament House in Islamabad.

Human trafficking menace insurmountable sans improved economic situation: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): limited presence of the members of the Upper House.

The questions pertaining to the government measures and their outcomes to curb the human of human trafficking were put to the floor by Senator Kamran Murtaza of Jamaat-e-Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan (JUI-P), Senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan (JIP) and independent Senator Nuzhat Sadiq.

Solangi noted that the Senators had raised important points, whereas the solution lied in the fact that the country had to fix its economy. He said that the

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KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Climate Change, Ahmed Irfan Aslam addresses to participants during opening ceremony of the BARRACUDA XII Exercise, held at Headquarters Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA)

ECP enforces conduct rules, removes candidates' ads above prescribed limits

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) monitoring teams have started removing the illegal advertisement hoardings of the candidates aspiring to participate in the elections of National and Provincial assemblies.

Monitoring teams deployed nationwide are currently removing advertisement hoardings that exceed prescribed limits, stated an official of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

According to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the monitoring teams in Multan and Sialkot are removing promotional materials of candidates who have erected advertisement hoardings in contravention of the code of conduct.

In accordance with the Election Commission of Pakistan's Code of Conduct issued on December 20, 2023, individuals and political parties are prohibited from affixing or distributing posters, handbills, pamphlets, leaflets, banners, or portraits larger than the specified sizes outlined by the ECP.

The specified dimensions are as follows: posters should measure 18 inches by 23 inches, pamphlets, leaflets, and handbills can have a maximum size of 9 by 6 inches, banners should not exceed 3 by 9 feet, and portraits should be limited to 2 by 3 feet.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has also established the Election Monitoring and Control Center (EMCC) at provincial and district levels for swift complaint resolution.

Operating round the clock until polling day concludes on February 8 and results are finalized, the center employs social media and electronic media monitoring.

Complaints can be sent through fax or email, and promptly addressed by trained personnel. The control room stays in touch with relevant Returning Officers (ROs) and District Returning Officers (DROs), urging individuals to use the helpline via complaints@ecp.gov.pk or WhatsApp at 0327-5050610. Another helpline at 111-327-000 operates from 8 am to 6 pm for complainants' convenience.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed distributing shields and awards among the participants of seminar.



LAHORE: Students of BNU present Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar with a painting as a souvenir.

Human trafficking menace...

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state as per its capacity, was taking measures but the issue demanded a holistic and national approach towards it.

"Unless the underlying issues are resolved, things will not improve. We are going into the election process, the senators should pay attention to the basic issues; establish a plan and consensus on the economic direction of the country so that our children do not give their lives in different seas and deserts of the world," Murtaza Solangi said.

In response to Senator Mushtaq's question seeking response pertaining to human trafficking through land routes and involvement of the authorities linked to the border areas' management, the minister said that the com-

plaint of human trafficking was true to a certain extent, but the issue of corruption was not of today, it was the problem of the system.

Referring to the Jinnah's inaugural address at the creation of the State Bank of Pakistan, the federal minister said, "Quaid-e-Azam's speech on August 11, 1947 also drew attention to this issue." He also added that the awareness was being raised about human trafficking as the state and media organizations were also making their efforts in this regard.

Murtaza Solangi emphasized that in order to end human trafficking, the nation needed to fix its economic situation.

In response to Senator Mushtaq's question pertaining to encroachments made by Islamabad

Club on the precious land of the federal capital, Murtaza Solangi said that the Building Control Section of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) wrote a letter to the management of the Islamabad Club on February 24, 2023 to end the encroachments.

However, the Islamabad Club management had requested that there were problems in shifting due to arrival of high-level personalities, he added. Murtaza Solangi said the Islamabad Club management has assured that no mature structure is being established alongside its premises.

He requested the Chair to send this matter to the Standing Committee concerned, on which the Chairman Senate directed to send the matter to the relevant Standing Committee.

No one has impunity to spread...

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diploamats of other countries by reminding them that if such a senseless behaviour on part of Israel continued, it would be radicalizing about 1.4 billion Muslims across the world, he added.

He reiterated that Pakistan was continuously insisting that someone should stop the war and create a humanitarian corridor. About 9,000 children had lost their lives in Gaza so far, he lamented.

The prime minister said that the world was speaking about an independent Palestine with pre-June 1967 borders and with Al Quds Al Shareef as its capital.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan was genuinely committed with the Palestine cause and utilizing all the diplomatic circles to convey its message.

Responding to another question regarding the protest of Baloch families in Islamabad, he said holding protests and demonstrations within the limits of laws throughout the world was a basic right but when those parameters were violated then laws were enforced by the governments.

He said that the use of a water cannon against the Baloch protesters was much criticized though he could cite about 200 inci-

dents of its use in the European countries against protesters.

The caretaker prime minister said that the law enforcement forces retaliated when they were pelted upon with stones. All the arrested people had been released subsequently, he added.

He further maintained that the women were agitating before the National Press Club, Islamabad which was their right, adding they were giving media interviews and enjoyed freedom of expression.

"What the government has done wrong! The government enforces law as it has to be enforced whether anyone like it or not," he added.

The prime minister agreed to a student's remark that there were serious concerns over the judicial system in the country which required to be addressed.

He also stressed upon change in behaviour and equal application of laws on all.

In a veiled reference to the political history, he said that institutions were used and admired for personal benefits. Caretaker Prime Minister Kakar, replying to a query, said that youngsters should explore opportunities abroad as such trends should not be con-

sidered as brain drain.

"They are the assets for the country and the people should understand the cycle as it is not a negative tendency," he said, adding such trends were seen throughout the world.

He also agreed that there was a lack of good rules and regulations in the media education. To address the mental health issue, the caretaker government could not go for legislation, but it could only draft its recommendations for the upcoming government, he added.

The caretaker prime minister said that in Pakistan, democracy was in the transitional phase as it was not a settled one. Non democratic forces often took advantage of non-performance of the democratic system, he added.

He regretted that the principles of democracy were violated by those who did not consider them in their advantage, adding that certain issues required a thorough debate and advised the youth to be genuine and try to find out genuine solutions to the country's issues.

The prime minister said that non-state actors and terrorists had been killing people in Balochistan. The State had the every right to respond to violence, he added.

Aneeq advocates collective...

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zations to establish peace. The Minister emphasized that a disposition of tolerance and respect is a fundamental aspect of Islamic teachings. Aneeq Ahmed expressed that the seminar with religious scholars from diverse faiths aims to fortify and integrate religious harmony, fostering unity in the country's development efforts.

The Federal Minister said that the religion of Islam teaches interfaith harmony, and the current situation demands that dialogues between religions and civilizations be held to establish peace in the world.

He added that Islam's philosophy is profoundly pragmatic and transparent, aiming to facilitate dialogue among various religions. He emphasized the crucial importance of comprehending contradictions for the establishment of a peaceful society.

The federal minister said that the commonalities of religions can be taken forward by understanding the differences; the world needs the golden principles given by Islam to create a peaceful society. He said that Pakistan is a region in the world where people of all religions are enjoying full religious freedom, and all the minorities living in Pakistan are playing a role side by side in the development of the country.

He said that the majority in Pakistan are Mus-

lims, and it is their responsibility to take care of the minorities, while the minorities also must bring a good name to the country and not listen to any rumors. He said that Muhammad (PBUH) established a state of Madinah in which the people of the three main religions lived and where peace, security, and mutual respect prevailed.

Provincial Secretary for Minority Affairs Dawood Khan Bazai, Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Pakistan Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khair Azad, Air, Vice Marshal (ret'd) Ejaz Mahmood Malik, Director General (DG) of Khana-e-Farhang Iran, Dr Abul Hasan Meri, and Acting Chief of PPAF Nadir Gul Barech, Chairman Board of Directors of BRSP Anwar Salim Kasi, Chief Executive Officer of BRSP Dr. Tahir Rashid, government officials, social workers, and prominent scholars from different religions and schools of thought were present in the seminar.

Addressing the seminar, Balochistan Caretaker Minister for Home and Tribal Affairs Zubair Jamali said that religious harmony is indispensable and that we need to work together to establish peace and interfaith harmony. He said that it is our responsibility to take care of people of all religions.

Imam, Afridi dropped as Pakistan announce squad for Sydney Test

SYDNEY (INP): Pakistan on Tuesday unveiled an 11-player squad for the upcoming Sydney Test against Australia, set to start on Wednesday (today).

The debutant left-handed batsman Saim Ayub will replace Imam-ul-Haq as the opening batter while Sajid Khan has been included in the squad in place of pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Meanwhile, Australia

on Tuesday named an unchanged line-up for David Warner's farewell match, which begins tomorrow at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Captain Pat Cummins confirmed that Australia's pacers had all recovered well from the second Test in Melbourne four days ago after bagging the three-match series with a close 79-run win.

Pakistan playing XI: Saim Ayub (Debut),

Abdullah Shafique, Shan Masood, Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (WK), Salman Ali Agha, Sajid Khan, Hassan Ali, Mir Hamza and Aamir Jamal.

Australia XI: Pat Cummins, David Warner, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Steve Smith, Travis Head, Mitch Marsh, Alex Carey, Mitchell Starc, Nathan Lyon, Josh Hazlewood.

APHC unveils plan to observe Jan 5 as Right to Self-Determination Day

SRINAGAR (INP): The All Parties Hurriyat Conference has announced that Kashmiris will observe 5 January as Right to Self-Determination Day by organizing protest demonstrations, rallies, seminars and other programs to invite world attention towards the urgency of resolving the long-pending Kashmir dispute to avert Jammu and Kashmir from turning into another Palestine.

According to Kashmir Media Service, APHC spokesman in a statement issued in Srinagar said, the unresolved Kashmir dispute is a big question mark on the credibility of the United Nations. "If the UN wants to restore its credibility it needs to

implement its resolutions on Kashmir without further delay," he said.

It was on 5th January in 1949 when UN Security Council passed a historic resolution saying, "The question of accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite".

The APHC said that seven decades have passed but the promised plebiscite remains unfulfilled till date.

The APHC said that by deploying over one million trigger-happy troops, India has turned Kashmir into a gigantic prison. Indian troops who have been given license to kill Kashmiris are trampling humanity under their jackboots, he added.

"Martyrdom of over one lakh Kashmiris, de-

struction of thousands of houses and structures, molestation, blinding youth is a glaring proof how India is hell-bent on annihilating Kashmiris and occupy their land," he informed.

The statement said that after 5 August 2019, Hindutva BJP-RSS regime has broken all previous records of brutalities. It is using Israeli-type tactics to deprive Kashmiris of their economy, properties and impose its devilish Hindutva agenda in IIOJK.

Issuing of domiciles to thousands of non-Kashmiris, granting them land rights in occupied territory and introduction of other anti-Kashmir and anti-Muslim laws have made the evil intentions of Hindutva forces very clear that they want to strip Kashmiris of their identity, culture and land.

Six barbers killed in North Waziristan

MIR ALI (INP): At least six barbers were killed by unidentified armed men in the Mir Ali area of the North Waziristan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, says in media reports.

According to police, the victims were running barber shops in the local bazaar, adding that they were abducted a day earlier and their bodies had been recovered on Tuesday from a nearby area.

Meanwhile, police have launched an investigation into the incident and started search for the arrest of culprits. The latest incident from North Waziristan came after five labourers had

been killed and a watchman was injured by unidentified gunmen while they were sleeping in Wana.

According to the locals of the area, the victims were constructing a police station. At night when they were asleep in their tent, unidentified gunmen shot them dead and fled.

Among the dead, three labourers belonged to the Burki tribe of Shikai and two to the Wazir tribe of Spurkai. The bodies were shifted to the hospital for post-mortem. On the other hand, South Waziristan Police Department is investigating the killings.



ISLAMABAD: Share certificates of HEC being handed over to Chairman IMS Engineering in the presence of Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad.

SC expresses resolve...

Continued from page 1

should remain within its limits. The matter be not politicized. Senate is there at present too.

The CJP while moving to Shoab Shaheen remarked Farrukh Habib, Sadaqat Abbasi and Usman Dar, who are these persons. Are you grieved over it that these people have quit the party. Should we say this to them to return to party.

A 3-member bench of SC presided over by CJP Qazi Faez Isa took up the case for hearing Tuesday. Khushdil Khan Malik petitioner for missing persons came on rostrum at the inception of hearing.

He requested that the judiciary should order parliament to legislate for enforced disappearances.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked a commission has been constituted already in connection with enforced disappearances.

The CJP inquired which commission has been constituted.

Khushdil Khan Malik said commission on enforced disappearances was constituted under Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal. But it has done nothing so far. The court should issue notice to government and inquire why the legislation has not been enacted about missing persons since the last 50 years.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa inquired how can the court order parliament to make

such and legislation. SC practice and procedure law-2023 has been made. Please bother to read it.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked the court is not authorized to legislate.

Shoab Shaheen counsel for Aitzaz Ahsan came on rostrum. He said son of Latif Khosa has been arrested and he has been power of attorney. Objections were raised on our petition.

The CJP remarked we are hearing the petitions by dismissing the objections. Because it is matter of public interest.

The CJP inquired Aitzaz Ahsan expressed what reservations in the petition.

Shoab Shaheen replied point of missing persons and then their appearance from one side was raised.

Shoab Shaheen said in 2011 PPP was in power and commission was constituted during this time.

The CJP inquired does Aitzaz Ahsan want to suspend the notification of his own government.

Shoab Shaheen said as per commission report 2200 people are missing so far.

Justice Qazi Faez Isa inquired is Aitzaz Ahsan in PPP still too.

Shoab Shaheen replied yes he is still in PPP.

Shoab Shaheen raised the matter of Sheikh Rashid, Sadaqat Abbasi and

other enforced disappearances.

The CJP remarked have all these people become petitioners before us.

The CJP remarked had Shireen Mazari resigned if her bill on missing persons was removed from Senate. Sheikh Rashid has remained minister several times. Will you place Sheikh Rashid in the list of innocent persons.

The CJP remarked the matter of missing persons is of serious nature. We will not allow to make joke of court. The alleged missing persons of PTI are influential. Some among them have returned.

The CJP remarked you made mention of Imran Riaz. Who is he. Is Imran Riaz still missing.

Shoab Shaheen replied he is not missing at present. But his condition was worse when he returned to his home.

The CJP inquired is Imran Riaz not influential person. Was Matti Ullah Jan not kidnapped. Why do you not include name of Matti Ullah Jan and Asad TOOR.

Shoab Shaheen said he had appeared in the case of Matti Ullah Jan.

CORRIGENDUM

The tender notice initially dated December 6, 2023, published in the Mashriq Quetta newspaper, etc. under PRQ No. 1119/05-12-2023 and BPPRA Tse-232412364643 with the original opening date of January 1, 2023, should now be considered with a revised opening date of January 9, 2024. The estimated cost mentioned on the BPPRA website, originally Rs 10,000,000, should now be understood as Rs 9,900,000. Note: Contractors holding a Rs 1000/- challan are eligible for the extended tender deadline, and all other terms and conditions remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer (R)
CWPP&H Department,
District Harnai

PRQ No.1287/02-01-2024

www.dpr.gov.pk @dpr_gov dpr.gov @dprbalochistan

TENDER NOTICE

The Director General Rural Development Academy invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following objects. Tender Fee +1 (Green challan Rs. 1000/-)

S.No.	Name of Objects	Bid Security
1.	ICT Equipments total count 1TSE-232412364981	2%

Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules - 2014. Eligibility of Bidders: (a) The bidder must have completed three assignments of similar nature of work in last 3 years. (b) Turnover of at least PKR Rs.3500000/- in last three years showing financial capacity of the firm. (c) Registration with relevant taxation departments. (d) Audit report of 3 years. (e) No Demand Certificate. Bid Security: The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Call Deposit or Bank Guarantee of amount specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the under-signed upon payment (non refundable) bidding document fee (amount mentioned above) through Green Challan. In account of C03805/If Others please specify (The NIT & Bidding Document can also be downloaded from www.bppra.org.pk Issuance of tender Documents: From the date of publication of NIT to 24/01/2024, during office hours on working days. Last Date of bid submission: The Bidders must be submitted latest by 24/01/2024 till 11:00 AM at the office of the under-signed. Tender opening: All tenders will be opened on same day at the office of the under-signed at 12:00PM. Address: Balochistan Rural Development Academy Western bypass road Quetta. Phone no. 081-9213262 Fax no. 9213263 Email. rdacquetta123@gmail.com.

Director General Balochistan Rural Development Academy Quetta.

PRQ No.1290/2-01-2024

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QUETTA: A group photo of student of Turbat during their visit of Balochistan Assembly



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony & Islamic Countries and Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi is being briefed while visiting National Emergency Operations Centre.

Ashrafi optimistic of polio eradication during current year

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Special Representative for Religious Harmony and Pakistani Diaspora in Middle East and Muslim Countries, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Tuesday expressed the optimism that there would be polio eradication from the country during the Year 2024.

During the visit to the National Emergency Operations Center, he said Ulema and Mashaykh unanimously had affirmed that polio drops were permissible, thus preventing disability.

Ashrafi, who is also the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, said all in-

stitutions, including religious scholars and leaders were fully collaborating with relevant agencies for polio eradication in the country.

During the visit, Ashrafi took round of the Control Room including various departments where he was given a comprehensive briefing on the program.

On this occasion, Coordinator Dr. Shahzad Baig also accompanied with the Prime Minister's Special Representative.

Being the Chairman of Pakistan Ulema Council, Ashrafi reaffirmed full cooperation for complete polio virus eradication from Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi called on Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif.

Dr. Saif holds meetings with UAE Ambassador, UK High Commissioner

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, Dr. Umar Saif on Tuesday held separate meetings with UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi, and UK High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott.

During the meeting with the UAE ambassador, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, particularly those related to the IT and telecom sectors, said a news release.

Dr. Umar Saif emphasized the significance of Pakistan's ties with the UAE, expressing the government's desire to strengthen these ties, especially in the IT sector.

He highlighted the ongoing efforts to boost IT exports, considering the UAE

as an attractive market for Pakistani IT companies.

Additionally, he mentioned plans to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UAE government for a Digital Government Experience Exchange Program.

In a separate meeting with the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, Dr. Umar Saif acknowledged the

longstanding support of the UK government in governance reform within Pakistan, particularly in the health, education, and public finance sectors. He underscored the immense potential of Pakistan's IT industry to expand its business in the UK, emphasizing the need for startups to attract larger investments from UK-based venture capitalists.

PIMS ED takes notice of allegations about FCPS seats selection

ISLAMABAD (APP): Executive Director of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) Professor Dr. Imran Sikander has constituted an inquiry committee after taking notice of the allegations of irregularities in the selection of FCPS seats.

According to Dr. Mubasher Doha, spokesperson to the PIMS ED, the committee will submit its report within three days after the investigation.

Dr. Mubasher Doha said that the PIMS administration believed in transparency and merit, and the inquiry committee formed

on the request in that regard would investigate the matter transparently.

The findings of the three-member committee headed by Prof. Dr. Mazhar Badshah with Professor Dr. Altaf Hussain and Professor Dr. Arif Khan as its members, would be made public and action would be taken against those found responsible, he added.

The spokesperson said that PIMS Dean Professor Dr. Rizwan Taj had not interfered in the matter of selection, as full powers had been given to the selection committee and head of department.



ISLAMABAD: Dense fog blanket the different areas early in the morning as an unexpected turn of weather events Pakistan is facing extreme challenges, causing disruptions in the daily lives of People.

Health camps to be established in FDE schools to ensure children well-being

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ministry of Federal Education an Professional Training, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health is initiating comprehensive health camp for students within the institutions working under the ambit of the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) to assess their health condition and ensure the well-being of the students. According to the official sources, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), in that regard, has directed all the Director colleges and schools and the Area Education Officers Rural area, Islamabad to ar-

range health camp in the educational institutions. FDE, in this regard, requested to direct all Head of Institutions to compile the necessary data of their students to share with the teams of Health Camp upon their arrival in the concern institution and compile the date by 05-01-2024.

Meanwhile, commenting the arranging of health these camps, Riffat Jabeen, Director Academics, Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) while talking to APP on Tuesday said that the aim of this activity is to ensure the health and well-being of the students. She said that the camps will start work in next two weeks. She said that FDE has directed the heads of educational institutions specifically to encourage students to actively participate in health camps without compromising routine academic activities. She further informed that the doctors team from all major public and private hospitals of federal capital will be hired for the check up of schools children. Under this program, the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training had already distributes 'Hygiene Kits' among students.

Interim bail of PTI founder, Bushra Bibi extended till Jan 16

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has extended Interim bail of PTI founder in six cases and Bushra Bibi in one case till January 16.

Duty judge Ahmad Arshid Mehmood took up six cases in respect of PTI founder and one case of Bushra Bibi for hearing Tuesday.

Bushra Bibi appeared in the court along with her lawyers Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry, Umair Niazi and Usman Gul in the court.

The court allowed Bushra Bibi to go after marking her attendance.

Wafaqi Mohtasib takes serious notice of shortage of rabies vaccine

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman, Mr. Ejaz Ahmed Qureshi has taken a serious notice of the non-availability of the Anti-rabies Vaccine in the Federal Government hospitals/dispensaries located in the Islamabad (ICT) and summoned the heads of the NIH and DRAP on January-09, 2024 in this regard.

He said that the non-availability of such essential vaccines for human life in major hospitals of Islamabad is a matter of deep concern. According to the details, a resident of Islamabad, Mr. Nazim Hussain sent an e-mail to the Wafaqi Mohtasib stating that his son was bitten by a rabid dog. He approached various hospitals in Islamabad to get his son vaccinated but he was told that the vaccine was not available.

Responding to the complaint promptly, the Wafaqi Mohtasib directed his Registrar, Mr. Muhammad Saqib Khan to conduct an inquiry in this connection. The Registrar contacted the heads of both these organizations and it was confirmed that the said essential vaccine was not available. The Wafaqi Mohtasib ordering an immediate probe into the matter, has summoned the heads of both institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Engr. Aamir Hasan, Member, PMIC is chairing the meeting at PMIC, PM Office, Islamabad on PSDP project titled "Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad" and getting briefing from the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing & Works, Pak PWD, NHA, ICT, CDA, RDA & Punjab Prison Department.

Layer of fog envelops Islamabad city as cold wave tightens its grip

ISLAMABAD (APP): The biting cold combined with dense fog threw routine life out of gear and disturbed traffic flow on roads here on Tuesday.

Islamabad Traffic police official talking to a Private news channel urged citizens to stay home and avoid unnecessary traveling as dense fog has disrupted traffic at several places due to low visibility.

He also appealed to citizens to drive slowly and switch on fog lights to avoid traffic accidents. In an unexpected turn of weather, dense fog has descended upon various areas of the federal capital, causing disruptions in the daily lives of residents, said a motorist.

Engr. Aamir Hasan for early completion of model prison project at H-16

ISLAMABAD (APP): Member Prime Minister Implementation Commission (PMIC) Engr. Aamir Hasan on Tuesday showing dissatisfaction over the implementation status of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) project "Construction of Model Prison at H-16, Islamabad", directed to complete the project well in time as per specifications.

He directed for speedy and early completion of the project within the deadline which had been significantly delayed.

He was chairing a meeting to review the status of the project. The meeting was attended by Muhammad Saleh Narejo,

Director, PMIC and the officers of Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ministry of Housing and Works, Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak PWD), National Highway Authority (NHA), Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), Capital Development Authority (CDA), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) in person and the officials of Punjab Prison Department through online.

During the meeting, the Member PMIC said the implementation report regarding progress in the project will be submitted to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Kashmiris to observe Right to Self Determination Day on January 5

MIRPUR (AJK) (INP): Reminding United Nations for early implementation of its January 05, 1949 resolutions for settlement of Kashmir issue without further delay, the Jammu and Kashmir people living on both sides of the line of control will observe the Right of Self Determination Day on Friday, January 5 with renewed pledge to continue their struggle till the achievement of their legitimate right of self determination through implementation of the U.N resolutions, official sources said on Tuesday.

Besides special gatherings and processions, public rallies would be held in all nine district headquarters in Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK). Special meetings would highlight the importance of early grant of the right of self-determination to Jammu Kashmir people which was being suppressed and denied by India since over last 76 years, the sources told. Speakers in these meetings would reiterate Kashmiris just and principled stance before the world that they (Jammu Kashmir people) would continue their struggle for right.

Dr. Shahzad urges political parties to contest upcoming polls on manifesto

ISLAMABAD (APP): Opposition leader in Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem has urged political parties to contest the upcoming elections based on a manifesto focused on public welfare. Speaking during a session in the Senate, he emphasized the need for unity among political parties to address the challenges being faced by the country. Dr. Shahzad Waseem also called for economic stability and the continuity of policies beneficial to the country.

He advocated for a level playing field in the upcoming elections, stressing that political parties should be allowed to run their campaigns independently. The opposition leader urged for ensuring a secure environment for political parties to conduct their election campaigns. He highlighted past incidents, including the killings of political leaders like Benazir Bhutto and ANP leaders during previous election campaigns.

SC declares PHC decision on suspension of RO PK-91 Kohat null and void

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has declared Peshawar High Court (PHC) order null and void regarding suspension of Returning Officer (RO) in PK-91 Kohat.

The Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa has remarked it seems to me some tactics are being used so that elections are not held. One RO fell ill and second was appointed. PHC cancelled the appointment immediately. As to why should we not impose fine on you as appointment was cancelled without notice. PHC judge even did not deem it proper to issue notice.

The CJP gave these remarks while presiding over a bench of SC during the course of hearing of Election Commission (EC) plea against the suspension of RO in PK-91 Kohat Tuesday.

The CJP inquired what difference it makes to the candidate who will be RO. IS RO relative of some rival candidate. You want RO of your own will.

The CJP inquired was the previous RO transferred due to some proper reason or he was really sick. It seems as if some tactics are being used that elections are not held. It is beyond my comprehension what type of orders are being issued. As to why exemplary fine be not imposed on those who are filing such petitions.

The CJP remarked do you want elections are not held.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar remarked scrutiny of 19 people will be left due to suspension of RO.

The SC accepted appeal plea of EC and declared PHC decision null and void.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Provincial Minister Finance Muhammad Ismail and Member GB Assembly, Amjad Hussain Adv in a group photo with Musa Ali, who traveled from near Siachen to Islamabad on a horse with the message of peace.

Akhuwat Foundation denies liability for fraudulent use of its name

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Akhuwat Foundation on Tuesday distanced itself from any responsibility for fraudulent activities conducted under its name, emphasizing non-accountability for dishonest transactions.

In a statement, a spokesman of the Akhuwat Foundation clarified that Akhuwat Islamic Finance operates as an interest-free loan provider, offering loans and managing installments through its branch network. The spokesperson noted that individuals are misusing the institution's name and educational services for fraudulent activities. The Akhuwat Foundation explicitly states that it will not take responsibility for any fraudulent or deceptive transactions carried out by these individuals.

Students seeking admission to educational institutions within the fraternity are not paying any fees or charges. Additionally, the fraternity does not offer scholarships, compensation or any similar benefits for students to pursue studies in other educational institutions. The spokesperson reported that individuals with malicious intent and fraudulent entities are exploiting the name of Akhuwat Educational Services, falsely claiming to offer scholarships to students for test fees.

Afnan says: PML-N to accept people's mandate

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senator Dr. Afnan Ullah Khan Tuesday said that his party leadership had a clear stance that the general elections must be held in a transparent manner and they would accept people's mandate.

The PML-N under the dynamic leadership of Nawaz Sharif would win the elections and put the country on the path of prosperity, progress and development, he said while to the PTV.

He recalled the achievements of PML-N last government which took charge of office after the 2013 election. Pakistan was facing multiple crises, including the menace of terrorism and no one was ready to invest in the country, but

it was Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who manged the country sail through.

"We are committed to again rescue the nation from the current economic turmoil and will steer the country out of all the crises," he added.

The PML-N if voted to power, would not only eliminate terrorism, reduce inflation and bring down the electricity prices, Senator Afnan said.

Those who had destroyed the economy had gone and now the future of youngsters would be in the safe hands, he added.

Replying to a query, Senator Afnan expressed confidence that the PML-N would sweep the elections on the basis of its last governments' performance.



ISLAMABAD: Laborers are busy during the construction of "Yadgar-e-Dastoor" in the memorandum of the completion Golden Jubilee of Constitution of Pakistan outside Parliament House in Federal Capital.

Islamabad police chief emphasizes effective policing, transparency for public trust

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has called upon all police officials to garner public appreciation through robust policing and increased transparency in their affairs. According to details, Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan held a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office Islamabad, to assess the current situation of crime, a public relations officer said.

The meeting was attended by AIG Operations, SSP Operations, AIG Investigation and Complaints, SSP Investigation, all zonal DPOs, SDPOs and all Incharge Police Stations.

During the meeting, the performance of all divisions was evaluated, and

each officer was individually scrutinized. ICCPO praised the officers for their outstanding performance and encouraged them.

He also directed them to continue learning for further improvement and ensure commitment towards the process of self-accountability. Instructions were given to take action against those carrying arms outside the institutions enforcing the law.

ICCP emphasized maintaining the law and order situation in the city, enhancing the security of government and other important installations, intensifying the campaign against drug dealers and professional beggars.

He also directed the officials to expedite the provision of facilities to the

public, setting an example through police stations, and enforcing the law according to the rules and regulations against those violating the law.

Officials were also directed to enhance security on internal and external routes of the city and keep a strict eye on suspicious elements. ICCPO directed officers to encourage subordinates for good performance and assured of rewards.

Measures were emphasized to ensure the protection of the lives and property of citizens, making the arrangements even better. ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan stressed the need for bravery, civility, and transparency to be the distinguishing features of the Islamabad Capital Police.

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SBP's projections

The State Bank Governor's Annual Report for FY2023 is "cautiously optimistic" about the economy. It projects headline price inflation to drop, the current account deficit to narrow, and GDP to expand during the ongoing fiscal year.

However, the report warns, this outlook hinges on the absence of adverse shocks stemming from geopolitical tensions, unforeseen climate events and unfavourable movements in global commodity prices.

That aside, the bank expects inflation to slow down to 20pc-22pc, the current account gap to narrow to 0.5pc-1.5pc of GDP, and the economy to grow by 2pc-3pc. The projected recovery is modest but still a source of comfort after a tumultuous year in which Pakistan barely avoided default.

"The economic landscape of Pakistan has faced unprecedented challenges throughout the fiscal year," the report notes, highlighting that political uncertainty was another factor impacting business and consumer sentiments, thus affecting economic activity.

The report asserts the "SBP's commitment to maintain price stability", highlighting the "crucial role of fiscal policy and effective administration in supporting stability". But, such assertions have featured in most previous SBP reports, including the bank's monetary policy statements, in the last few years.

There is no doubt about the core role of fiscal policy in our balance-of-payments crisis as well as escalating inflation — the bank cannot absolve itself of its own part. Its past projections have often proved wrong, and the SBP has been behind the curve when it comes to taming inflation and checking the dollar's flight.

It may be impossible to undo the past but with 2023 behind us, many want to know if our rulers have learnt their lesson and are prepared to meet the upcoming challenges. This year should see stabilisation. The new government, which will take office after the February polls, will have its work cut out.

The first and most crucial challenge for it would be to negotiate a bigger, medium-term IMF loan to stabilise the external sector and raise funds from other bilateral, multilateral and commercial creditors in order to build the country's foreign exchange reserves.

Such a deal will entail a series of difficult fiscal, governance and structural reforms. The question is: will a government taking office as a result of a tainted election and questionable mandate be able to execute the required reforms and make tough decisions? This year is going to be a defining one for Pakistan's future trajectory. Many countries have managed to turn their crises into opportunities for fixing their respective economies.

All our economic challenges, including the ongoing balance-of-payment crisis and shortage of foreign currency, can be fixed. We are at a crucial juncture from where we can turn either way: towards a brighter and prosperous future or total collapse. It is all in our own hands.



Arifa Noor

Shakespeare may have come up with a line for all times when he wrote "to be or not to be", but in Pakistan we have found a dilemma just as important and worthy of much debate.

We have been wondering whether or not this past year and what it brought in politics was unprecedented. Is it simply more of the same aka 2018 main bhi yehi hua tha, or have the excesses against a political party touched new heights — or should it be lows?

At this rate, this discussion will continue as we enter 2024 because we Pakistanis believe in carrying our baggage with us, as we do our circular debts. But instead of a recap of the year that passed, let me try and offer a slightly different, or zara hat kai, version of what

we have been experiencing for the past few years, and what really is 'unprecedented'.

Pakistan has evolved as a country which has become used to living on international rents, thanks to our geostrategic position. From Ayub Khan's decision to join the Western bloc to the two Afghan wars, we picked friends and allies who came bearing gifts in the form of aid and dollars, which were then used to make the economy grow — and 'buy' legitimacy for the unelectable leaders ruling us.

Elections — managed ones — were held, and state patronage, in the shape of development funds, were shared with politicians, which then trickled down to the people. The politicians, give or take a few, fell in line that despite constant refrains of unfair and rigged elections, political parties generally opted to sit in parliament.

Other than arguing that this was important for strengthening the parliamentary process, this also suited individual parliamentarians, in all parties, who needed access to patronage, which was routed through

the forum. However, this political consensus — if it can be called that — has been weakening in recent years as the economy has faltered. The inflow of aid has been reducing; there is less money to spare and share, while the expenses of the state/government continue to grow.

The absence of reform means the economy is not growing, while the needs of the populace continue to explode. Urbanisation and the youth bulge add to the problems; the existing patronage system can only cater to a limited number. The impact this has had on politics in terms of new parties and movements is an issue which continues to be discussed time and again. But more important, this crisis of the economy has weakened consensus among the elite — an elite which was willing to let the military establishment be the primary stakeholder at home because of its ability to secure rents from abroad.

And if this primary role meant that the latter intervened in politics, disrupted the political process and dominated policymaking, so be it. The judiciary would

provide legal cover, the politicians would take part in elections and provide a form of legitimacy. Even the business elite would pay homage to the 'stability' brought about. This allowed the establishment to enjoy legitimacy and claim it had the people's support.

However, this started changing in the post-Musharraf period as rents began to dry up. Perhaps one can argue that from the 2013 PML-N term onwards, intervention in politics and the resultant instability has garnered more and more criticism from society and within the elite because in the absence of international rents, it is hard to camouflage the instability that interventions cause in politics.

With the economic crisis intensifying, criticism has simply grown in the wake of the clash with the PTI, beginning with its removal from power and the crackdown which followed in 2023.

This absence of consensus is not just visible in the judiciary, which has more than once given decisions that have made the establishment's 'plans' (or scripts) difficult to imple-

ment, but also in the reluctance of politicians to fall in line. Forming the king's party is not the walk in the park it used to be because state patronage is not proving enough to muster the numbers needed to secure victories. And as the populace, for the reasons mentioned, is also opting for parties such as the PTI (in mainstream areas such as Punjab), electables are being forced to choose between the people — or their choice of party — and the establishment. If this was PML-N in 2018, it is PTI in 2023.

This is one reason for the harsh measures we have been witnessing in recent years where politicians have faced imprisonment, torture, threats to family and business. If this meant disqualification and imprisonment for the PML-N 2017 onwards, it has at present led to temporary enforced disappearances for those in the PTI as well as kidnappings of family members and raids on their homes.

In other words, the establishment has turned to harsher tactics, as it faces loss of legitimacy, not just among the people but also

the political elite, who were earlier willing to play second fiddle.

Ask any PTI politician who has to contest an election and he will explain that while the establishment is pressuring him to switch sides, the voters have warned him that he can only win if he stands firm. And there are no solutions to this equation, it seems.

The point of this spiel was not just to explain that what is unprecedented is the fragile consensus which had existed earlier among the elite. In fact, it is also to argue that the 'heavy-handedness' in display may not end soon. As the economic crisis intensifies and the fragmentation of the elite continues, the establishment will turn more authoritarian, as it struggles to maintain its dominance.

In the short term, there might not be a change in this larger policy unless there is a quick (miraculous) injection of funds which can restore — even partially — the earlier system. The targets may change but the repressive measures, I fear, are here to stay, unless all the players are willing to sit down and chalk out a new consensus. — Courtesy Dawn

COP28: a critical analysis



Shafqat Kakakhel

COP28, held late last year, included a global climate action summit attended by 154 heads of state and government, heads of UN agencies, major regional networks, business organizations, and civil society leaders, who all reiterated their support for efforts to tackle the climate conundrum.

Decisions taken during COP28 include the operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund and the UAE Consensus. Other interesting takeaways from the summit include the reports by the World Resources Institute (WRI) and other organizations.

In 2015, the Paris Agreement recognized the imperative of enhanced adaptive capacity, strengthened resilience, and reduced vulnerability to climate change. But it had not prescribed a framework for

defining the goal on adaptation.

At COP28, a set of time-bound targets for specific themes and sectors — such as reduction in climate-induced scarcity of water, achieving climate resilience in food and agricultural production, and resilience against the adverse health impacts of climate change — were agreed upon.

Developing countries were disappointed that agreements could not be reached on financial support for implementation. Shortly before COP28, the UNEP issued its annual assessment of climate action which highlighted that developing countries need around \$387 billion a year to prepare and deal with the impacts of climate change.

It also pointed out that the adaptation finance needed to help developing countries prepare and cope with the consequences of climate change was 10-18 times more than international finance flows. It stated: "There is a gap of \$360 billion a year. Between \$215 billion and \$387 billion a year is needed during this decade. But flows have actually dropped 15-21 per cent in 2021."

COP28 established a two-year work programme to develop indicators for measuring and assessing progress towards the overarching targets of adaptation goal.

Evidently COP29, to be held in Azerbaijan this year, will have to deal with the perennially thorny questions related to climate finance, including the adoption of a new finance goal — the new collective quantified goal (NCQG). The goal will replace the \$100 billion annual fund target set in 2009 and encourage developed countries to raise around \$5.8-5.9 trillion until 2030 to help developing countries meet their climate finance needs.

At COP28, additional \$3.5 billion in new pledges were announced to the second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund. The second replenishment now totals \$12.8 billion. The challenge will be to turn the pledges into actual disbursements to developing countries for impactful climate actions.

In 2024, three technical expert dialogues will define the key elements of the NCQG such as the amounts of the goal, the timeline of fundable activities, and how to measure

progress. Negotiators will also develop the framework for a draft negotiation text.

The Global Stocktake has also underscored the importance of reforming the multilateral financial architecture, including multilateral development banks, institutional investors and other financial actors. In fact, the heads of the IMF and the World Bank have initiated discussions on how to better deploy their resources for effective climate action.

The UAE Consensus calls on countries to submit new NDCs well before COP30. The revised commitments should update the 2030 targets and offer new targets for 2035. The COP28 decision underlines that the new NDCs have to be more ambitious, in line with the IPCC finding that achieving the objective of limiting increase in temperature to 1.5 degrees C compared to pre-industrial levels requires reducing GHG emissions by 60 per cent below the 2019 levels.

The COP28 decision states that the revised 2030 emission reduction targets should upscale current actions to reduce emissions, as well as include plans for adaptation, just transition

efforts, and compensation for loss and damage. NDCs should also reflect multi-sector transformations, including clean energy, nature conservation, road transport, and more.

Governments should initiate the preparation of their next versions of NDCs. The UN system will hold a series of global and regional workshops and capacity building sessions to help them. The UN chief will hold a special event for countries to submit their new commitments.

COP28 came up with a new political contrivance to promote collaboration on climate action: the presidencies of COPs 28, 29, and 30 will jointly promote a 'roadmap to 1.5 degrees C', including preparation of more ambitious NDCs and securing funds for implementing them.

In response to the growing worldwide concerns over the adverse effects of climate change on global food security, 159 nations, covering 80 per cent of the world's land, have signed the COP28 Declaration on Sustainable Agriculture, Resilient Food Systems, and Climate Action, committing to integrate food and food systems into their NDCs by

2025.

COP28 saw a number of initiatives for addressing methane pollution, a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide. Governments, companies and philanthropists announced \$1 billion in new grants for projects aimed at cutting methane in the oil and gas, waste and agriculture sectors.

The UAE Consensus also calls on all countries to speed up their reductions of non-CO2 emissions, including methane, and encourages them to include all greenhouse gases in their next NDCs.

The success of the decisions adopted at COP28 as well as the initiatives launched outside the negotiations depends on the ability and will of governments and non-state stakeholders to implement the very ambitious agreements. NDCs serve as a framework for action. Finance, science and technology, and skilled human resources will be needed to translate the COP28 outcomes into meaningful actions. Efforts of developing countries must be supported by adequate external support at the bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels. — Courtesy TheNews

Fertiliser subsidy



Aijaz A. Nizamani

Wheat is the most important dietary component in food consumed in Pakistan. The same is reflected in Pakistan's cultivation trends, with over 22 million acres of farmland — more than 50 per cent of the cropped area — allocated to wheat crops in the winter. The winter season is when fertiliser requirements peak, and fertiliser plants have to compete with power plants for natural gas in order to produce nitrogenous fertiliser.

However, dwindling domestic supplies and increased competition in the international market for natural gas have made these competing demands nearly impossible for Pakistani policymakers to manage. Invariably, bureaucrats and politicians make a mess of the situation, and the high cost of their mess is passed on to consumers and producers alike. It is no surprise that the country imports millions of tonnes of wheat worth hundreds of millions of dollars every year.

The current year's budget has allocated Rs30 billion for fertiliser subsidies. This subsidy is used to pay for cheap gas to fertiliser plants, which, in return, are supposed to provide their urea and phosphate fertiliser products at administered rates to farmers through their distribution networks. The list of ministries and bureaucracies involved in the disbursement of this subsidy is mind-boggling. For a comparatively low figure of Rs30bn, the list of ministries involved includes the

Ministry of Industries and Production, the Ministry of Petroleum, the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority, the Cabinet Division, the Ministry of Food Security and Research and the Ministry of Finance.

Since their bureaucrats get caught up in turf wars, making timely decisions is not possible. Each year, delayed government decisions on setting gas prices for fertiliser plants also result in bottlenecks in the value chain. Gas supply bottlenecks give rise to discrimination: the Competition Commission of Pakistan is often approached by plants that do not receive enough supply of gas, while others are reportedly favoured.

The impact of this mismanagement is seen in the small-town markets of rural Pakistan, where farmers are paying between Rs5,000 and Rs5,500 for a bag of urea in the black market, which is supposed to be sold at Rs3,250 this season. The situation was no different under the PTI government when farmers queued all day to receive just two bags of fertiliser.

Industry sources say the country has enough plant capacity to produce more fertiliser than needed by local farmers. So, why are wheat farmers forced to buy from the black market each year in winter, especially for a crop as important as wheat? The price differential is not the only issue: producers also suffer from what economists call high transaction costs, as well as the loss of valuable time. They are unable to provide crops with vital plant nutrients when they are critically needed, resulting in loss of production, which is ultimately met through wheat imports.

The fertiliser subsidy is not provided to farmers but to fertiliser plants — in other words, to industrialists. The rationale provided for this arrangement is that it ultimately helps farmers. However, as the experience every year shows, it does not work that way, as farmers invariably pay more than administered prices for their requirements. Some studies done by the Pakistan Institute for Development Economics also show that the fertiliser subsidy does not significantly impact food costs for the poor. The logical question is: why not do away with the subsidy altogether when both consumers and producers (farmers) do not get the value it is paid for?

Since farmers are net losers in this subsidy regime, it is they who should demand a liberal fertiliser import and export mechanism. It looks like even fertiliser manufacturers are not averse to a market-based mechanism: they believe they can export fertiliser under such a regime, bringing in as much as \$500m in foreign exchange. Free imports and an export facilitation policy would go a long way towards improving food security while cutting out meddling bureaucrats. This will, undoubtedly, require government regulation, but this must be light and enable activity, instead of stifling it.

The next question would be how to incentivise the wheat crop in case the fertiliser subsidy is done away with. The solution lies in direct fiscal transfers to farmers, as is done in all OECD countries. The government may support a certain amount, like Rs5,000 per acre, with a ceiling of 10 acres per farmer. This will be a targeted production subsidy for small and medium farmers. It can easily be put into practice using satellite and technology, and disbursed directly to farmers' bank accounts with minimum involvement of bureaucratic personnel. — Courtesy Dawn

Mass extinction



Aisha Khan

The end of the 28th session of the Conference of Parties in December 2023 moved the needle forward on climate action but not at the pace needed to avert the sixth mass extinction. As eco-anxiety grows and optimists try to rationalise slow progress, with the inherent constraints of multilateral processes, the clock keeps ticking, reminding us of the perils and predilections of change and the timescale for keeping life systems alive.

The conversation on climate has become so jargon filled and technical in its approach that at times it loses sight of the here and now, becoming occasionally delusional and sometimes capricious.

Anatomically, modern humans emerged around 200,000 years ago in a process of evolution from ancestral Homo sapiens dating back six million years. Civilisation as we know it started around 6,000 years back and the advent of the industrial age began in 1850.

In the span of 173 years, humans have successfully landed on the moon but degraded ecosystems and destroyed the environment on planet Earth. Today, with advancements in science and technology, life expectancy has increased, progress in communication has transformed connectivity and creature comforts have enhanced life quality beyond imagination.

Ironically, all this has come at the cost of development that has turned into an existential threat. The main culprit for disrupting

planetary balance are greenhouse gases.

As we enter 2024, it is important to put some things in perspective. The blame game at negotiations has gone on for 28 years. Perhaps it is time to take more individual responsibility and combine the two to save our species. A change in perspective may also alter thinking and help in finding solutions faster.

The dilemma facing the world is not only about how to reduce carbon emissions; in fact, it is more about how to retain existing lifestyles without compromising on quality or changing consumption patterns.

At COP28 Sultan al-Jaber earned flak for his statement that was interpreted to mean that giving up fossil fuels is tantamount to going back to the cave age. Seen in a broader perspective, perhaps it suggests that no one is quite ready yet to give up on lifestyles supported by fossil fuel. This applies to people from all tiers of society, across sectors, institutions and affiliations.

The outcry every year at climate summits is on the ascendant, and disappointment outshines hope. However, the fundamental question that holds the key to the climate conundrum remains unanswered. How much are we willing as citizens and societies to give up on current consumption patterns to embrace a low-carbon-footprint lifestyle? After all, it is possible to curtail supply by reducing demand.

Data demonstrates that modern food systems drive 90 per cent of deforestation and 60pc of biodiversity loss, and account for 70pc of the world's use of freshwater. Overall, food systems alone contribute to over one-third of global greenhouse emissions. By going vegan the global population could reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food production

by 28pc. And yet only 1-2pc of the world population is vegan.

The list of possible individual actions is as long as the list of commitments made by nations at climate summits.

Extinction is not a new phenomenon on planet Earth. There have been five previous mass extinctions. Many researchers argue that we are in the middle of a sixth mass extinction. The common denominator in all previous extinctions was a drastic change in the carbon cycle. The Permian-Triassic Extinction that took place 250m years ago was the largest mass extinction event in Earth's history, affecting a range of species. The loss of biodiversity ended all life.

Today, the overgrowth and transformative behaviour of a single species is destroying habitats and unleashing a crisis. A European Commission modelling study shows likely extinction of 27pc of plants and animals by 2100. This continued disruption in the biosphere poses an extinction threat to one-half of Earth's higher life forms by the turn of the century.

From all evidence, it seems that human beings are an aberration in the evolutionary process. They show scant respect for nature, are wasteful in their use of natural resources, degrade the environment, harm biodiversity, destroy the ecosystems that support them, and kill their own species. Rich, developing and poor nations all follow the same exploitative pattern of human behaviour.

The home truth is that the battle for human survival will not be won at the negotiating tables but by solutions provided by science and technology. Evolution will not stop with Homo sapiens. We might even be taken over by other forms of life in a new world order governed by artificial intelligence. — Courtesy Dawn

KP govt invests in youth prosperity: CM

Inaugurates technical training under 'Khushal KP Programme'

PESHAWAR (APP): Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice (Retd) Arshad Hussain Shah said on Tuesday that youth are our assets, and the KP government is investing in them to build prosperity.

He addressed the inaugural ceremony of the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program, which aims to create technical training and employment opportunities for the youth.

He expressed concern over the longstanding issue of unemployment in the country, emphasizing the distress caused by witnessing the youth facing joblessness.

"We have implemented a program

prioritizing the training of the youth on preferential grounds," he said.

He highlighted that this training program is a crucial component of the Khushal Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program, describing it as a comprehensive initiative that will have lasting effects.

He stated that this is a program for the welfare of humanity, and its success requires collective efforts. In the first phase, over one hundred thousand young individuals will undergo vocational courses, aimed at equipping them with skills beyond just information technology.

Chief Minister

definitive goal of providing training to at least five hundred thousand youth, ultimately facilitating their employment.

He emphasized the clear roadmap established for the welfare of the youth, which will also serve as a helpful guide for the incoming government.

As part of the programme, initially, over 0.1 million young individuals will undergo various courses, including IT, in addition to other fields.

During the ceremony, agreements and memorandum of understanding were signed between various departments and institutions to facilitate the program's objectives.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inspecting the quality of new beds in upgraded Emergency Unit at Punjab Institute of Cardiology.

The first lady for integrated efforts to ensure child protection

KARACHI (APP): The First Lady Samina Arif Alvi, Tuesday, stressed the need for effective implementation of Zainab Alert Act, an integrated single helpline, and close coordination among all the relevant organizations and stakeholders for speedy recovery of missing children.

The first lady, while chairing a meeting during visit of Roshni Helpline-a non governmental organization working for recovery of missing children-emphasized that a universal helpline for receiving public complaints and joint and coordinated efforts through a single platform would result into more effective and timely outcomes.

There were several organizations both in public as well as private sector working separately to provide relief to citizens and they have different

helpines to receive grievances, she noted adding that however it might confuse the aggrieved citizens about who should be contacted with in a certain situation.

Begum Alvi suggested that there should be a single and integrated helpline to receive the public complaints and calls for emergency assistance and all the organizations working in different domains should work under one umbrella so that citizens could access the helpline easily and the matter could be referred to the most relevant organization for prompt and effective action.

Founder of Roshni Helpline Muhammad Ali and other board members briefed the First Lady about vision, performance and initiatives of the organization for protection of children particularly recovery of missing children.



MOHENJO DARO: A tourist delegation from Hungary are visiting and expressed keen interest in the historical ruins of the World Heritage Monuments of Mohenjo Daro during foggy weather of winter season, in Mohenjo Daro.

PPP against postponement of elections: Nisar Khuhro

KARACHI (APP): Provincial President Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Sindh chapter, Senator Nisar Khuhro Tuesday said that the PPP wanted general elections in the country and would not support any move aimed at postponing polls beyond announced date of February 8 in any case.

He was addressing a press conference along with General Secretary PPP Sindh Senator Waqar Mehdi and President Karachi division Saeed Ghani at Bilawal House.

On the occasion, Vice President Muslim League-N Sindh advocate Sheikh Javed Mir also announced joining PPP.

Nisar Khuhro said that the narrative of postponing general election beyond the scheduled date would tantamount to "Delaying democracy and

denying democracy".

"According to the constitution, term of the caretaker government was only three months, so we demand conduct of free, fair and transparent elections on February 8, 2024 so that power could be transferred to elected representatives of the people," he reiterated.

The people should be given an opportunity to elect their representatives having affiliation with any political party and their mandate must be accepted and respected, Khuhro maintained.

Armed forces of Pakistan are capable of dealing with the menace of terrorists under the National Action Plan and the same was done in the past, he said accusing that, Imran Khan later came into power and fueled terrorist sentiments in the society.

Former CJ PHC, Qaisar Rasheed passes away

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC), Justice Qaisar Rasheed breathed his last at a local hospital here on Tuesday.

Hospital sources said, Justice Qaisar Rasheed was admitted to the hospital for the last many days. Justice Rasheed was on a ventilator for the last three days and today he left this mortal world. Justice Qaisar Rasheed had also undergone a kidney transplant procedure last year.

One killed, another injured

FAISALABAD (APP): A woman was killed in an accident while a youth was injured during a robbery near here on Tuesday.

According to the Rescue 1122, a woman was hit to death by a rashly driven car near Kohistan express service. The victim was later identified as Zahra Kalsoom of Muzaffar Colony Saman Abad. The body was handed over to police while the driver fled away. Separately, Khawar of Chak No 283- GB was injured by dacoits during a dacoity who was shifted to the THQ hospital Jaranwala.

Five outlaws held; drugs, arms recovered in Tank

TANK (APP): The district police have arrested five accused of recovering 1978 drugs and illegal weapons along with ammunition from their possession during an ongoing crackdown against anti-social elements across the district. According to a police spokesman, the police have intensified actions against criminal elements following the directions of District Police Officer (DPO) Iftekhar Ali Shah. As part of such actions, a team of City police Station led by SHO,



LAHORE: Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Lahore, Bilal Saddique Kamyana presides over a high level meeting at his office in Lahore.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali inaugurates academic block for Bachelors Degree Programme Paramedics at Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Postgraduate Paramedical Institute.

Punjab CM says: Efforts would be made to induce artificial rainfall with assistance of the UAE team

LAHORE: Ahmed Al-Kamal, head of the cloud-seeding team from the United Arab Emirates' meteorology department, chief pilot Michael Anstis and pilot Col Ubaid called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Tuesday.

The CM thanked the team members for their endeavors to induce artificial rainfall to reduce smog and expressed gratitude for the UAE's cooperation, acknowledging it as the first-ever successful attempt at artificial rainfall in Lahore's history.

Chief Minister Naqvi stated that the Punjab government appreciates the collaboration with the UAE, and reiterated the need for artificial rainfall to

combat smog. He assured that further efforts would be made to induce artificial rainfall, once again, when the required atmospheric conditions are met, with the assistance of the UAE team. Highlighting the success of the first-ever artificial rainfall in Lahore.

CM reviews progress on new Ravi Bridge

LAHORE (APP): Demonstrating an unwavering commitment to public infrastructure development, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi conducted a thorough inspection of the ongoing development work of the 540-meter-long four-lane new Ravi Bridge.

While observing advancements in piling and drilling works of the new Ravi bridge, he ordered to burn the midnight oil to complete it by Jan 31.

The CM also inspected the roads' construction around Shahdra Chowk and directed to accelerate the pace of work to complete different tasks in the coming days. Commissioner/DG LDA and the contractor briefed that two new machines have been installed to expedite the process and 11 piles of new Ravi bridge have already been completed. Similarly, 23, out of 96 girders, have been prepared as well, they added. Provincial Minister Azfar Ali Nasir and others were also present.

World-class sports complex, universities to be built in Zafarwal: Ahsan Iqbal

ZAFARWAL (APP): Senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader and candidate for NA-76 Narawal and PP-54 Zafarwal constituencies, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal announced building a world-class sports complex for the youth of Zafarwal, so that they could participate in sports activities and bring laurels to the country.

He expressed these views at the closing ceremony of the All Punjab Shah Faisal Shaheed Football Tournament here on Tuesday. The former federal minister said, "I promise to the youth of

Zafarwal that I will soon build a sports complex in Zafarwal like the Narawal Sports Complex, where world-class sports and coaches are available."

He said that the future of Pakistan was linked to the youth and for their bright future, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had taken practical steps. "More steps will be taken for their welfare in the future. More than 7,000 youths are studying in three universities in Narawal and world-class universities will also be set up in Zafarwal soon," he added.

Rangers, SIU arrest Lyari gangster

KARACHI (APP): The Pakistan Rangers Sindh, in collaboration with the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), utilized advanced technological methods during a joint operation that led to the apprehension of Anas Aftab Baloch, a notorious member of a Lyari gang involved in extortion. The arrest took place in Mureed Goth, Liaqatabad area of the city.

As per a statement by a Rangers spokesperson on Tuesday, Anas, along with his associate Hassan, made extortion demands of 0.1 million rupees from a builder in Karachi on May 4th, 2023, using various mobile numbers.



KARACHI: Begum Samina Arif Alvi being briefed during her visit to Roshni Helpline office.

Governor requested to play role in preventing use of e-cigarettes among youth

PESHAWAR (APP): Blue Veins and the Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control, a CSOs led alliance working to lead tobacco control initiatives, has requested Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali to play his effective role in preventing use of e-cigarettes and vapes among young population.

In a letter to Governor KP Haji Ghulam Ali, both Blue Veins and Provincial Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco Control brought his attention to a pressing issue that is affecting the youth of the province.

"The leadership of Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali can set a precedent for

other provinces of Pakistan, showcasing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as role model for proactive and preventive health governance," reads the letter. A concerning rise in use of e-cigarettes and vapes has been observed among youngsters in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adds the letter.

These devices, are often perceived and claimed to be safer alternatives to traditional tobacco products, are laden with highly addictive nicotine and Other harmful chemicals, it added.

Their growing prevalence, especially among the youth and women.

ANF recovers 214 kg drugs in nine operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting nine operations across the country managed to recover over 214 kg drugs and arrested six accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that 2.4 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a passenger, going to Doha on Qatar Airways at Lahore Airport. 100 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Sri Lanka at a courier office on Shahr-e-Faisal, Karachi. 209 kg hashish was recovered in four operations conducted near Morghah border area.

Minister Murad reviews PUNJMIN performance

LAHORE (APP): Provincial Minister for Mines and Minerals Ibrahim Hassan Murad, during a meeting held here on Tuesday, reviewed the performance of Punjab Minerals Development Corporation (PUNJMIN) and advocated its digital transformation.

PUNJMIN Managing Director presented updates on salt projects, coal projects, and the Mianwali project, emphasizing progress through a detailed presentation.

During the briefing, it was revealed that PUNJMIN is set to digitize its operations, adopting Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP). However, the initiative requires skilled professionals in IT, mining engineering, and accounting. A request for relaxation in new recruitment has been sent to the Chief Minister's

office. The minister highlighted the importance of digitalization for enhancing the corporation's efficiency, citing its profitability due to effective government strategies. He noted the positive impact of increased industrial salt prices on government revenue. Stressing the need for continued improvement, the minister instructed PUNJMIN to implement e-bidding and e-auction systems to curb corruption.

Furthermore, the minister urged transparency in all affairs to facilitate strategic expansion of the mines sector. The meeting also included a presentation on a ten-year revenue comparison, reinforcing the commitment to elevating PUNJMIN's performance.



HYDERABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) Sindh Chairman, Dr. S. M. Tarique Rafi take keen interest at stall during the 18th Degree Show (Annual Thesis Display/Exhibition) held at Shaheed Allah Bukh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritages in Jamshoro.

Certificate of Sadiq, Ameen being maintained for play boy: Mian Latif

LAHORE (Online): PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif has said certificate of Sadiq and Ameen is being maintained for play boy.

"The country is undergoing uncertain situation at economic, political level, he said this while talking to media men here Tuesday.

He went on to say those who are making policies are not accepting their mistakes.

He held millions of rupees were spent on those who made narrative on social media. Had some one investigated then it would have come to surface the links of May 9 and 10 incidents go to which countries.

He questioned can the armed forces of the country

be threatened. He remarked May 9, 10 attack is matter of grave concern for the institutions. No one is there to ask from those who were schemers of 2017-18.

He added 7 to 8 months have passed and now mitti pao program cannot work.

Had Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif attacked defence institutions.

Today much cry is raised on the matter of election symbol but no one had spoken in our case, he observed.

The sword of disqualification is being hung on the head of the person who has been acquitted.

Strict monitoring of canal de-silting ordered

FAISALABAD (APP): Divisional Commissioner Madam Silwat Saeed had directed the deputy commissioners of all four districts of the division and officers of the irrigation department to ensure strict monitoring of the canal de-silting drive.

Chairing a meeting on Tuesday, she said that cleanliness of canals was imperative to ensure the provision of irrigation water to all farmers especially tail-enders. She said that the phase-1 of the de-silting campaign would commence from January 13 and officials of irrigation and water management

departments should evolve a comprehensive strategy to achieve 100 percent targets of the drive.

She said that the canal cleanliness drive would be monitored strictly across the division and strict action would be taken against officials for poor performance, negligence or lethargy. Faisalabad Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh and officers of irrigation and water management departments were present in the meeting while deputy commissioners of Jhang, Toba Tek Singh and Chinot joined it through video link.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Information Minister, Ahmad Shah along with Inspector General Police Sindh, Dr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja addresses to media persons during press conference held at Sindh Assembly building in Karachi.

'Fake video created by using technology' says SALU VC

SUKKUR (APP): Vice Chancellor (VC), Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Prof Dr Khalil Ahmed Ibutopo on Tuesday said that the circulating video is fake and it was created by using technology.

Talking to APP, he said that some subordinate officials from inside the university and some from outside were blackmailing him since five months. In this regard he had already

filed an application in the cyber crime wing of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on September 9, 2023, accusing the Network Operator Rashdi, Administrative Officer Tahir Abbass Khaskheli, Senior Data Processing Officer Mohammad Younis Phuelpoto and Hakim Ali Phulpoto, local Journalist Abuzar Ghafar Shar and a social media activist Shukat Zardari of

blackmail. He said that the accused persons were making certain unacceptable demands while threatening him that they were in possession of a compromising video of the VC which might be leaked on social media if he did not accept their demands.

To a question, he termed the video as fake and it was created by using technology.

High-profile Chinese business delegation meets Planning Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-profile business delegation of China, led by the Chairman of Chang Chinag Chamber of Commerce Li Ting, met with Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed potential collaboration opportunities between Pakistan and China in various sectors, fostering business expansion and exploring new investment avenues, a news release said.

Comprising eight members, the delegation represented diverse industries such as import and export, technology, electronics, machinery,

office supplies, apparel, and building materials. The discussions centred on strengthening bilateral ties and identifying strategic areas for mutually beneficial partnerships.

Minister Sami Saeed emphasized key sectors for investment, including Agriculture, Information Technology & Telecommunications, Mines & Minerals and Energy sectors.

He highlighted the opportunities to utilize Special Economic Zones (SEZs), stating that Pakistan encourages foreign investment, especially Chinese investors for the joint ventures and relocation of industries to Pakistan.

The minister also

highlighted Pakistan's demographic dividend as youth was more than 60 per cent of the country's population, providing ample business opportunities, especially in the field of IT sector.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to providing a secure business environment for investors making the 'investor-facilitation' a top priority.

"One window operation for foreign investors, ensuring security and comfort in our industrial zones, is our government's utmost priority. We encourage B2B investments and welcome businesses to explore opportunities in sectors like agriculture, food, IT,



ISLAMABAD: A high-profile business delegation, led by Mr. Li Ting, Chairman of the Chang Chinag Chamber of Commerce, China met with Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed.

Export set to reach the targeted capacity of \$3bln per month soon

ISLAMABAD (Online): Dr. Gohar Ejaz, the Minister for Commerce, Industries and Investment announced today that exports in December 2023 increased by 22.2% to USD 2.812 billion from USD 2.301 billion in December 2022. He said that the increase is 9.3% with USD 2.573 billion exports in November 2023.

He also said the said positive trend extends to imports as well which decreased by 12.25% in December 2023 to USD 4.514 billion compared to USD 5.144 billion in December 2022.

Looking at the broader picture, the exports in Jul-Dec 2023 witnessed

continued export growth and increased by 5.2% to USD 14.981 billion from USD 14.244 billion during the same period in preceding year. Notably, imports during this period saw a significant 16.28% reduction compared to the same period in 2022, falling from USD 31.209 billion to a much lower USD 26.129 billion.

These developments translate to a substantial narrowing of the trade deficit. In December 2023 alone, the deficit shrank by a significant 40% to USD 1.7 billion, representing a decrease of USD 1.141 billion compared to the previous year.

The Jul-Dec 2023

period saw an even more impressive trend, with the trade deficit shrinking by 34% to USD 11.148 billion, down from USD 16.965 billion in the same period last year (a decrease of \$5.817 billion). Commenting on these achievements, Dr. Gohar Ejaz expressed optimism, stating, "This is the record growth in past four months. When the Caretaker Government took over, the last month's exports were USD 2.07 billion. Alhamdulillah, these now stand at USD 2.81 billion. Pakistan's exports have recovered and are on a clear upward trajectory, reaching an impressive USD 2.8 billion in December 2023."

Fly Jinnah and 1-Link collaborates to enhance Customer Experience

Independent Report
KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's low-cost airline, has partnered with 1-Link to streamline payments for flight bookings. Under this innovative collaboration, passengers will have a dedicated time window to

transaction. At the core of this partnership is a dedication to providing Fly Jinnah customers with a seamless booking experience. What sets this partnership apart is the array of payment channels available to



confirm their bookings by completing the payment process, offering unmatched flexibility and convenience.

1-Link, which is Pakistan's largest payment gateway and switch system will enable customers with any bank account to easily complete their bookings by making payments from their phone or laptop, eliminating the need to visit a physical Fly Jinnah office for the

customers. Payments can be made through various means, including any bank's branch or ATM connected to the extensive 1-Link network. Additionally, customers can swiftly complete their transactions through their bank's website or mobile app integrated with 1-Link. This diversity of payment options empowers travelers to choose the method that best suits their preferences.

FTO disposes of 17,101 complaints in 3 years

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) on Tuesday released its three year performance report from 2021 to 2023, during which the department disposed of around 17,101 complaints.

2023, provided relief to 6,106 and 2,867 complainants in 2022 and 2021 respectively. The number of registered complaints stood 5,752 in 2022 and 2,816 in 2021.

In 2023, FTO Registrar Muhammad Majid Qureshi said the organization launched an aggressive outreach campaign to create public awareness about the role of FTO office for providing speedy and cost-free justice to aggrieved taxpayers and general public.

He said the FTO held around 115 seminars with concerned Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI), different Trade bodies, Tax Bars, and college/universities in 2023 compared to 76 such seminars and sessions in organized in 2022.

As per the details, the FTO settled down 8,128 complaints out of 8,076 in



ISLAMABAD: Registrar Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Muhammad Majid Qureshi addressing a press conference at FTO Secretariat.

Pakistan's exports to China increase by 39.44% in 5 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's export of goods and services to China witnessed an increase of 39.44 per cent during the first five months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

Overall Pakistan's exports to other countries witnessed an increase of 4.99 per cent in the first five months, from US \$11.915 billion to US \$12.510 billion, the SBP data revealed.

The overall exports to China were recorded at US \$1223.532 million during July-November (2023-24) against exports of US \$877.444 million during July-November (2022-23), SBP data revealed.

On the other hand, the imports from China into the country during the months under review were recorded at US \$4741.099 million against US \$5045.390 million last year, showing a decline of 6.03 per cent in July-November (2023-24). On a year-on-year basis, the imports from China witnessed an increase of 10.71 per cent.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Dr. Umar Saif in a meeting with British High Commissioner to Pakistan Ms. Jane Marriott.

New FPCCI Regional Chairman, VPs assume offices

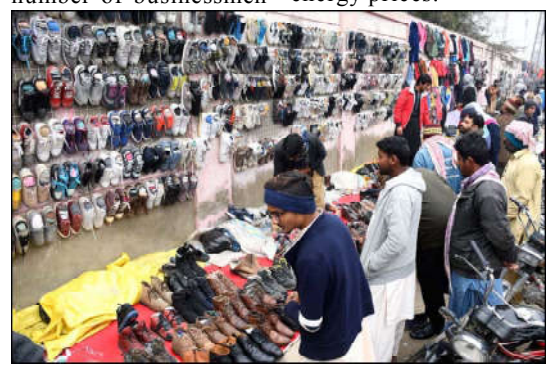
Independent Report
LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (FPCCI) newly elected Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Aijaz Qureshi and Vice President Zain Iftikhar Chaudhry assumed the charge of their offices in a ceremony held here at FPCCI Regional Office on Tuesday.

SM Tanveer, Zaki Ijaz Qureshi, Zain Iftikhar, Zubair Tufail, Aamir Atta Bajwa and other leaders, while giving their roadmap, said that special attention will be given to research and development (R&D). "Allah Almighty has given us great success, along with which we have a great responsibility. We have very little time; we have to work hard so that the country's industries will flourish and exports will increase."

A special ceremony was held in honor of the newly elected officials in which Punjab's Minister for Industries and Commerce and Patron in Chief of United Business Group (UBG) SM Tanveer, former President FPCCI Zubair Tufail, former Senior Vice President FPCCI Aamir Atta Bajwa, former LCCI President Almas Hyder, Momin Ali Malik, Ali Hussam Asghar, Ahmed Chennai, Mian Zahid Hussain, Muhammad Sohail, Zafar Mahmood Chaudhry, Malik Tahir Javed, Mian Shafiqat, Sohail Lashari, Mahmood Ghaznavi, Khawaja Shahzad Nasir and a large number of businessmen

participated in the ceremony and congratulated the newly-elected office-bearers on their historic success in the FPCCI elections.

They added that if the industries develop, the country will also develop, and unemployment will also end. "We have to work for Pakistan through FPCCI." Currently, the economy is facing the double challenge of rising energy prices and interest rates. They said that measures will have to be taken to control the energy prices.



LARKANA: A large number of people busy in purchasing second hand shoes at old bus stand road.

Punjab Governor says: Doors of Governor House always open for the business community

Independent Report
LAHORE: The delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry led by Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Gohar Ijaz, Federal Minister of Finance, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar and Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce, S. M. Tanveer met with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman here today at Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab congratulated the newly elected members of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry and expressed hope that the newly elected body will play its role for the welfare of business community.

Rehman said that Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry is the most important business organization, adding that it is playing an important role in the economic development of the country by promoting business activities.

He said that the doors of Governor House are always open for the business community. Governor Punjab said that the development of industry and business in the country leads to socio-economic development.

He said that the caretaker government's public welfare projects and measures for the promotion of trade are praise worthy. Governor Punjab said that Pakistan has vast opportunities for exports in agriculture, fisheries, and other sectors.

FTO resolves 8128 complaints of Taxpayers

MULTAN (APP): In-charge Regional Federal Ombudsman Office (Multan) Dr Khalil Ahmed urged tax-payers to contact the Federal Tax Ombudsman Office (FTO) for redressal of their complaints as 8128 complaints were resolved during Year 2023.

Railways staff' efforts for record revenue earning of Rs. 41.b acknowledged

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Federal Minister for Communication, Railways and Maritime Affairs, Shahid Ashraf Tarar has commended the efforts of Railways Staff and management for record revenue earning of 41 billion rupees during the first half of the fiscal year 2023-24.

There is a 46 per cent increase in revenue of Pakistan Railways in comparison to the same period of last year, said a news release.

Pakistan Railways earned revenue of 24 billion rupees from passenger trains and 11.5 billion from freight trains in the first six months. Income from other sectors was about five billion rupees. The increase in revenue is the result of effective and efficient reforms introduced by Pakistan Railways management and the tireless work and dedication of railway employees.



LAHORE: A delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry led by Federal Minister of Commerce and Industry, Gohar Ijaz, Federal Minister of Finance, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar and Provincial Minister of Industry and Commerce, S. M. Tanveer in a group photo with Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

BISP Savings Scheme Landmark step to instill financial independence among vulnerable sections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The newly launched 'Savings Scheme' by the internationally acclaimed Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) will prove as a landmark step towards instilling financial independence and promoting a savings culture among the vulnerable sections of society.

The BISP Saving Scheme is aimed at providing a financial buffer to the piece-rate workers for unexpected expenses and emergencies, making them self-reliant.

Socio Economic Registry (NSER) BISP, Naveed Akbar, the piece rate workers were the biggest affectedes during the COVID-19 who found it hard to earn their livelihood as they lacked savings. Therefore to mitigate their sufferings, the government provided one-time financial assistance to them of Rs. 12,000 during that difficult time. Keeping in view those circumstances, BISP Savings Scheme has been initiated to motivate those piece-rate workers to save a little amount from their daily earnings to cope with any untoward situation, the DG said.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Three ships namely, MSC Jemima, Luna Rossa and IVS Crimson Creek carrying Container, Wheat and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Grain Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Kensington, Rich Rainbow, FSM and Limra also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim during last 24 hours to load/unload Containers, Palm oil and LPGs respectively. A total of ten ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Ullswater and Sunray are left the port on today morning and three more ships, MSC Jemima, Leila Confidence and Al-Bidda are expected.



ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Economic Affairs Hosts Successful Meeting with International Delegation for 119th Advance Railway Course under PTAP Initiative.

China willing to work with US for stable relationship: Xi

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's President Xi Jinping on Monday said he was willing to work with the United States to promote stable bilateral ties, exchanging congratulations with his US counterpart Joe Biden on the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations, state media said.

Xi, in his message, said both countries have "weathered the storms and moved forward in general", which has enhanced the well-being of their peoples and contributed to world peace, stability and prosperity, according to the ministry statement.

Xi called China and US forming ties "a major event" in the history of bilateral relations and in international relations.

China-US ties have been frosty but Biden ad-

ministration officials have visited Beijing and met with their counterparts to rebuild communications and trust in the months leading up to a high-stakes summit between Xi and Biden in San Francisco in November, deemed an opportunity to cool tensions between the world's two largest economies.

Xi said the summit has pointed out the direction for both nations' ties, under a future-oriented vision.

"I am willing to work with President Biden to continue to steer and navigate the China-US relationship for the benefit of China and the US and the two peoples, and to promote the cause of world peace and development," Xi said.

The US is due its presidential election in November, in which former president and outspoken

critic of China Donald Trump is campaigning against Biden to come back for a second term.

Xi also exchanged New Year's messages with North Korea leader Kim Jong Un, and both announced 2024 to be a "friendship year" for both countries, launching a series of activities for that, the Chinese foreign ministry said separately.

Xi said China is willing to work with North Korea to deepen strategic mutual trust, enhance exchanges and cooperation, promote greater bilateral ties and make new contributions to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region.

On New Year's Eve, the Chinese leader exchanged greetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin as well.



ISTANBUL: Tens of thousands of people demonstrate to show solidarity with the Palestinian people amid the Gaza crisis, at the Galata Bridge.

Gaza war to continue through 2024, warns Tel Aviv

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: Israel warned on Wednesday that its war in Gaza would continue throughout 2024 as unrelenting strikes killed at least 25 people in the besieged enclave on New Year's Day.

Israel's military spokesman Daniel Hagari said in a New Year's message that some of the 300,000 army reservists would get a break in order to prepare for the "prolonged fighting" ahead.

"The army must plan ahead, understanding that

we will be required for additional tasks and warfare throughout this year," Hagari said.

"We are also currently adapting the planning of the force deployment in Gaza and the reserve system. Some of the reservists will return to their families and employment this week. This will significantly ease the burden on the economy and allow them to gather strength for the upcoming activities in the next year, as the fighting will continue and they will still be required," Hagari added.

Five dead as planes catch fire after collision at Japan's Haneda airport

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A passenger plane and a Japanese coast guard aircraft collided on the runway at Tokyo's Haneda Airport on Tuesday which claimed five lives.

Transport Minister Tetsuo Saito confirmed that all 379 occupants of Japan Airlines flight JAL-516 got out safely before the plane was entirely engulfed in flames.

The pilot of the coast guard plane also escaped, but five crewmembers died, Saito said.

Local TV video showed a large eruption of fire and smoke from the side of the Japan Airlines plane as it taxied after landing.

Bangladeshi Nobel winner convicted of violating labour laws

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus was convicted on Monday of violating Bangladesh's labour laws in a case decreed by his supporters as politically motivated.

Yunus, 83, is credited with lifting millions out of poverty with his pioneering microfinance bank but has earned the enmity of longtime Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has accused him of "sucking blood" from the poor.

South Korean opposition leader in intensive care after being stabbed in the neck

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korean opposition leader Lee Jae-myung was recovering in intensive care after he was stabbed in the neck on Tuesday by a man who pushed through a crowd pretending to be his supporter, his party said.

Lee was surrounded by journalists when a man lunged and struck him on the left side of his neck, Busan police official Son Je-han said at a press briefing.

Lee was first taken to a hospital in Busan, then flown to the capital Seoul where he underwent a two-hour surgery, Kwon Chil-seung of Lee's Democratic

Party told reporters. "Damage to the internal jugular vein was confirmed," Kwon said.

Lee was conscious after the surgery and is "currently admitted to the intensive care unit and is recovering", Kwon added. The attacker was arrested at the scene.

Police official Son told reporters that he was a man in his 60s who "used an 18cm knife — its blade is 13cm long — which he purchased online".

In footage aired on South Korean television stations, police were seen wrestling the suspect, who displayed a pro-Lee slogan, to the ground.

South Korean opposition party leader Lee Jae-myung, who was attacked in Busan, gets off from a helicopter on a stretcher to be transported to Seoul National University Hospital, at a heliport in Seoul.

Iranian warship enters Red Sea amid tensions

Monitoring Desk
TEHRAN: Iran's Alborz warship has entered the Red Sea through the strategic Bab al-Mandeb strait, Tasnim news agency reported on Monday, at a time of heightened tensions over the globally important waterway.

The agency did not give specific reasons for its deployment, but noted that Iranian military vessels had operated in the area since 2009. "The Alborz destroyer entered the Red Sea... by passing through the Bab al-Mandeb," waterway at the southern tip of the Red Sea,

connecting with the Gulf of Aden in the Indian Ocean, the agency said. It added that Iran's naval fleet has been operating in the area "to secure shipping lanes, repel pirates, among other purposes since 2009".

The United States in early December set up a multinational naval task force for the Red Sea following a flurry of missile and drone attacks by Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi rebels on merchant vessels which led shipping companies to suspend passages through the area.

UN to boost food ration for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: The United Nations will increase the food ration for each Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh by \$2 a month, to \$10 from Jan. 1, the World Food Programme (WFP) said on Tuesday, as it thanked donors for coming to the rescue of a cash-strapped effort.

The United Nations had cut food aid last year to the refugees by a third, to \$8 each every month, as it had raised less than half of the \$876 million required to support them.

Nearly a million members of the Muslim minority from Myanmar live in bamboo-and-plastic camps in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar, most of them having fled a military crackdown in 2017.

The WFP cut the refugees' food entitlement to \$10 from \$12 in March, and further in June, to stand at \$8 each a month, in the wake of a severe funding crunch.

China calls on Taiwan's people to promote 'peaceful reunification'

Monitoring Desk
TAIPEI: The head of China's Taiwan Affairs Office on Tuesday called on Taiwan's people to promote the process of "peaceful reunification", saying it was the common desire of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

Song Tao's message, which comes less than two weeks before Taiwan holds presidential and parliamentary elections on Jan 13, follows President Xi Jinping's remarks in his New Year Eve's address that China's "reunification" with Taiwan was inevitable.

"The motherland will eventually be reunified, and it will inevitably be reunified," Song said in his New Year's message on his office's website. This is the common desire and common mission of people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, Song added.



Palestinians protest in solidarity with Gaza in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank.

2023 worst year for settler violence in West Bank, says watchdog group

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Israeli settlers killed at least 10 Palestinians and torched dozens of homes in the occupied West Bank in 2023, making it the "most violent" year on record for settler attacks, an Israeli watchdog said on Monday.

Numerous West Bank attacks were carried out by a large group of Israeli settlers, and the violence spiked after Oct 7, said Yesh Din, a human rights group. "At least 10 Palestinians were killed by settlers and dozens of homes and vehicles were set on fire" last year, it said. "2023 was the most violent year in settler violence against Palestinians in the West Bank in both the number of incidents and their severity."

The West Bank has been under Israeli military occupation since the 1967 Six-Day War. About 490,000 settlers live among approximately three million Palestinians in the West Bank, in settlements that are considered illegal under international law.

Hong Kong tycoon Jimmy Lai pleads not guilty in national security trial

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: Hong Kong pro-democracy tycoon Jimmy Lai pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to all charges against him in a high-profile national security trial that could see the city's leading critic of the Chinese Communist Party jailed for life.

Lai faces two counts of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces — including calling for sanctions against Hong Kong and Chinese officials — under a China-imposed national security law.

Turkey detains 33 people suspected of espionage for Israel's Mossad - state media

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkish authorities have detained 33 people suspected of carrying out espionage for Israel's Mossad intelligence service, the state-run Anadolu news agency said on Tuesday, adding 13 others were being sought by police.

Anadolu said police had carried out simultaneous raids in 57 locations across eight provinces as part of an investigation that the counter-terrorism bureau of the Istanbul prosecutor's office had launched.

Japan quake toll nears 50 with many feared trapped in freezing cold

Monitoring Desk
TOKYO: A powerful earthquake that hit Japan on New Year's Day killed at least 48 people, with rescue teams struggling in freezing temperatures on Tuesday to reach isolated areas where many people are feared trapped under toppled buildings.

In Suzu, a coastal town of just over 5,000 households near the quake's epicentre, 90 per cent of houses may have been destroyed, according to its mayor Masuhiro Izumiya.

"The situation is catastrophic," he said.

The quake with a preliminary magnitude of 7.6 struck on Monday afternoon, prompting people in western coastal areas to flee to higher ground as tsunami

waves swept cars and houses into the water.

Around 200 tremors were detected since the quake first hit on Monday, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency, which warned more strong shocks could hit in the coming days.

A Coast Guard aircraft en route to deliver aid to the quake-hit region collided with a commercial aeroplane in Tokyo's Haneda airport on Tuesday, killing five Coast Guard crew while all 379 on board the Japan Airlines flight miraculously escaped a fire. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said the extent of the quake damage was becoming "increasingly clear" more than 24 hours after the quake struck on the Noto peninsula in Ishikawa prefecture.

Ukraine's Zelenskiy says Russia suffering heavy losses

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Russian forces are suffering heavy losses and the notion that Moscow is winning the nearly two-year-old war is only a "feeling" not based on reality.

"Thousands, thousands of killed Russian soldiers, nobody even took them away," he told The Economist magazine in an interview published on Monday, referring to fighting around the besieged eastern town of Avdiivka which he visited last week.

He provided no evidence to back up his assertion but Western military analysts agree Russia is paying a heavy price in men and equipment for relatively minor gains in eastern and southern Ukraine.

There was no response to a request for comment from Russian officials on Zelenskiy's remarks. Russian officials have said Western estimates of Russian death tolls are

vastly exaggerated and almost always underestimate Ukrainian losses.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said last month Russia's position was improving and it would not stop what he calls the "special military operation" until its objectives, including Ukraine's "denazification, demilitarisation and its neutral status", have been achieved.

Russian officials have dismissed as a failure a Ukrainian counteroffensive launched in mid-2023 in the east and south. Zelenskiy acknowledged that the counteroffensive backed by advanced Western weapons may not have succeeded "as the world wanted. Maybe not everything is as fast as someone imagined." In contrast, he hailed the "huge result" of Ukrainian forces breaking through a Russian Black Sea blockade, enabling grain exports by way of a new route along its southern coast.

Somalia to hold emergency meeting on Somaliland-Ethiopia deal

Monitoring Desk
MOGADISHU: Somalia will hold an emergency cabinet meeting on Tuesday, state media said, after the breakaway region of Somaliland struck a controversial deal with Ethiopia giving Addis Ababa access to the Red Sea.

Monday's surprise pact has triggered fury in Mogadishu, which considers it a violation of its sovereignty. It was announced only days after Somalia's central government had agreed to resume dialogue with the separatist northern region after years of stalemate. Somaliland has been seeking full statehood since claiming independence from Somalia in 1991, a move fiercely opposed by Mogadishu and not recognised internationally.

The Addis Ababa agreement gives landlocked Ethiopia long-desired access to the Red Sea, a key waterway for global trade.

"This historic agreement ensures Ethiopia's access to the Red Sea for their naval forces, reciprocated by formal recognition of the Republic of Somaliland, marking this as a significant diplomatic milestone for our country," Somaliland's foreign ministry said in a statement. Somali National Television said on X, formerly Twitter, that there would be an emergency cabinet meeting on Tuesday to discuss the agreement.

There has been no immediate reaction from President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's office, but his predecessor Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, better known as Farmajo, said on X it was a "serious concern for Somalia and the whole of Africa". Somalia's pointperson for Somaliland, Abdikarim Hussein Guled, said the government in Mogadishu would respond with a "firm and measured statement".

"The Ethiopian government's actions... constitute a blatant disregard for international norms and legal frameworks, representing a brazen violation of Somali territorial sovereignty and undermining the progress achieved."

Fireworks, war and quakes as world tumbles into 2024

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Fireworks lit up skies across the world to welcome 2024, but airstrikes marred the year's earliest hours in Gaza, Israel and Ukraine, and a major earthquake hit Japan triggering tsunami warnings.

Many around the world may wish to shake off high living costs, global tumult and extreme weather in 2024, which heralds elections for half the planet's population of more than eight billion.

Yet with the new year barely started there were already ominous signs. Hours earlier in Sydney, the self-proclaimed "New Year's capital of the world", more than a million partygoers had packed the harbour to cheer in the new year.

In New York City, thousands watched the annual dropping of a giant illuminated ball in Times Square. Revellers danced in the streets in Greece and bathed in the nude in

southern France.

In Italy, New Year fireworks killed one person and injured 274, police said. A dozen police officers were hurt in clashes in the German capital, Berlin, and more than 230 people were arrested.

On Rio's Copacabana beach, a three-dimensional fireworks show was accompanied by a live orchestra.

"Today we have positive thoughts so that we have a wonderful 2024, in which we make our dreams come true and with health," Francielle Marinho, 39, said.

In Rome, Pope Francis prayed for the victims of conflicts around the globe, including the people of Sudan and the "martyred Rohingya" of Myanmar.

"At the end of a year, have the courage to ask how many lives have been torn apart in armed conflicts, how many deaths?" the 87-year-old pontiff said.



NEW YORK: Revellers get ready to celebrate the New Year's Eve Ball drop in Times Square.

President emphasizes need to provide employment opportunities to women

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr. Arif Alvi has emphasized the need to provide employment opportunities and enabling working-environment to women to increase their economic participation.

He was speaking at a meeting chaired by him during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH) in Islamabad Tuesday.

Federal Ombudsperson for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace, Ms Fauzia Vihar, Secretary FOSPAH, Mr Arif Karim, advisors and officials of FOSPAH attended the meeting.

Ms Fauzia Vihar gave a detailed presentation about the role and achievements of FOSPAH in protecting women's rights.

She informed that FOSPAH was providing speedy justice in harass-

ment at the workplace and property cases of women who had been deprived of their ownership rights. She informed that 725 harassment cases were registered with FOSPAH, during 2023, out of which 517 cases had been decided.

She said that an upsurge had been witnessed in the registration of harassment and women's property cases with FOSPAH due to the awareness campaign about its role and functions. She apprised the meeting that harassment of women and denial of property rights to women were pervasive issues in Pakistan. Appreciating the continued support of the President Dr Arif Alvi, she told the meeting that so far 208 representations against the decisions of FOSPAH had been filed with the President, out of which only 10 were under process with the office of the President

while the rest had been decided. The President called for taking appropriate legislative measures at the federal and provincial levels to ensure the protection of women's property rights, besides discouraging the transfer of property by women to their family members due to pressures. He said that he was conducting personal hearings of the Ombudspersons' cases to expedite the process of justice. He stated that highlighting important decisions of FOSPAH in harassment and women's property cases through media would help increase awareness about the role of the Ombudsman. He said that police at the local level needed to improve their response to women's complaints in property cases, adding that police officials should be educated about the provisions of the Enforcement of Women's Property Rights Act, 2020.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi chairing a meeting during his visit to the Federal Ombudsman Secretariat for Protection Against Harassment at Workplace (FOSPAH) Head Office.

Jamali describes promotion of peace & inter-faith harmony important need of hour

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Zubair Jamali has underlined the need to promote peace and inter-faith harmony.

He said that peace and interfaith harmony is an important need of the hour. He said that there is forgiveness in the rights of Allah but not in the rights of people.

We have to make our self-accountability to bring change in the society putting an end to the negative things within us.

These and similar other views were expressed by the caretaker Minister while addressing a seminar on peace, interfaith and social harmony held under the auspices of Balochistan Rural Support Programme and PPAF in collaboration with here on Tuesday.

Also present in the seminar were the caretaker Minister for Education, Dr Qadir Bakhsh Baloch, Ad-

ditional Secretary for Minorities Affairs, Mamoona Aachakzai, chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad, Air Vice Marshal (R) Ejaz Mehmood Malik, acting Chief Executive Officer, Nadir Gul, Chief Executive Officer of BRSP, Dr Tahir Rasheed, Chairman board of directors BRSP, Anwar Saleem Kasi, senior government officials, social activists besides religious leaders belonging to different schools of thoughts.

Addressing the seminar, Mir Zubair Jamali also stressed that we have to take well care of people of all the religions.

He said that we can address the social problems being faced in the country by promoting interfaith harmony.

He said that humanity is a common thing among all belonging to any religious group.

He said that every individual would have to play

one's role for establishing law and order and promoting brotherhood in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad said that there's a need to promote harmony among us.

In addition to this, we have to protect the rights of minorities.

He said that our religion teaches lesson of humanity.

The caretaker Minister for Education, Qadir Bakhsh, Mrs. Roshan Khursheed Bharucha, religious scholar Dr Qari Abdul Rasheed and others also addressed the seminar and underscored the need for promotion of peace and interfaith harmony.

Meanwhile, the book entitled Paigham-e-Pakistan was also launched published on the joint national narrative for tackling the increasing extremism and lacking tolerance in the society.

PPP to clinch majority in upcoming general elections: Kundi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party Information Secretary Faisal Karim Kundi expressed optimism that his party will clinch a majority in the upcoming general elections.

Speaking to a press conference in Dera Ismail Khan he said: "The formation of an alliance against our party is not a new thing. The time will tell who is going to be the country's next premier. The elections should be held on time."

He demanded a level playing field for all political parties in the run-up to the general elections to en-

sure a free, fair and transparent electoral exercise. He asserted that no party should be coerced or marginalized in the political process, advocating for equal opportunities for everyone to engage in politics.

Kundi said that JUI-F wants to run away from the elections by attributing excuses to the country's situation.

He said: "We want the conduct of the general elections in a peaceful way. There can be political differences, but there is no chance of personal differences."



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets with the President of Pakistan Muslim League (Q).

Aftab Sherpao says Voters reaching polling stations to face difficulty in poor law, order

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Tuesday said that the voters would face difficulty in reaching the polling stations in the prevailing poor law and order.

Addressing a gathering in Tangi tehsil in Charsadda, he said that the candidates would also face problems with running their election campaign.

On this occasion PTI Nazim Muhammad Nisar Khan, along with his family members and supporters, announced joining the QWP.

The QWP Chairman said that the law and order was getting worse with each passing day. He said that the political forces would have to join hands and work hard to steer the country out of the prevailing circumstances.

He said that the country faced three major challenges in the year 2023 which included political instability, economic crisis and rising acts of terrorism.

He said that which-ever political party came to power after the 2024 general election would have to work hard to address these challenges. He added that the ones demanding level-playing field should recall whether it was provided to the other political forces for the 2018 general election.

Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao said that experiments with the political system caused colossal loss to the economy therefore such practices should be stopped. He said the Imran Khan experiment caused economic stagnation, inflation and political instability. "What service was done to the country by bringing him to power?" he asked.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed chairing a meeting with Religious Scholars of various religions.

Privatization of HEC completed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Privatization Commission of Pakistan on Tuesday completed the privatization process of Heavy Electrical Complex (HEC) by handing over the share certificates to the buyer M/s IMS Engineering (Pvt) Limited.

In a final settlement of Rs1.4 billion transaction, the buyer IMS Engineering has not only made full payment but has also taken over additional liabilities of Rs 752 million payable to the Bank of Khyber. The Bank of Khyber issued an NOC for the conclusion of the transaction, said a press release.

Speaking on the occa-

sion, Caretaker Minister for Privatization, Fawad Hasan Fawad congratulated all the stake holders who contributed towards the conclusion of the sale agreement including the SIFC, State Bank of Pakistan, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Industries, Chief Secretary KPK, the Bank of Khyber, the Financial Advisor and the team of Privatization Commission.

The Chairman IMS Engineering, Mahmood Haq expressed that plans for better utilization of the facility are already in place and that they expect to be able to make exports of \$250-300 million in two to three years.

Caretaker PM meets Ch Shujaat

LAHORE (Online): Caretaker Prime Minister (PM) Anwaar ul Haq reached residence of PML-Q president Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and inquired about his welfare.

Sources told Online Care taker PM met Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain at his residence. The two exchanged views on overall political and economic situation of the country.

Sources said Caretaker PM inquired about welfare of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi also accompanied caretaker PM.

Sheikh files appeal against rejection of nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Awami Muslim League chief and former federal minister Sheikh Rashid on Tuesday lodged an appeal against the rejection of his nomination papers from the NA-56 constituency in Rawalpindi.

In a statement to a private TV channel, Sheikh Rashid's lawyer asserted that the receipts for rest house arrears are fabricated, emphasizing that Sheikh Rashid never stayed at the rest house. The legal representative urged the annulment of the returning officer's decision to reject the nomination papers. The rejection of Sheikh Rashid's nomination papers was officially communicated on January 1.

Asad Qaiser calls for 'free and fair' elections

SWABI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former speaker of the National Assembly (NA) Asad Qaiser on Tuesday called for 'free and fair' elections in the country.

In an exclusive interview with a private TV channel Asad Qaiser urged the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to play a more effective role in ensuring the 'free and fair' polls in the country.

He termed the election commission's role during the upcoming general election 2024 as 'worst', stating that the electoral watchdog should play its role as a neutral institution.

"Such elections will not bring stability but things will get worse in Pakistan," Qaiser asserted, he accused the ECP of "supporting" a political party, and stated that, despite the pre-poll rigging tactics, PTI will win the upcoming elections.



QUETTA: Members NCRC Pirbhu Lal Satyani and Khalid Anam addressing a seminar on draft bill 2023-24 of child domestic labour

NCRC holds third consultation in Balochistan to improve prohibition of child domestic Labour Bill 2024

Independent Report
QUETTA: The National Commission on the Rights of the Child (NCRC) commenced 3rd consultation in Balochistan aimed at discussing the Prohibition of Child Domestic Labour Bill 2024 with key stakeholders.

The Prohibition of Child Domestic Labour Bill 2024 seeks to instigate transformative change by reinforcing legal measures against those involved in engaging children in domestic labor. By classifying Child Domestic Labour (CDL) as a non-compoundable, non-bailable, and cognizable offense, the NCRC underscores its commitment to prioritizing the rights and well-being of children. This proposed bill intends to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898, criminalizing CDL and eliminating this widespread menace. Titled the Criminal Amendment (Prohibition of Child Domestic Labor) Bill, 2024, it signifies a dedicated effort to protect the rights and dignity of children across Pakistan. The bill proposes the addition of a new section, 374-A, to the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860, specifically addressing child domestic labor. This section criminalizes the employ-

ment, recruitment, harboring, transportation, or provision of a child below the age of eighteen years for domestic labor, with penalties including imprisonment ranging from two to seven years and a fine not less than five hundred thousand rupees. The offenses related to child domestic labor are categorized as non-bailable, non-compoundable, and cognizable.

Embarking on the path toward widespread societal change, the NCRC has outlined a series of consultations at the provincial level to refine and strengthen the proposed bill.



QUETTA: A delegation led by Mayor Chaman Haji Habibullah Achakzai meeting with Chairman PKMAP Mehmood Khan Achakzai.

Dr. Nadeem proposes allocation of 2 pc of GDP for health sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Nadeem Jan on Tuesday proposed allocation of two percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the health sector.

In response to a calling attention notice moved by Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani regarding the non-availability of vaccines, especially the anti-diphtheria serum in the country, with a specific focus on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leading to the unfortunate deaths of chil-

dren, the minister said that our request to the next government would be to allocate at least two percent of the GDP for health, a sector that has been overlooked by all previous governments.

Regarding the Anti-Diphtheria Serum (ADC), he clarified that the provision and procurement of ADC was the responsibilities of the provinces.

However, he added that the federal government can play a role in facilitating resource generation and providing guidelines in this regard.

Caretaker Minister Home takes notice of Jungle Piralizai incident

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali has taken notice of the incident occurred in Jungle Piralizai.

According to an official handout issued here on Tuesday, the caretaker Minister sought report of the incident from the concerned authorities.

He also expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Dr. Fida Muhammad in the incident. The Minister directed the concerned authorities to review the incident from its all aspects.

He also directed to constitute special teams for arrest of the culprits involved in the incident and give them exemplary punishment taking them to task. Mir Zubair Jamali prayed that may Allah Almighty rest the departed soul into Its eternal peace and give enough strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear the tragic loss.



Chairman Gwadar Port Authority Pasand Khan Buledi presiding over 1st meeting of executive body of Pak-China Technical & Vocational Institute Gwadar University.

Senator Samina Zehri If there is problem of missing persons, why don't they go to the MPA, MNA and Sardars

ISLAMABAD (APP): In our society, especially in Balochistan, women are given a lot of respect and it is sad to see our girls and mothers from Balochistan who are sitting outside in the cold weather and it is very sad and sad that the way they are sitting on a sit-in.

These views were expressed by Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri in her speech at the Senate. She said that not only in Balochistan but in the whole country, women are respected and women's honor is important for everyone and women who are sitting for their rights are also respected by all of us but if there is a problem of missing persons, why don't they go to the MPA, MNA and Sardars of the area from which people are disappearing?

The tribal system of Balochistan has JIRGA and chieftaincy system and women sitting on the streets like this is a matter of moment for this system. This problem should be solved first by those representatives and chiefs who got votes from these areas

and are sitting in the Houses. Coming to Islamabad and protesting is beyond understanding.

Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri said in her senate speech that the problem of missing persons is not today's problem but an old problem, then why was this problem raised as the elections were approaching.

She said that when any good or big work is done in this country such problems come to the fore and instead of solving them at the lower level, they are referred to Islamabad. Why is this so? The politics of sit-ins have caused immense damage to the country and now as the date of elections is approaching, this sit-in has started. It should be that the MNN, MPA and Sardar Nawab of every region should listen to this problem and try to solve it properly, but unfortunately, this critical problem was not seen and understood properly.

The representatives of these areas have never understood the people there what they want. What does the unemployed youth want?



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson and Women Commission Women Wing of Azad Kashmir Ms. Rehana Khan meeting with the Caretaker Foreign Minister of Pakistan Jalil Abbas Jilani.

No case of JN.1 Corona variant reported in Pak: Health Ministry

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Health on Tuesday said that so far, no case of the JN.1 variant of Corona has been reported in any part of the country.

According to the spokesperson of the ministry, a new variant of Corona, JN1, Omicron, has been reported in some countries as per media reports, which is a matter of concern.

Meanwhile, caretaker federal Minister for Health Dr Nadeem Jan said that the government is continu-

ously monitoring the situation as this subvirus of Omicron was found in some countries. He said that the risk of this variant spreading in Pakistan is very low, but caution is necessary.

The minister assured to proper implementation of the recommendations of international health regulations.

Dr Nadeem Jan said that there is an effective screening system at international airports at entry and exit routes of the country.

PML-N's final candidate list expected to unveil on January 10

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Dr Nisar Ahmad Cheema on Tuesday revealed that the party's candidate list would be finalized by January 10th.

Talking to a private news channel, Dr. Cheema said that Nawaz Sharif was personally conducting interviews with potential candidates who will represent PML-N in the upcoming elections.

Dr. Cheema further said, "Once the candidate announcements are made, we anticipate a surge in the

election campaign, reaching every corner of the country."

He emphasized Nawaz Sharif's unparalleled commitment to the political landscape, citing it as a manifestation of seriousness rarely seen in Pakistan's political history. "Nawaz Sharif's track record of accomplishments for the people of Pakistan is unparalleled," he added.

In light of the current challenges facing the country, Dr. Cheema concluded that Nawaz Sharif remains a pivotal option for steering Pakistan out of crises.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Ministers Captain (ret) Muhammad Zubair Jamali, Abdul Qadir Baloch, Abdul Khabir Azad and other addressing participants of a seminar titled Promoting Peace, Interfaith and Social Harmony