

Sindh, Fed govt to sign MoU for implementation of Urban rebuilding plan

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar in order to implement his Urban Rebuilding Plan under which high rises would be constructed at the vacant plots of old quarters - Matrin, Claton, and Jahangir Quarters, has decided to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Federal Ministry of Housing & Works.

This emerged in a meeting the chief minister held with the Federal Ministry of Housing & Works through a video link. Federal Secretary of Housing & Works Dr Shahzad Bangash along with his team participated in the meeting through a video link from Islamabad. The CM was assisted by Mayor Karachi Murtaza

Wahab, Chairman P&D Shakil Mangnejo, Secretary Local Government Manzoor Shaikh, DG P&D Asad Zamin and others.

The CM said that he has worked out an urban rejuvenation/rebuilding plan under which high-rise plazas would be constructed at the empty plots of Matrin, Clayton, Jahangir Quarters and Pakistan Quarters which are in dilapidated condition.

Justice Baqar said that these old quarters were established over an area of 240 acres at the junction of District East and District Central. He added that after the shifting of the Capital in 1959, no proper maintenance of the quarters has been made by the federal government.

It was pointed out

that the federal employees on their retirement did not vacate the official accommodation.

Their next generations and some other people have encroached upon the open spaces around the houses.

The CM said that the key objective of the urban rejuvenation project was to improve housing conditions, improve infrastructure and public services, increase economic activity in the areas and create new jobs and economic opportunities.

The federal secretary for Housing also shared a similar plan and finally, it was agreed upon that a MOU should be signed between the Sindh government and the federal government so that the project could be carried forward.



KARACHI: Caretaker Sindh Chief Minister, Justice (Retd) Maqbool Baqar and Federal Secretary for Housing preside over a meeting to discuss the construction of high rises in place of Old Quarters-Jahangir etc through video link, held at CM House in Karachi.

Naqvi visits Ring Road Southern Loop-3 project, inspects construction work

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a detailed visit to the Lahore Ring Road Southern Loop 3-project, here on Wednesday.

He inspected the 8-km long whole route from Maraka Multan Road up to Adda Plot and reviewed asphalt laying work and shook hands with the labourers. Mohsin Naqvi also checked the temperature of asphalt along with construction of the walls. He while ordering to expedite asphalt laying work directed to increase the resources so that the project could be completed

within the stipulated time frame.

"The support of the whole Punjab government's team stands with you," the CM said that hopefully, this project would be completed at the earliest. Mohsin Naqvi in order to accelerate pace of work on the project, issued directions to the Provincial Minister Bilal Afzal and Secretary Communication & Works in this regard. He inspected ongoing construction activities on the project. FWO officials gave a briefing about progress being made on the project.

The CM underscored that people would be provided excellent

transportation facilities with the completion of Ring Road Southern Loop-3 Project, adding that 8-km long Southern Loop-3 project would be opened for traffic soon. It was informed during the briefing that 6 out of 8 main structures have been completed while 20 small structures have also been completed. Approximately, 70 per cent work of the project has been completed. Provincial ministers Azfar Ali Nasir, Bilal Afzal, Secretary C&W, Commissioner Lahore/DG LDA, Chairman Lahore Ring Road Authority, MD NESPAK, Project Director LESCO and FWO officials were also present.



LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister and Chairman Pakistan Ulama-e-Islam Council, Allama Tahir Ashrafi is presenting shield to Saudi Arabia's ambassador Noor Al Lamki during Haramain al-Shareefain conference at local hotel.

Govt making efforts to facilitate pilgrims: Tahir Ashrafi

LAHORE (APP): Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Interfaith Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmoed Ashrafi said on Wednesday the government was making efforts to provide optimal facilities to prospective pilgrims.

Addressing the Tazeem-e-Haramain Al-Sharifain Conference, organised by Hajj Organisers Association of Pakistan (HOAP) Punjab zone, at a hotel here, he said Saudi Arabia was dedicated to enhancing facilities for the Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

He said that an effective system had been put in place to ensure effective monitoring of facilities to be provided to Hajj pilgrims. Under the system, Hajj pilgrims' complaints would be resolved speedily. Ashrafi, who is also the chairman of Pakistan Ulama Council,

said the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is strong, and has no precedent in the world, adding that the two countries have long brotherly relations and both the Muslim countries have always stood with each other in difficult times.

About the recent four-day Hajj and Umrah Services Conference and exhibition, organised by the Saudi government in Jeddah, he emphasised that the event placed significant importance on enhancing overall environment for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims.

Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, while appreciating the brotherly relationship between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, clarified that both brotherly countries' relationship was authentic and long-standing, consisting of many decades.

UAE artificial rain experts calls on CM

LAHORE (APP): Members of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) team, who orchestrated artificial rainfall in Lahore recently, called on Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi at his office on Wednesday. The CM greeted the team members, expressing gratitude individually during the meeting.

Among those present were Ahmed Al Kamal, Head of Cloud Seeding for the UAE NCM Team, Pilot Col. Obaid Halaf, Pilot Michael Anstis, Head of Cloud Seeding Department Abdullah Al Haman, Arnold Ningala and Vergliottelodolot.

CM Naqvi recognised their efforts by presenting certificates of appreciation and commemorative shields to each member and conveyed his thanks for successfully bringing artificial rain to Lahore, marking a historic event in Pakistan. He emphasised that the nation would always remember this successful experience, which was a culmination of 12 years of efforts to achieve artificial rain in Punjab, including Lahore.

The first artificial rain in Lahore was not only celebrated in Pakistan but gained recognition worldwide, he added. The names of the UAE team members have now become a part of Pakistan's history.

KP HCIP conducts workshop to upgrade primary healthcare services

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project (KP HCIP) Health Department here Wednesday conducted a day long workshop to upgrade Primary Healthcare Services (PHS) in selected districts of the province. The workshop focused on the assessment of stakeholder needs for development of training modules improving the availability, utilization and quality of healthcare services. The workshop

aimed to gather crucial information about existing training manuals or modules, evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, aligning them with on-ground needs and identifying potential improvements in a clear and concise manner.

Advisor to Caretaker Chief Minister for Health, Dr. Riaz Anwar commended KP HCIP and said that the initiative would play pivotal role in fostering positive changes within the health system.

3-day 'Unique Art & Craft Exhibition' begins

LAHORE (APP): The opening ceremony of the 4th annual 'Unique Art and Craft Exhibition' of the Unique Group of Institutions was held in collaboration with the UGIs and Lahore Arts Council at Alhama Arts Council. The ceremony was chaired by Unique Group of Institutions (UGIs) Chairman Professor Abdul Manan Khurram. Among the guests were well-known critic, artist and principal of Punjab University Art and Design College Prof.

KP CM chairs meeting to discuss traffic issues of Abbottabad

PESHAWAR (APP): Caretaker Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah on Wednesday chaired a meeting to discuss traffic issues of divisional headquarters Abbottabad.

Spokesperson to Chief Minister Brigadier (R) Syed Mujtaba Tirmizi and high ups of the transport department and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Urban Mobility Authority (KPUMA) attended the meeting.

will have concept designs of priority urban mobility projects for aforementioned cities. The participants were also informed about different options for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service in Abbottabad on the model of BRT project of Peshawar.

The CM on this occasion, has directed the KPUMA's authorities to prepare a master plan for traffic management in Abbottabad adding that the initial concept of the plan should be finalized keeping in view the ground realities, objective conditions and prevailing vehicular traffic problems in the city.

"A realistic and viable traffic plan should be prepared in consultation with all the stakeholders", he said and directed to have a joint meeting of all the relevant departments and authorities to be presided over by commissioner Hazara Division, for this purpose.

Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPS) for three major cities of the province including Peshawar, Abbottabad and Mingora.



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed is being presented shield from Iqra University during conference on Sirat-un-Nabi (SAW) and Contemporary Challenges and their solution at Iqra University Dr Mufti Irshad Ahmad Ajaz and others also seen on the stage.

Sindh information minister pays tribute to Mirza Abid

HYDERABAD (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Social Protection and Minority Affairs Mohammad Ahmad Shah has said that Abid Abbas was an asset of our country who led his life with principles and satisfaction and we should remember our heroes.

He was addressing at the inauguration ceremony of a library in memory of Late Mirza Abid Abbas, former Principal of City College and father of former DG ISPR Major General @ Athar Abbas at the College Auditorium here Wednesday.

Renowned literary Mazhar Abbas, Azhar Abbas and Zafar Abbas were also present on the occasion. The minister said we have made wrong persons as our heroes in present times and forgotten the real heroes and well wishers of Hyderabad. He said that in the past, intellectuals and educationists were the torch bearers of the society but today, unfortunately

wealthy people had become our leaders and now our society had been converted into a capital society.

He lauded the efforts of the College Principal for organizing a programme to remember our past heroes and well wishers adding that in future, such programmes would be organized to remember other heroes of Hyderabad city. He informed that they were going to organize a three-day literature festival at Public School Latifabad where a session on heroes of this city would be included.

Renowned literary poets and writers like Anwar Maqsood and Iftikhar Arif will participate in the festival, he said adding that this festival would be organized every year in the city.

Renowned journalist and son of Abid Abbas, Mazhar Abbas while addressing at the ceremony, said that unfortunately our assemblies were decorated and our schools.



HYDERABAD: Former PPP leader Dr Irfan Gul Magsi addressing a press conference after joining MQM Pakistan with their fellows and leaders of MQM at district office and Election cell.

Govt to start rehabilitation center for women drug addicts soon

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Provincial Caretaker Minister for Social Welfare, Justice Retired Irshad Qaisar has said that very soon government would start a rehabilitation center in Peshawar for women drug addicts.

She was chairing a meeting being convened to discuss progress on projects of social welfare department under annual development program.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Social Welfare Farooq Khan, Senior Planning Officer and the relevant officials of the department. Secretary Social Welfare Aneela Durrani participated in the meeting through video link.

The minister said that

the facility would be first government level rehabilitation center where only women suffering from drug abuse would be rehabilitated and treated.

The meeting was told that twenty projects are underway under the annual development program for the year 2023-24, seven projects have been stopped due to financial difficulties while thirteen projects have not been approved yet.

It was told that a center of excellence for child autism was created where children suffering from autism are treated and provided counsel while plans are underway to establish Dar ul Aman in different districts of the province.

May-9: ATC issues arrest warrants of 24 accused

LAHORE (APP): An anti-terrorism court (ATC) on Wednesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants of 24 accused, including leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), in a case of torching a container in front of National Park Gulberg.

The court issued the arrest warrants of Shah Mehmood Qureshi, his son, Zain Qureshi, Farrukh Habib, Dr Azeemud Din, Shakil Ahmad Niazi, Khawar Shahzad, Rana Bilal Ijaz, Chaudhry Asif Ali and others. ATC Judge Muhammad Naveed Iqbal issued the warrants on an application filed by the police for the purpose.

The investigation officer had stated that the accused neither joined the investigation process nor could they be arrested yet. He submitted that the accused had hidden themselves to avoid arrest. He pleaded with the court to issue their non-bailable arrest warrants.

QWP flays social media campaign against SC

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Wednesday condemned the malicious social media campaign against the judges of the Supreme Court.

Addressing a gathering at Mandani area in Charsadda district, he said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lost its electoral symbol but due to its own follies. He said that PTI founding chairman Imran Khan was responsible for the situation his party was facing.

The QWP chief said that the recent decision of the Supreme Court upholding the ruling of the Election Commission of Pakistan about the intra-

party election of the PTI was based on merit and in accordance with the law. However, he expressed resentment over the launching of the smear campaign against the judiciary.

He said that the country was already facing a host of issues and it could not afford confrontation and unrest. Aftab Sherpao said that some elements were out to create disturbance for their vested interests.

The QWP leader said that holding a free, fair and transparent election was the only way to take the country towards economic and political stability.

He maintained that the country was facing the issue of law and order, poverty.

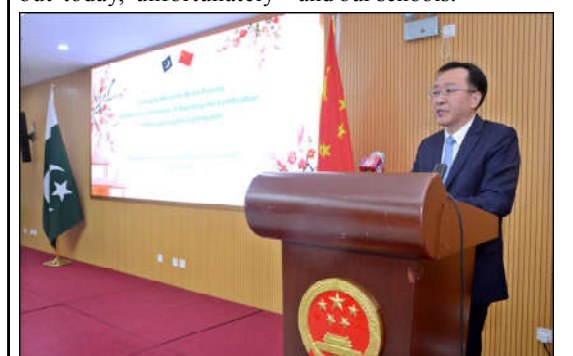


PESHAWAR: Peoples Party (PPP) Leader, Asma Alamgir along with Syed Zahir Ali Shah and others addressing a press conference, in Peshawar.

ACS South Punjab visits BVH to inspect ongoing work

BAHAWALPUR (APP): Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Captain (retd) Saqib Zafar visited the under-construction Outdoor Department of Bahawal Victoria Hospital. He inspected the ongoing upgradation works in various wards of the hospital. Secretary of Communication and Works South Punjab Jawad Akram was also present with him.

He inspected the revamping and renovation work of the outdoor department of Bahawal Victoria Hospital. He directed that officers of the Buildings Department should complete the construction works within a specific period. Secretary Communication and Works Department Jawad Akram briefed ACS South Punjab about the degradation work. He said that various wards including TB Ward, Medical Ward, Surgery Ward, Emergency Block, and Old CCU are being renovated. He informed ACS about the details of ongoing construction works in CU and other wards. He said that special attention is being paid to the quality of construction materials. The safety arrangements for the working labor have also been ensured.



KARACHI: Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong addressing a ceremony of awarding the certification to media friends at Consulate General of the People's Republic of China.

Rana Hussain says: Learning process for teachers never ends

HYDERABAD (APP): Caretaker Sindh Minister for Education and Women Development Rana Hussain has said that in the past educational institutes were established with the objective and spirit to secure the future of the young generation however preservation of such buildings and related emotions was now our responsibility.

She expressed these views on the occasion of the conclusion ceremony of the faculty professional development Programme at Government College University Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Vice Chancellor of Government College of University Prof. Tayyab Zareef, Pro Vice Chancellor Sindh University Thatta

Campus Dr. Rafique, Director of Professional Development Dr. Amjad Ali, Teachers and other officers were also present.

The minister said that the learning process for teachers never ends and in this connection Sindh Government keeping in view the need for professional development at the School and College level has prepared various training programmes so that the teaching standard of the teachers could be improved.

She said that it was a moment of immense pleasure that Government College University has taken responsibility for the professional development of its teachers and also accomplished its goal in this regard.

PM Kakar for equitable chances to all to benefit from modern technology

PM, CEO Cocacola discuss matters pertaining to SIFC, foreign investment

DAVOS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday called for providing equitable opportunities to all nations and regions to grab the fruits of modern technology. Speaking at a forum titled "Trade Tech's Trillion-Dollar Promise" on the sidelines of the 54th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), the prime minister said utilizing the state of the art technology was vital to achieve the targets of fast development.

Stressing the need to ensure equitable opportunities to all to secure the technology, the prime minister said equitable opportunities was key to ensure sustainable global development. Keeping in

view the development of technology, PM Kakar maintained that the digital economy would attain more importance in the days to come. He said every region of the world should be benefited from the development being made in the technology sector. As regards the issues of trade and business, he said the private sector should be encouraged to boost investment. Further he added that the private sector should take a lead to help the government resolving the challenges of trade and business. "The government do think in a different way and manner when it approaches towards challenges of trade and business, while the private entities and the

business people have different opinion," he said adding the private entities should become the opinion maker and influencing and contributing more towards it. Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar held a meeting with Chief Executive Officer of Cocacola Company, James Quincey on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos today.

In the meeting, the Prime Minister highlighted the steps taken by the government to facilitate business and investment in Pakistan.

The Prime Minister also discussed the establishment of the Special Investment Facilitation Council and the favorable environment for foreign investors.



CEO of Cocacola Company, James Quincey calls on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

President directs IESCO to refund Rs 139,000 to a complainant

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi has directed the Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) to refund Rs 139,860 to a complainant who had been wrongly issued an additional demand notice for the installation of an electricity connection along with a transformer due to cost escalation.

The president issued these directions while deciding upon a representation filed by IESCO assailing the order of the Wafaqi Mohtasib directing IESCO to refund the amount to complainant Haji Akhtar Raheem and adopt proper procedure/rules/regulation, which

were violated by IESCO, resulting in maladministration. The IESCO had violated its own procedure by not installing the connection within 30 days and later sent an additional demand notice to the complainant, who had already paid the original requisite amount, on account of the escalation of the cost of the material. The complainant had applied with IESCO for an electricity connection along with a 25 KVA transformer. Subsequently, a demand notice of Rs 305,656, including the cost of allied material was issued to him. He deposited the amount, however, IESCO

instead of installing his connection timely, issued an additional demand notice of Rs 139,860 on account of the escalation of the cost of the material. He approached IESCO for withdrawal of the demand notice but to no avail. Feeling aggrieved, he approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib for the redressal of his grievance, who passed the order in his favour. IESCO, then, filed a representation against the President. After personally hearing the case and going through the record of the case, the president directed IESCO to refund the amount to the complainant.

Dr Saif says: ICT exports increased by 22.67% in Dec 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Dr Umar Saif on Wednesday said that the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) export remittances had increased by 22.67 percent in the month of December 2023. A total of \$303 million ITC exports proceeds were received in December, following a 13% increase in November 2023, the minister said in statement.

Dr Umar Saif said that facilitative measures, such as allowing to retain 50% of the dollars, digital payment systems, and initiatives for freelancers had played a crucial role in boosting ICT exports growth. Expressing gratitude to Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and the Special Investment Facilitation Council for their efforts in providing facilities for the IT industry, he said that the objective behind the policies was to bolster the national economy and advance the IT and telecom sectors in the country. Dr Saif said it was a beginning, which would usher in significant industry's growth. "The reforms introduced by the caretaker government has played a key role in that regard."



DOHA: SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik meets Dr. Ali bin Samikh Al Marri, Labour Minister of the State of Qatar.

SAPM Sohrab meets Qatari Labour Minister, discuss safe immigration

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Jawad Sohrab Malik, commenced his inaugural official visit to Qatar with a pivotal meeting with Dr Ali bin Samikh Al Marri, the Minister of Labour in Qatar.

During the meeting, SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik provided an overview of the Government of Pakistan's ongoing efforts and initiatives aimed at enhancing labour skills to align with and meet the demand and standards of the Qatari labour market and received press release here on Wednesday.

The discussion underscored the commitment of both leaders to encourage as well as enhance the safe and legal migration of the Pakistani workforce to Qatar.

SAPM, Jawad Sohrab Malik and Qatar's Labor Minister, Dr. Ali bin Samikh Al Marri pledged to foster a collaborative environment that supports the secure and lawful movement of Pakistani workers to contribute to Qatar's dynamic labour market.

The leaders affirmed their commitment to ensuring the welfare and prosperity of the Pakistani workforce in Qatar. Both leaders also discussed the opening of more Qatar Visa Centers (QVCs) in Pakistan for ease of the Pakistani migrant workforce.

As part of the official visit, SAPM Malik is scheduled to engage with Qatari conglomerates to explore and sign agreements aimed at providing and enhancing employment opportunities for the Pakistani workforce.



LAHORE: Regional Chairman FPCCI Zaki Ejaz in a group photo with participants during round table discussion on packaging sector in his visit to Regional Office Lahore.

Senate body seeks details of budget, following austerity measures

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue on Wednesday directed the Finance Division to provide details of the budget saved following the issuance of austerity measures notification, issued by the Finance Division. The Secretary of the Finance Division stated that the Government was complying with austerity measures, resulting in government spending for the current fiscal year staying within the budget.

A meeting of the Committee was held at Parliament House on Wednesday with Senator Saleem Mandviwalla in the Chair. The Senate deliberated on the Bill titled "State Owned Enterprises (Governance and Operations) (Amendment) Bill, 2023." Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, the bill's mover, stated that the primary objective was to restrain the Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officers of the state owned enterprises from using company assets for political and monetary purposes, proposing disqualification for such actions.

The Committee made two amendments in the amendment bill: firstly, reduced the 20 years of relevant experience for the Chief Executive Officer to 10 years and changed the words "Personal gains and Political point scoring" to "Personal and Monetary Gains". The Senate body discussed the motion moved by Senator Zarqa Suharwardy on controlling the non-development expenditure of the Government. While discussing the Public Petition for the deletion of the proviso in the Customs Act 1969 added by the Finance Act, 2022, the Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) maintained that the proviso in Customs Act 1969 cannot be deleted as it is part of the Finance Act, 2022, and he assured the Committee that the FBR will consider the concerned proviso at the time of passage of the upcoming Finance Bill.

Pakistan secures second LNG cargo from SOCAR

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government on Wednesday announced securing the second LNG cargo from the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR) under the Government-to-Government Framework Agreement between Pakistan LNG Limited (PLL) and SOCAR.

"The cargo is scheduled for delivery in February 2024, further strengthening the energy partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan" the Ministry of Petroleum

said in a news release. PLL and SOCAR signed a landmark Framework Agreement under the Government-to-Government arrangement, marking a significant milestone in the bilateral energy cooperation between the two countries.

The Framework Agreement stipulates that SOCAR may offer 1 LNG cargo per month to PLL, while PLL's acceptance of these offers is subject to the demand for LNG in Pakistan and commercial considerations.

Gold rates down by Rs.3,600

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold decreased by Rs.3,600 and was sold at Rs.213,700 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs.217,300 on last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs.3,087 to Rs.183,213 from Rs.186,300 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs.167,945 from Rs.170,775 the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola silver decreased by Rs.50 to Rs.2,600 whereas that of ten gram silver declined by Rs.42.86 to Rs.2,229.08.



LAHORE: President Lahore Chamber of Commerce Kashif Anwar presenting shield to Chinese Consul General Zhao Shiren during his visit to LCCI.

FPCCI seeks industry status for packaging sector

ISLAMABAD: Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Aijaz on Wednesday demanded the government grant industry status to the packaging sector. He expressed these views while addressing the FPCCI's Round Table Discussion on the 'Packaging sector: Challenges and opportunities', here at FPCCI Regional Office, Managing Director and CEO of Packages Limited, Syed Hyder Ali, Director & CEO of Century Paper & Board Mills Limited Aftab Ahmed, Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt, Chairman Pakistan Association of Printing And Graphic Arts Industry Saad Haleem Khan, Senior Vice Chairman of All Pakistan Corrugated Cartons Manufacturers Association (APCCMA) Khawaja Tariq Mehmood, Chairman of Flexible Packaging-Association of Converters of Pakistan Mujahid Ali Shaikh, CEO of Roshan Packages Limited Tayyab Aijaz Qureshi, Aslam Mehdi, Imran Aziz and others participated in the discussion, and put forth their suggestions for promotion of packaging sector, exports and substitutes of imports.

Zaki Aijaz said that packaging sector was the backbone of all industries and the government should grant industry status to it in order to reap maximum benefits. He said that stakeholders should be included in the committee formed by the federal government on the packaging sector.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor is selling Kinnow at his fruit stall alongside a road at Khanna Pull area in the Federal Capital.

Punjab Green wheels program to provide E-bikes, E-rickshaws

LAHORE: Caretaker provincial minister for transport of Punjab Ibrahim Hasan Murad on Wednesday marked a pivotal moment in Punjab's history by integrating 26,000 electric vehicles into its urban fabric.

Talking to a private news channel, he said the initiative caters to students, low-income citizens, women, and people with disabilities.

Through this program, the government has decided to give the university students 10,000 electric bikes on a subsidy, he added.

The major announcements were interest-free e-bikes for women, three-wheeler bikes for the disabled and also interest-free e-

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity reported at the Port where three ships namely, MSC United VII, High Challenge and Poly World carrying containers, palm oil and coal, berthed at container Terminal, Liquid Terminal and Bulk Cargo Terminal respectively on Tuesday 16th January, 2024. Meanwhile another containers ship 'Maersk Cape Town' also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on today January 17th, 2024.

A total of eight ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them a containers ship 'MSC United VIII' is left the port on Today morning January, 17th 2024 and four more ships, Sakizaya Youth, Kourous Glory, Bateleur and Medi Tirreno are expected to sail on same day afternoon.

Recognizing the pressing need to combat pollution, the Punjab government's program addresses the root cause by targeting the 70-80% pollution contribution from the transportation sector, he added.

He said, "Punjab's commitment to sustainable transportation is not just a step forward; it's a leap into a greener, cleaner future."

The minister said that another historic milestone was achieved with the issuance of electric vehicle (EV) licenses for the first time in Pakistan.

This move not only encourages the adoption of eco-friendly modes of transportation but also positions the country,

China, Pakistan cooperate on recycled aluminum project

BEIJING (online): A project to recycle aluminum recently began a trial run in Pakistan and Chongqing, southwest China, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday.

The project was initiated by the aluminum working committee of Trade and Economic Multifunctional Platform for SCO countries (SCO TEMP). The committee's member units have established an entity in Chongqing Lianglu-Guoyuan Port Comprehensive Bonded Zone (CBZ) and have also set up an overseas industrial park in Pakistan.

With an investment of approximately RMB 5.5 billion, the industrial park in Pakistan will be equipped with an advanced manufacturing system. Raw materials purchased from the global market will be processed in the park.

According to Hu Kaiqiang, Director General of SCO TEMP, this will create job opportunities, generate tax revenue, and enhance international trade for Pakistan in the future.

In addition, the processed materials will be sold in the international market or exported to Chongqing CBZ.

The Chongqing entity will utilize its local manufacturing expertise to process the imported materials into high-valued-added products and distribute them in the global market, Hu added.

The initiative benefits from China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, as well as Pakistan's industrial base, preferential policies, port and logistics services, and relatively low costs, according to Hu.

Over population poses great challenge to economy: Meher

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator of Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman Meher Kashif Younis Wednesday said that over population had posed a great challenge to Pakistan's economy, exerting pressure on resources, infrastructure, and socio-economic stability.

Addressing a conference on "Impact of over population on Pakistan Economy" held here under the aegis of Gold Ring Economic Forum (GREF) a strategic think-tank, he said with a population surpassing 220 million, Pakistan grappled with adverse consequences of overpopulation that permeate various sectors.

Meher said natural resources were strained, exacerbating environmental degradation, excessive use of water, deforestation, and increased pollution were direct consequences, posing threats to sustainable development and exacerbating climate change-related concerns.

The coordinator said that rapid urbanisation, driven by population growth, leads to the emergence of slums and inadequate living conditions, further exacerbating socio-economic disparities.

"To mitigate its impact, we must prioritize comprehensive family planning programmes, invest in education and healthcare infrastructure, and implement policies that promote sustainable resource management," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

PM says: Pakistan needs to be more competitive, attractive to benefit from industrialisation

DAVOS (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Wednesday said that Pakistan needed to be more competitive and attractive to facilitate the journey of industrialisation in the region.

The prime minister, addressing an event titled "20th Pakistan Breakfast at Davos 2024" held by Pathfinders Group on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, said a trading activity of around \$336 trillion was happening in China, and GCC countries were also entering into the manufacturing industry. He said China had acquired the transformation stage to relocate some of its industry and Pakistan could be one of those destinations.

Similarly, the GCC countries were rich with capital but had geographical

disadvantages with the options of either importing the manpower or taking their capital to countries with a conducive environment and cheap energy and labour.

He told the gathering of intellectuals, writers and representatives of welfare organisations, that Pakistan was a unique place owing to its diversified culture, geography and topography with the eight highest peaks, deserts of Thar and Balochistan and the plains of Punjab. Calling human resources the biggest asset of Pakistan, he said 60 per cent of its 240 million population was under 30 years of age which meant whole of energy and required direction.

Highlighting the achievements of his government, Prime Minister Kakar said the minister

structure was improving and that the government would leave behind a blueprint for the next government enabling it to respond to the challenges.

"I am quite sanguine that people are feeling a deep sense of positivity," he said and mentioned the structural changes and re-vamping of the taxation system.

He said "spend less on government and earn more" were the two lessons or takeaways of the incumbent government which was also facilitating the private sector to earn money and pay taxes.

Referring to Pakistan's ideal geographical situation, he said the whole of Central Asia was looking to have connectivity through Pakistan which had the highest population in the ECO region.



DAVOS: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar meets the Prime Minister of Belgium Alexander De Croo on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum.

WMFP strongly condemns assault on Kosovo journalist

ISLAMABAD (PR): The Women's Media Forum Pakistan (WMFP) stands in solidarity with a Kosovo journalist who was assaulted by the Prime Minister's security team. WMFP is concerned about the increasing attacks on women in media around the world.

WMFP strongly condemns the assault, pressing media rights organisations to take steps to help train women journalists against such attacks and demand that authorities ensure journalists, especially women journalists are safe in the field.

On December 28, 2023, journalist Blerta Dalloshi-Berisha from TV Klan was attacked when she

attempted to ask Kosovo Prime Minister Albin Kurti a question.

Blerta hurt her right hand after the PM's security used needless force on her and snatched her microphone which also disrupted the filming.

Later, Blerta elaborated on the incident, condemning the attack on her Facebook calling it a "shame."

Media reported there has been tension between PM Kurti's government and the media outlet TV Klan that Blerta works for. In June 2023, the government tried to close the channel by stripping it of its license. Fortunately, the courts did not allow this to happen.

Taraqee Foundation organizes Hackathon in Balochistan's six districts

QUETTA: A hackathon was organized in six districts of Balochistan, Quetta, Pashin, Kharan, Nushki, Musa Khel and Zhoib, under the auspices of Taraqee Foundation, to promote better coordination for entrepreneurs.

The Hackathon organized for Farmers, FAO, Livestock, BRSP, Banks, Livestock Department, Agriculture Council Balochistan, Commission Agents, Input Suppliers, PPAF and Agriculture Departments. The focus was on increasing connectivity and facilitation between these stakeholders.



President Quetta Chamber of Commerce Abdullah Achakzai attending a meeting of 11th Joint Border Trade Committee held in Charbahar, Iran

DC and REC inspect Monitoring Control Room

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Naseerabad Batul Asadi along with Regional Election Commissioner (REC) Abdullah, Election Commissioner Tariq and all other focal persons inspected the District Monitoring Control Room.

They also expressed satisfaction over the measures during visit.

While giving a briefing, Focal Person Manzoor Ahmed said that close attention would be focused on all the issues on the occasion through the control room

and it could also be the center of measures for immediate redressal of complaints made by the public, many other important aspects were also highlighted.

The DC gave orders that the officers who have been assigned the responsibilities in the control room should perform their duties in the true sense, so that this phase of the election could also be completed in a clean and transparent manner. All facilities including wireless system are provided in the control room so that the focal persons do not face any kind of difficulties.

Panjgur additional DC injured in Kalat road mishap

KALAT (INP): Panjgur additional deputy commissioner and his driver sustained injuries in a road mishap on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway in Kalat on Wednesday.

According to sources in the police, a Zamyad vehicle crashed into the car of Panjgur Additional Deputy Commissioner Khurram Khalid on the Quetta-Karachi National Highway. As a result, the ADC and his driver sustained injuries.

The injured were shifted to a hospital in Quetta after administering first aid.

Police have also arrested the driver of Zamyad.

Islamabad Court drops charges against PTI founder and wife

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Islamabad court has dismissed the case alleging an illicit relationship against the founder of PTI, Imran Khan, and his wife Bushra Bibi. The District and Sessions Court in Islamabad presided over the hearing on the marriage case between Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, ultimately rejecting the accusations of improper relations.

The court cited legal

requirements, specifically Section 496B, which mandates two witnesses. Noting the absence of the second witness, the court decided to drop the charge under Section 496B. Consequently, the charges against PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi now solely pertain to Section 496. The charges revolve around the marriage between the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi during Eid.



QUETTA: Director General NAB Zafar Iqbal Khan, Vice Chancellor University of Loralai Ehsanullah Kakar and Director NAB Balochistan Dr. Muhammad Rashid addressing students participated in a lecture organized by NAB Balochistan in connection with Awareness Campaign against Corruption



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Dr. Nadeem Jan witnesses the grant signing ceremony between Pakistan and Japan to support Pakistan's Polio Programme.

Japan announces \$3.62m grant to support Pakistan's polio programme

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan has announced a new US\$ 3.62 million grant to procure essential oral polio vaccines as part of its continued support to polio eradication efforts in Pakistan. Pakistan Polio Programme will use these funds to procure more than 21 million doses of vaccines to support polio campaigns in 2024, said a news release.

Pakistan is one of only two countries globally that has yet to stop polio. In 2023, Pakistan reported a total of 6 cases of polio. With polio cases cornered to only a few locations in the country, the Government of Pakistan and partners are preparing to launch an aggressive plan of activities in 2024 to stop this life altering disease for children. Each national immunization

drive targets over 44 million children under the age of five, with more than 370,000 frontline workers, predominantly women, playing a crucial role to ensure the Polio Programme's outreach. "Despite the challenges, Pakistan will remain relentless in our drive to put an end to polio in the next year," said Dr. Nadeem Jan, caretaker Federal Health Minister. He said, "As we prepare to launch polio campaigns in 2024, together with our partners we will maintain an emergency focus towards resolving the remaining challenges that stand in our way to reach all children." "The minister said, "The unwavering support of the Government of Japan has been instrumental in helping us get closer to reaching zero cases. We are thankful to the Govern-



QUETTA: Former Provincial Advisor Malik Naeem Bazai meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

First Lady calls for universal access to assistive technology

DAVOS (APP): First Lady Begum Samina Alvi on Wednesday called for ensuring universal access to assistive technology for persons with disabilities, the aging population and those suffering from non-communicable diseases.

The first lady, in her keynote address at an event themed "Unlock the everyday: advancing the SDGs through the power of Assistive Technology" on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum 2024, urged global leaders to prioritize the integration of assistive technology in their national plans and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) strategies.

"Unlock the Everyday" is the first-ever global campaign on assistive technology (AT) that has been launched to raise awareness about everyone's right to AT - such as wheelchairs, glasses, hearing aids, prostheses and digital devices - regardless of their geographic and socio-economic background. The event, organized by Devex and AIFs at the SDG Tent in Davos, was attended by high-level leaders specializing in disability inclusion, technology and impact investment, and aimed to explore the transformative power of AT in revolutionizing the lives of millions of people who have special needs.

Delegation of student, faculty members of UoL visits NAB Balochistan

Independent Report QUETTA: In connection with anti-corruption awareness campaign, NAB (Balochistan) invited a delegation of students along with faculty members of University of Loralai (UoL) to visit NAB Balochistan.

Accordingly Vice Chancellor Mr. Ehsan Ullah Kakar, Director General UoL Dr. Khair Muhammad Kakar, faculty members and fair gathering of students visited NAB (Balochistan). During the visit, a ceremony was arranged wherein lectures to the participants were given about the working of NAB (Balochistan) and its other allied matters. Thereafter, the guests visited different offices of NAB (B) including investigation wing, complaint verification cell, library, art gallery and other offices.

The event inaugurated with recitation of holy Quran and national anthem. Director General NAB Mr. Zafar Iqbal Khan and Director NAB Dr. Muhammad Rashid delivered their lectures on awareness against corruption and working of NAB (Balochistan). In order to eradicate corruption from society, they stressed upon the students to live their lives as per Islamic values, so the evil of corruption can be eliminated from our society. They highlighted that nepotism, Influence peddling and favouritism are the branches of corruption but unfortunately these have been taken by the society as norm/right. DG NAB (Balochistan) replied detailed answers to the questions raised by the students and faculty members during the session.

Quran, Seerah solution to all contemporary issues of world: Aneeq Ahmed

KARACHI (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Aneeq Ahmed has said that Quran and Sirat-e Tayyaba provide us guidance and set basic principles concerning to every field of life urging students to develop comprehension of religion as well as contemporary issues. While addressing a conference on "Sirat-un-Nabi (SAW) and contemporary challenges and their solutions" jointly organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Iqra University here on Wednesday, he said that it had been imperative that students not only understand the religion of Islam but also comprehend requirements of the contemporary era as well as economic, social and other issues in the light of teachings of Islam and keep themselves abreast of developing global situation.

Aneeq Ahmed said that religious obligations (Deen) and demands of worldly pursuits (Duniya) are intertwined and we have to search the solution of

contemporary issues in the light of Quran and Sirat-e-Tayyaba adding that true comprehension of religion could not be achieved without understanding the worldly affairs.

Islam emphasizes on practical action and application of knowledge and life of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) is a guiding example for every human being, he noted and added that Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) set standards for individuals, society and state and those must be followed.

While referring to his recent visit to Saudi Arabia, the federal minister informed that Hajj agreement was signed in Hajj Conference in Madina Munawwarah which was attended by delegates from 80 countries. "I have floated an idea at the conference that all the rulers of Muslim countries should gather in Makkah Mukarama on the occasion of Hajj to discuss the issues being faced by Muslims across the world and come up with a unanimous agenda to deal with them.



RAWALPINDI: H.E. Dr. Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Jordan called on Minister for Defence, Lt. Gen. (Retd) Anwar Ali Hyder at Ministry of Defence.

Fake news - a biggest threat to democracy & journalism: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Wednesday said that the fake news had become the biggest threat to democracy and journalism. Highlighting the issue of fake news, disinformation and misinformation on the social media platform 'X', the minister referred to the doctor notifications and statements of institutions being circulated on social media regarding elections.

Condemning a fake press release issued in the name of the Election Commission of Pakistan, he said such unethical moves were on the rise as the date of elections was nearing.

"Today, a fake directive was forged and circulated in the name of Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. Now the Chief Election Commissioner is being targeted. Today fake news is the biggest threat to democracy and journalism," the minister remarked.

Secretary C&W says Timely completion of dev. projects in Nasirabad, Sibi our top priority

QUETTA (APP): Provincial Secretary, Communications and Works (C&W) Kamber Dashti on Wednesday said that the improvement of infrastructure and timely completion of development projects in Naseerabad and Sibi divisions was our top priority.

He expressed these views while chairing a meeting regarding the progress of the ongoing development projects in the Sibi Zone Road Sector fiscal year 2023-24. The meeting was attended by Engineer Officers of Sibi and Naseerabad Divisions, Chief Engineer

Sibi Zone Mir Ahmed Mengal, Chief Engineer Design Dr. Sajjad Baloch and Technical Advisor Mukhtiar Kakar. The meeting was briefed in detail regarding the progress on the ongoing development projects in Sibi and Naseerabad divisions.

On this occasion, the Secretary said that these two divisions of the province were agriculturally prosperous and fertile areas and the connecting roads of these areas were playing a very important role in timely delivery of agricultural produce to the market.



LAHORE: PPP President, Asif Ali Zardari addresses public gathering meeting regarding inauguration ceremony of Election Campaigns in connection of the General Election 2024, held at Peko Road NA-127 constituency in Lahore.

Pak China Institute enrolls 366 students

GWADAR (INP): Pakistan-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCT&VI) has admitted 366 students from Gwadar and other parts of Balochistan in various programs.

Around 500 students both male and female made their appearance in entry test to get admitted in many areas of study including Tourism, English language, Maritime and Port Management, Software Technology, Chinese Language and Culture, Mechatronics and E-Commerce, according to a Gwadar Pro's report on Wednesday.

PCT&VI official told Gwadar Pro that classes will commence on January 22 as per schedule already

conveyed to admit students in their relevant subjects.

He said that 15 students were admitted in Tourism Management, 127 were enrolled in English Language, 59 were admitted in Maritime and Port Management.

Meanwhile, he said that 100 students were enrolled in Software Technology, 35 were admitted in Chinese Language and Culture, 5 were given admission in Mechatronics and 25 were enrolled in E-Commerce.

All vocational and training programs and courses are designed in collaboration with Shandong Institute of Commerce and Technology (SICT), China, and relevant accredited institutions.