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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting on Afghan Transit Trade and Anti-smuggling.

Issue of Baloch protesting families being painted wrongly: PM Kakar

Every citizen has right to protest within constitutional limits; Says not his mandate to respond to social media criticism.

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that issue of Baloch families from Balochistan was being projected in negative and in sharp contrast to realities as Balochs were standing with the state of Pakistan.

Responding to different media queries during his visit to Business Facilitation Center, the prime minister said that terrorists and armed militants had been involved in the killing of people of Balochistan. They were killing doctors, lawyers and teachers, he added.

He reassured the State would fight with them with all force as they could not be given license to kill people.

The prime minister, referring to criticism by a section of the media, said that the government was not fighting with the Baloch families and regretted that efforts were made to spread confusion and mingle things together.

The issue of families of Balochs had been blown out of proportion, he said, adding these terrorists had been

taking money and funding from RAW and killing people in the province.

The caretaker prime minister said that about 90,000 people had been killed in the fight against terrorism but hardly nine accused had been convicted so far.

The prime minister opined that the criminal justice system in the country required improvement.

To a question, he mentioned that there was no restriction on freedom of expression.

Replying to another question regarding an alleged firing incident in DI Khan over vehicles of Maulana Fazlur Rehman Amir of JUI-F, he said that it was alarming, adding the government was responding to security threats in the southern parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with all the available resources.

The caretaker prime minister said that all the resources and security apparatus would be utilized to ensure the holding of peaceful polls on the election date and expressed the hope that they would be successful in this regard.

Rejection of nominations to be challenged: Conspiracies being made to weaken BNP even today, alleges Akhtar Mengal

Independent Report
QUETTA: The president of Balochistan National Party (BNP) Sardar Akhtar Mengal has stated that we have always waged struggle for securing rights of the people, but adding he charged that conspiracies are being made to weaken the party (BNP).
He claimed that pressure is being exerted on our companions to leave the party.
The BNP chief said that nomination papers of 12 candidates of the party contesting elections for Balochistan Assembly have been rejected without any reason.
His nomination papers have also been rejected

from four constituencies.
However, we would be challenging the rejection of papers of the candidates in the court of law.

Sardar Akhtar Mengal was addressing a hurriedly called press conference here on Monday.

The BNP President said that the province was made laboratory for experiments in every era while attempts were made to run it through artificial leadership.

Addressing the press conference, Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that the undemocratic forces always derailed democracy in the country, even our certain political parties also became tool in their hands

playing part to derail the democracy.

He said that BNP has always talked about democracy and the people for it is being punished.

The BNP chief said that the incidents of torturing and forced disappearance of the people were occurred to pressurize us through different tactics.

He said that we didn't bow to the pressure despite lot of attempts made.

Regarding the upcoming general elections, Sardar Akhtar Mengal said that there would be worst selection in the elections for the preparations have already been made, adding he alleged

More than 5,000 terrorists arrested from all over country: Afghanistan exporting terrorism to world, asserts Jan Achakzai

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has pointed out that Afghanistan is exporting terrorism to the world, which is a very dangerous trend.
He said that the incidents of terrorism in Pakistan have linkages with Afghanistan.
Around 1,000 people including 260 security personnel have rendered sacrifices of their lives for the cause of protection of life and property of the masses besides safeguarding the country's frontiers.
More than 500,000 illegal immigrants have

so far been repatriated to their country Afghanistan till December 31, 2023.

These and similar information were shared and views expressed by the Minister for Information while addressing a scheduled press conference here at the civil secretariat on Monday.

The Minister Information noted that the law enforcement agencies made certain achievements against terrorism during the year 2023.

He said that 566 terrorists were killed in different operations carried out by the security forces during the previous year.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary PHE Abdul Wali Khan and MD WASA Hamid Latif Rana meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Aneeq to chair national conference on interfaith harmony & peace

QUETTA (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed will chair the national conference on interfaith harmony and peacebuilding to be held at a hotel Quetta.
Prominent scholars from across the country will participate in the national conference.
Meanwhile, the minister will also hold a meeting with the well-known religious scholars of Balochistan.

SC to hear lifetime disqualification case today

ISLAMABAD, Jan 01 (INP): The Supreme Court's (SC) seven-member on Tuesday will hear a case pertaining to the matter of lifetime disqualifications under Article 62(1)(f) of the Constitution.

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa, the bench comprises Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Amin ud Din Khan, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar and Justice Musarrat Hilali.
The top court has constituted a larger bench in the case of former MPA Mir Badshah Qaisrani against his lifetime disqualification.

Five killed in firing incident in D.I Khan.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Five people were killed in a firing incident on Monday near Mutha Road, Dera Ismail Khan.
As the private news channel reported, the victims were individuals previously implicated in a violence-related case, and the shooting is believed to be a consequence of longstanding animosity.
According to police sources, the deceased individuals were nominees in a case related to violence against a woman. The victims had allegedly subjected a woman to violence in 2018, police said.
The police have transferred the bodies to the hospital for further examination, initiating an investigation into the incident.

Governor Balochistan calls for paying immediate attention to resolve civic issues of Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has regrettably pointed out that the citizens of Quetta are facing numerous issues in the present developed era even, therefore, there's a dire need to pay immediate serious attention on their sustainable solution.
The Governor stressed the need to resolve the issues of poor cleanliness, drainage and sanitation system, deteriorated roads condition and traffic problems in Quetta.
The Governor was speaking to different delegations who called on him

here at the Governor House on Monday.
He expressed sorrow over that increased number of members of provincial and National Assemblies couldn't help resolve the issues of Quetta.
The Governor said that several projects were made for restoration of the traditional beauty of Quetta city. But their positive results couldn't be yielded, adding he noted.
He asked the present government especially the concerned authorities to sit together on increasing issues of Quetta and devise result oriented strategy to address the same.

PTI to knock SC's door against rejection of nomination papers

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced on Monday that it would approach the Supreme Court against rejection of nomination papers of its leaders.
PTI leader Babar Awan told media here on the premises of the Islamabad High Court that none is permitted to stop anyone from contesting election under the 1973 Constitution. But the PTI candidates were prevented from filing nomination papers all over the country, he added.
Unidentified people snatched nomination papers while returning officers rejected papers of more than 300 PTI candidates, he continued.



QUETTA: Caretaker Provincial Minister Jan Achakzai meeting with Caretaker Home Minister Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali

Pakistan, India swap lists of prisoners and nuclear installations

By Czechangez Khan Jadoon
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and India have exchanged their lists of prisoners and nuclear installations and facilities.
The move follows up on years-long agreements between the two arch-rivals who have fought numerous battles since their independence in 1947.
Both nations, who parted ways after ousting the Britishers, exchange the lists of prisoners on the first of January and July each year, while they share details of nuclear installations and facilities on the first date of each calendar year.
In a statement on Monday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Agreement on Prohibition of At-

China's BRI project appreciated by world as progress possible by working together: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Monday that China's Belt and Road Initiative was appreciated by the world as progress was possible only by working together.

In an exclusive interview with China Radio International, the minister said that President Xi Jinping's vision of development was based on universal development.
"The fruits and benefits of development come only when development is not limited. No country can progress in isolation", Murtaza Solangi main-

Welcoming the message of the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping at the beginning of the new year, Murtaza Solangi said his vision of global development was also evident in his New Year message.
President Xi has always promoted the timeless principles of humanity and his theory was a negation of the theory that a country can achieve development only by keeping other countries behind, the minister opined.
"In our region too, President Xi Jinping's globalist ideology is gaining ground," he said.



Beautiful view of sunrise of year 2024 with the new hopes, captured over the horizon of Quetta

Mir Zubair Jamali inaugurates Rahdari Management System at Pak-Iran border districts

Independent Report
QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali inaugurated the Rahdari Management System (RMS) introduced in five districts at Pak-Iran border on Monday.
While the Minister Home participated in the inauguration ceremony as chief guest, the event was also attended by the Addi-

tional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Commissioner Quetta, Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, Secretary Information Technology, Ayaz Mandokhail, Special Secretary Home, Abdul Nasir Dotani, Commissioner Makran, Saeed Jamali, Commissioner Rakhshan, Shah Irfan Gharshen. The Deputy Commissioners of concerned districts participated in the event through video link.



QUETTA: Balochistan National Party Chief, Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal addresses to media persons during press conference at Quetta press club

Senators demand national dialogue, highlight Balochistan protesters issue

Adopts resolutions about negative propaganda against armed forces, reforms in higher education curriculum

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the Upper House of the Parliament on Monday called for initiating a national dialogue and highlighted the issue of Balochistan protesters in the Capital.
The third convening of the 334th Senate session was held with Senator Sadiq Sanjrani in the chair that started with the call from Senators for allowing to speak on the issue of Balochistan protesters.

The Chairman Senate in his welcome remarks felicitated the members of the House at the commencement of the New Year before initiating the proceedings.
Senator Muhammad Akram of the National Party said the protest had started from Balochistan and the protesters reached the Federal Capital after a long journey. He pointed out the plight of the women and the protesters under open skies that also included children.

He also called for addressing the missing persons issue without further delay.
"There should be a debate on missing persons issue to start the dialogue. The stakeholders should be convened on a single platform under a separate committee that should be established to resolve the issue", he added.

Senator, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam Pakistan (JUI-P) also highlighted the plight of women protesters and demanded the proper redressal of their grievances.
The JUI-P Senator proposed that a committee to resolve the issue of missing persons of Balochistan and the rest should be set up to resolve the issue amicably.
Senator Muhammad Tahir Bizinjo of National Party also expressed concern over the plight of Baloch protesters.
Senator, Haji Hidayatullah Khan of Awami National Party regretted that the increase in

terrorist activities and targeting of political parties, were harmful for democracy and the electoral process. He said that the threats to political leaders like his leader Aimal Wali Khan or Moulana Fazlur Rehman, would have adverse impacts on democratic norms.
Senator Humayun Mohmand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanded that the interim government under its constitutional mandate, should hold free and fair elections in the country.
Senator Kamran Murtaza of JUI-P condemned the terrorist attacks on his party leaders and termed it harmful for democracy.
Senator Moulvi Faiz Muhammad of JUI-P said it was the responsibility of the government to ensure protection of life, property and honour of the citizens. The terrorist activities in Balochistan were regrettable and commendable, whereas the government must make serious efforts to address the terrorism issue.



QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting of Quetta Development Package Steering Committee

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Unequal world

A world increasingly divided between the rich and the poor – with the gap widening almost annually – has once again witnessed an astonishing \$1.5 trillion increase in the wealth of the top five richest empires. This is no small sum. In fact, for some countries, this sum is bigger than their GDP; for example, Pakistan whose GDP is a paltry \$348 billion is among these countries. In a world that wants to switch to renewable energy and phase out of fossil fuels to save the planet from further chaos, the petro-money of the Middle East has put two families from the region among the world's five richest.

The Al Nahyans of Abu Dhabi have topped the 2023 list put out by Bloomberg of family fortunes, with a total worth of \$305 billion. The Al Thanis of Qatar also added significantly to this wealth. For the first time in five years, the Waltons of Walmart are no longer the richest group in the world. Meanwhile, the family that owns Hermes continues to grow, with the focus, according to experts, being on creating generational wealth. Unfortunately, the growing influence of the Middle East is not being put to use politically, for example by using its clout as a reminder that the Palestinians have powerful friends. The same is true of Yemen, where children starve as a result of poverty which has built up over the decades and worsened by almost a decade-long war in the country.

The report is a stark reminder of wealth concentration in the hands of a few. If this money earned from oil, fashion design, retail sales, and other areas was spread out more equitably, many would benefit hugely. Inequality in the world is widening, leading to some important questions. Are the world's riches reserved only for a small number of people? Shouldn't there be some mechanism to offer more opportunities and a greater division of wealth to the world's 99 per cent who had a difficult financial year? It is almost impossible to imagine the scale of fortune a few families have amassed. The arrival of the oil-rich Gulf countries on the scene adds in some way to the complications but also depicts a changing world where the West is not necessarily the largest power holder at least in financial terms.

Geo Strategic Concerns

By Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai
International Court of Justice in its unofficial press release, issued on December 29, 2023, states, "South Africa today filed an application instituting proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, concerning alleged violations by Israel of its obligations under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the 'Genocide Convention') in relation to Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

Earlier in December 2019, The Republic of the Gambia, with the support of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) also filed a case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) alleging human rights violations committed by Myanmar against the Rohingya violate various provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide ("the Genocide Convention").

Both these developments are significant steps towards greater international recognition of the serious alleged abuses committed against civilian population. Filing of an application at the ICJ may take the veil of secrecy off alleged human rights violations. Perhaps now the global community can share the outrage felt by the people of the region.

Yet in another part of the globe – Kashmir – atrocities of a similar pattern have been and are being perpetrated by the 900,000 Indian military and paramilitary forces (Figure quoted from an interview with Indian novelist, Arundhati Roy) with no fear of a corrective international response. The scale of the human rights atrocities in Kashmir dwarf those in Kosovo, Bosnia, Sierra Leone, and East Timor which have triggered international interventions. But the world powers and the United Nations have remained silent, not even employing moral suasion against India's shocking indiscriminate violence in

Kashmir as was done regarding South Africa during its ugly years of apartheid. It is painful but necessary to mention here how Indian law grants virtual legal immunity to any type of war crime against humanity perpetrated in Kashmir. Rape is a recognised war crime, and countless Kashmiri women have been raped by Indian army. Torture is an international crime, as the Legal proceedings against General Augusto Pinochet in Great Britain proved. Yet Indian leaders who permit torture in Kashmir are not prosecuted for the crime in jurisdictions they may be visiting. Narendra Modi was banned to enter to the United States and Great Britain because of his involvement in massacre of Muslims in Gujarat. Now he is being given red carpet reception in many Capitols of the world. Is an international crime less criminal if the aggressor is India and victim is a Kashmiri, people ask?

The common Kashmiris also asks: Are Kashmiris less human than peoples of other nations? To borrow from Shakespeare in The Merchant of Venice: Hath not a Kashmiri eye? hath not a Kashmiri hand, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as other peoples are? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? It is true that violence characteristically stems from dehumanising an adversary or enemy. The more another seems distant, odd, inferior, or different from yourself, the easier to kill, maim, and oppress. That psychological insight is corroborated by thousands of years of experience. Take genocide. The Nazis and Germans generally perpetrated the Holocaust by demonizing Jews and inculcating the idea of their racial or religious inferiority. Jews looked different from Aryans. Jews were stigmatised as killers of

Christ, making them all enemies. In this way, Holocaust participants were able psychologically to block out their villainies by perceiving Jews as subhuman, and thus their extermination as no different than killing animals for food. The Holocaust would never have reached its horrifying scale if Aryan Germans had perceived and treated Jews as human peers and subscribed to John Donne's timeless poetic recognition of the unity of mankind. It is quite possible that if international law were applied evenhandedly in Kashmir, an international war crimes tribunal would have been established years ago to try the scores of Indian civilian and military leaders guilty of crimes against humanity and aggression. What Slobodan Milosevic did in Kosovo and Bosnia pales in comparison to what Indian civilian and military grandees have done in Kashmir for 76 successive years, something resembling genocide on the installment plan.

Let us have a pragmatic view of the world. The world powers seldom place democracy and human rights above geo-strategic or economic concerns. Let me conclude with these sobering observations. Foreign policy in the United States does not emerge from a simple algorithm. It is driven in part by popular emotions, in part by daily headlines, in part by domestic considerations, and in part by long-term global concerns that transcend the momentary and transient. And what relative influence these varied elements play in a particular foreign policy decision varies depending on the country, the timing, and the circumstances. If anyone thinks there are simple markers for predicting American foreign policy, then they are seriously mistaken. It is much more ad hoc and improvised than systematic and thematic. That means the opportunities to try to reason out with the policymakers are great, but so are the hazards and imponderables of such an enterprise.—Courtesy The Nation

Election unknowns

By Maleeha Lodhi

Election activity has swung into high gear in the country with the filing of nomination papers by candidates and mobilisation of supporters by party leaders. The election date of Feb 8 is now cast in stone. But there are more unknowns than knowns about how the election will play out. The first unknown is the PTI factor. Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf is engaged in legal actions aimed at securing a level playing field in the poll. It has contested the decision of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to deprive it of its election symbol — which is how most voters identify which party a candidate belongs to on the ballot paper. Court dramas are likely to continue on this and other counts, including petitions challenging Khan's disqualification. Whatever the legal outcome, the key political question is whether the perception that PTI is being persecuted will translate into a 'sympathy wave' to boost its electoral support or deter its supporters from showing up at the ballot box.

With most of its leaders and many activists incarcerated, it will be hard for the party to mobilise its base. But the party has also shown a knack of using social media and communication technology to overcome such obstacles. Whether this will work in the complex environment of individual parliamentary constituencies remains to be tested.

This brings up the second unknown. Constituency politics embedded in networks of traditional allegiances often override the personal popularity of leaders at the national level. If there was a presidential system, a leader's popularity would be enough to determine the outcome. But parliamentary elections are a different matter where dynamics are more complicated.

The phenomenon of 'all politics is local' also works to the advantage of older parties that have long dominated Pakistan's constituency-based politics. Electoral politics still piv-

ots around transactional patterns of behaviour and traditional allegiances to determine the result at the constituency level — hence the importance of so-called electables, who are local power brokers. This makes the overall outcome harder to predict.

The third unknown is the impact of the urban-rural balance, which in the past has long tilted in favour of the countryside and reinforced traditional allegiances. But greater urbanisation is altering this picture. Although urban Pakistan is still underrepresented, many rural constituencies now have urban features.

In the battleground province of Punjab, this shift is most evident. In Punjab's 144 national constituencies more than half are now either urban or 'mixed', displacing a significant urban complexion. This is weakening older alignments and reshaping voting patterns, again making outcomes harder to forecast.

New voters are a fourth unknown factor. Since the last election in 2018, over 23.5 million voters have been added to the electoral list — 18 per cent of the electorate. This could impart a significant swing factor to the election. A substantial number of new voters can be assumed to be unaffiliated to any party with no firm party preference. They are therefore up for grabs for any party able to appeal to them and get them out to vote.

The youth bulge in the electorate has, of course, attracted much attention. ECP figures show voters from the ages of 18 to 35 constitute 45pc of the electorate. This makes young voters a significant factor, even a game changer, in determining the poll outcome. But what is unknown is whether young voters will actually show up at the ballot box — which would give PTI an edge.

So far, turnout among younger voters has been exceedingly low. Official statistics are lacking on this but a Gallup-Pakistan report, relying on exit polls conducted since 1988, finds

youth turnout to be much lower than overall voter participation. It shows that usually only a quarter of young voters turned out to vote. In the past two elections, their participation was only a third compared to the average overall turnout of 52pc.

Overall voter turnout is itself a big unknown. It could be a significant indicator of how free, fair and credible voters will judge the election to be. Turnout in previous elections has ranged between 51pc (2018), 53pc (2013), 44pc (2008) and 41pc (2002). The lowest turnout in 2002 was clearly a measure of the scepticism with which people saw an election held under military rule. A very low turnout, say below 44pc, could undermine the legitimacy of the February election result.

Another unknown is how voters in Punjab will respond to the new Istehkam-i-Pakistan Party organised to unseat PTI and comprised mostly of PTI deserters in a process orchestrated by the establishment. Pakistan's electoral history shows voters usually punish incumbents, just as they reject expedient alliances. Individual IPP leaders with a strong constituency base may, however, buck this trend.

What should be among election 'knowns' by now is where contesting parties stand on the consequential issues and challenges facing the country. But with elections just a month away, political parties have yet to articulate their positions on key policy issues or offer detailed programmes on what they will do if elected.

One party has made extravagant and utterly unrealistic promises wilfully ignoring the dire state of the economy. At a time when the economy is still in the critical ward and needs bold and decisive action, the need for policy ideas and options has never been greater. However, this has yet to figure in the election campaign that has so far been mostly about ticket distribution and 'seat adjustment' deals.—Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Govt-private sector liaison crucial for economic development: PM

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that the development model, featuring a close liaison between the government and private sector, could yield positive results for national economic growth. The prime minister, interacting with the business community at the Business Facilitation Center (BFC), said the enhanced interaction between the business community and the government, would help increase employment

opportunities, taxation as well as GDP growth. He said that owing to the mutual cooperation between the government and the business community, the country was heading towards achieving economic stability and revival.

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ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting availability of Urea Fertilizer in the country.

PM for legal proceedings against urea fertilizer hoarders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Monday said that enough urea fertilizer was available in the country to meet requirements and directed for initiation of legal proceedings against those involved in its hoarding and illegal profiteering. He said that those exploiting farmers by urea fertilizer hoarding would not be spared. The prime minister chaired a meeting over the availability of urea fertilizer in the country. The meeting was attended by Caretaker Finance Minister Dr Shamsad Akhtar, Caretaker Minister for Energy Muhammad Ali, Caretaker Minister for National Food Security Dr Kausar Abdullah Malik, Caretaker Minister for Trade Dr Gohar Ejaz, caretaker chief ministers and relevant officials, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad in a meeting with Chinese Business Delegation on at Privatisation Division.

Pakistan signs agreements with int'l companies to boost employment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan signed over a dozen agreements with Saudi and international companies that were executed during the recent expo in Saudi Arabia to boost employment opportunities abroad for the Pakistani workforce. Pakistan, through its Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (OP&HRD), participated for the first time in the International Human Resources & Labour Services Expo in Riyadh last year from December 24 to 27, 2023. An official source told

APP here on Monday, he said that the agreements would open doors for the Pakistani workforce in various sectors such as construction, hospitality, information technology, services industry and various other fields globally. To a question, he said that the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC), which is part of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, was also present at the expo through its Managing Director Naseer Khan Kashani. Other dignitaries at the expo included Pakistan's Ambassador to

Saudi Arabia Ahmad Farooq and representatives of multinational organizations. Underlining the importance of the expo, he stated that the expo served as a pivotal forum, bringing together human resources and recruitment companies alongside reliable and accredited labour services entities. It provided an opportunity for Pakistan to engage with the global community, understand international market needs, and "tailor our skills to meet the evolving demands of the job market", he added.

President FPCCI entrusted the charge of Chairman FPCCI Capital Office

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram President FPCCI has entrusted the charge of Chairman FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad to Mr. Karim Aziz Malik, former Vice President FPCCI & CEO Barkat Rice Mills (PVT) Islamabad, who has taken over the charge of this office today. Mr. Karim Aziz Malik expressed that the election of FPCCI has now over and the entire business community of Pakistan will be united under one roof of FPCCI without any grouping for the revival of Pakistan's economy. On the occasion, Special Prayers were held for the solidarity, Safety and Security of Pakistan and economic revival and

progress of the country. He stressed on need of aggressive and untiring sincere efforts to bring out the country from the existing economic crises. The new Chairman of FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad expressed his gratitude and congratulated the newly elected President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram and the Senior Vice President Mr. Saqib Fayaz Maggon and other Vice Presidents. He appreciated the efforts of the business leaders of United Business Group (UBG) SM Tanvir, Zafar Bakhtawari, Mian Akram Farid, Zubair Tufail, Khalid Javed, Mian Shokat Masood, Amir Waheed, Sohail Malik.

LCCI starts membership renewal for 2024-25

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has started renewal of memberships for the year 2024-25 and bills have been issued to more than 37,000 members. For the renewal of membership, proof of income tax return filing for the financial year 2022-23 will be mandatory. Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Kashif Anwar here Monday appealed to the LCCI members to get their memberships renewed for the year 2024-25 as soon as possible to avoid rush and other problems.

Pak earns \$372.930m by exporting transport services in 4 months

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan earned US \$372.930 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first four months of the current fiscal year (2023-24) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. This shows an increase of 26.01 percent as compared to \$295.959 million earned through the provision of services during the corresponding months of the fiscal year (2022-23), the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the months under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 120.49 percent, going up from \$65.700 million last year to \$144.860 million during the months under review. Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services dipped by 62.56 percent from \$53.370 million last year to \$19.980 million whereas the exports

of other sea transport services however increased by 912.81 percent from \$12.330 million to \$124.880 million current year, the PBS data revealed. The exports of air transport witnessed a nominal decline of 1.95 percent going down from \$222.779 million last year to \$218.440 million during July-October 2023. Among the air transport services, the exports of passenger services increased by 3.57 percent, from \$144.650 million to \$149.810 million, whereas the exports of freight services dipped by 32.51 percent from \$11.350 million to \$7.660 million, in addition, the export of other air transport services also dipped by 8.70 percent from \$66.779 million to \$60.790 million.

Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the months under review witnessed a growth of 70.15 percent going up from \$4.590 million to \$7.810 million.

Mobilink Bank closes 2023 with 41% increase in MSME Disbursements

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank stood out for its commitment to empowering Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), constituting a significant 36% of its total loan portfolio and a noteworthy MSME Growth (YoY) of 41% in 2023. The Bank strongly advocates for social mobility, especially in empowering MSMEs and women across remote rural regions, offering tailored financial products and services. Mobilink Bank's inclusive loan offerings are pivotal in bringing about positive transformations within communities nationwide. In a dedicated effort to address the gender-specific impacts of natural disasters driven by climate change, the Bank has allocated PKR 1.7 billion to climate financing. Additionally, the Bank's strong commitment to environmentally sustainable practices is evident, with 10% of its branches successfully transitioning to solar power, underscoring its dedication to green initiatives.

CM virtually inaugurates 36 upgraded police stations

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi virtually inaugurated 36 upgraded police stations across the province here on Monday.

He also inaugurated the newly constructed Gulshan-e-Iqbal police station, said a handout issued here.

In a generous New Year gesture, he announced a waiver on fee increases for driving licences until Jan 9, extending an opportunity for citizens to obtain licences at the existing rates.

The CM inspected the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Police Station and its different sections, including the front desk, waiting room, SHO's room, IT room, and meeting room. Expressing appreciation for the initiative to provide top-

notch facilities, CM Naqvi conveyed his congratulations to the IG police, CCPO Lahore, DIG (Ops) and their respective teams.

Provincial ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, Home Secretary, CCPO Lahore, Secretary Communication and Works, Commissioner, DIG (Ops) and others were also present.

Meanwhile, Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi commenced the dawn of 2024 by inspecting public welfare projects.

He inspected the 7.3 KM long controlled access corridor Band Road for two hours to review the progress. Currently, 50 per cent completion is reported for package one and 38 per cent for package two.

In his commitment to

timely delivery, CM Naqvi set a deadline of Jan 31 for the project's completion, emphasizing a steadfast adherence to the schedule, and even advocating for round-the-clock efforts.

Expressing concern over reported extortion from the soil supplier contractor, the CM directed the police to take legal action against the extortionists.

He scrutinized construction activities, urging both the contractors to accelerate their pace. He tasked the deputy commissioner to remove encroachments surrounding the project areas. Commissioner/DG LDA briefed about the project's progress.

Provincial ministers Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, Azfar Ali Nasir, CCPO, secretary C&W and others were also present.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering Dua after virtual inaugurating of Police Station Gulshan Iqbal and other 36 Police Stations under 737 Police Stations building upgradation.

Providing modern education IG FC North commends Cadet College Warsak for its commitment

PESHAWAR (Online): Addressing the gathering, Chief Guest Major General Noor Wali Khan commended Cadet College Warsak for its commitment to providing modern education. He acknowledged the institution's role in maintaining high academic standards, placing it on par with other esteemed educational entities in Pakistan.

Major General Noor Wali Khan credited the success to the dedicated management and faculty of Cadet College Warsak. The event drew attendees from various sectors, including parents of cadets, civil and military officials, and a diverse cross-section of the community. Established in 2009, Cadet College Warsak has become a beacon of quality education, currently hosting 650 students from across Pakistan, including tribal districts of KPK.

Caretaker Minister chairs a meeting on newly merged Districts

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged Districts Affairs, Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Dr. Aamer Abdullah, on Monday, chaired a meeting of the Special Steering Committee, formed for Newly Merged Districts, here at Cabinet Room, Civil Secretariat in Peshawar.

Besides Additional Chief Secretary Planning and Development Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, Secretary Communications and Works Muhammad Idrees Khan, Secretary Relief Inayatullah Wasim, Secretary Industry Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Special Secretaries Home and P&D Departments Muhammad Zabair and Kamran Afridi, Officers of Police, Pakistan Army and other departments participated.

In the meeting, the progress and implementation of the tasks given to various departments in the decisions of the previous meetings of the steering committee and provincial task force formed under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister were reviewed.

On this occasion, the forum was informed that the process of capacity building of police in NMDs is on progress. 19 DSPs and 85 inspectors of police have been promoted to the next grades while recruitment of 1571 police personals through ETEA, will also be completed soon. Similarly, 513 ghost employees have also been removed from the police in these districts.

Titanic of PTI politics has sunk: Javed

MANANWALA (Online): PML-N central leader Mian Javed Latif has said titanic of PTI politics has sunk. "We will put the final nail in the political coffin of Intehar Khan and his coterie on February 8 and send him packing for ever, he said this while talking to media men here Monday after holding corner meetings in different villages of constituency PP-142. "My Quaid Nawaz Sharif is last ray of hope for people who will steer the country from "Masalistan" and put it on the path to progress and prosperity, he added.

PML-N will win the election with overwhelming majority from across the country, he claimed. Sheikhpura is citadel of tigers of Mian Nawaz Sharif. Our political rivals have become confused over our politics of service to people. We have accomplished record development projects in our respective constituencies.

He announced Mian Nawaz Sharif and Maryam Nawaz will soon address public meeting.



PESHAWAR: Members of Khyber Medical Employees Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at Peshawar press club.

2024 to be a year of development, prosperity for Pakistan: Firdous

SIALKOT (APP): Former Federal Minister and Pakistan Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Central Information Secretary Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan has congratulated the nation on the beginning of the New Year.

In a statement, she prayed 2024 to be a year of development and prosperity for Pakistan, for which all have to struggle together. "It is my prayer that the sun of the New Year should be a symbol of progress and prosperity and that the name of Pakistan shine globally," Firdous Ashiq Awan prayed for the

ANF recovers over 2 tons drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF), while conducting 10 operations across the country, managed to recover over 2 tons of drugs and arrest three accused, including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He said that 1.5 kg of ice was recovered from a Bahrain-bound passenger on Flight No. GF-0791 at Faisalabad Airport. 100 grams of hashish were recovered from a parcel booked for Dubai at a courier office near Jinnah Airport. 1460 kg of hashish and 215 kg of heroin were recovered from the Mazai Adda area of Qila Abdullah.

510 kg of hashish was recovered from Pishin, while 335.6 kg of hashish was recovered from the Toba Achakzai area of Chaman.

The spokesman informed us that 68.4 kg of hashish was recovered from the Morgah Border, Khyber area, in four separate operations.

180 kg of hashish was recovered from the Gali Alam Khan area of Pishin, and 17 kg of crystal heroin was recovered from a hilly area of Chagai.

In an operation, 6 kg of heroin was recovered from a drug manufacturing factory in the 'Kabari'.

PML-N office arson case: Court extends physical remand of Sanam Javed

LAHORE (Online): Sessions Court has extended physical remand of PTI worker Sanam Javed.

The PML-N office arson case came up for hearing in sessions court against Sanam Javed here Monday.

The police presented her in the court on completion of her two days physical remand.

The Model town police requested the court to extend physical remand of accused as more investigation has to be made from her.

The counsel for Sanam Javed opposed the police plea for further physical remand.

The court reserved judgment on Police plea.

Announcing the decision later, the court extended physical remand of Sanam Javed for one day.

International News

Fighting rages in Gaza as Israel looks at new phase of war

Monitoring Desk
CAIRO/ JERUSALEM/ GAZA: Israel pulled tanks out of some Gaza City districts on Monday, residents said, as it announced plans to shift tactics and cut back on troop numbers, but fighting raged elsewhere in the Palestinian enclave along with intense bombardment.

Israel says the war in Gaza, which has reduced much of the territory to rubble, killing thousands and plunging its 2.3 million people into a humanitarian disaster, has many months to go.

But Israel has signalled a coming news phase in its offensive, with an official saying on Monday that the military would draw down forces inside Gaza this month and shift to a months-long phase of more localised "mopping up" operations.

The official said the troop reduction would allow some reservists to return to civilian life, shoring up Israel's war-battered economy, and free up units in case of a wider conflict in the north with Lebanon's Iran-backed Hezbollah.

Artillery fire between Hezbollah and Israel has rattled the border since the start of the Gaza conflict, with Israel's military saying it carried out an air strike on Monday, and any new escalation carries risks for a wider regional war.

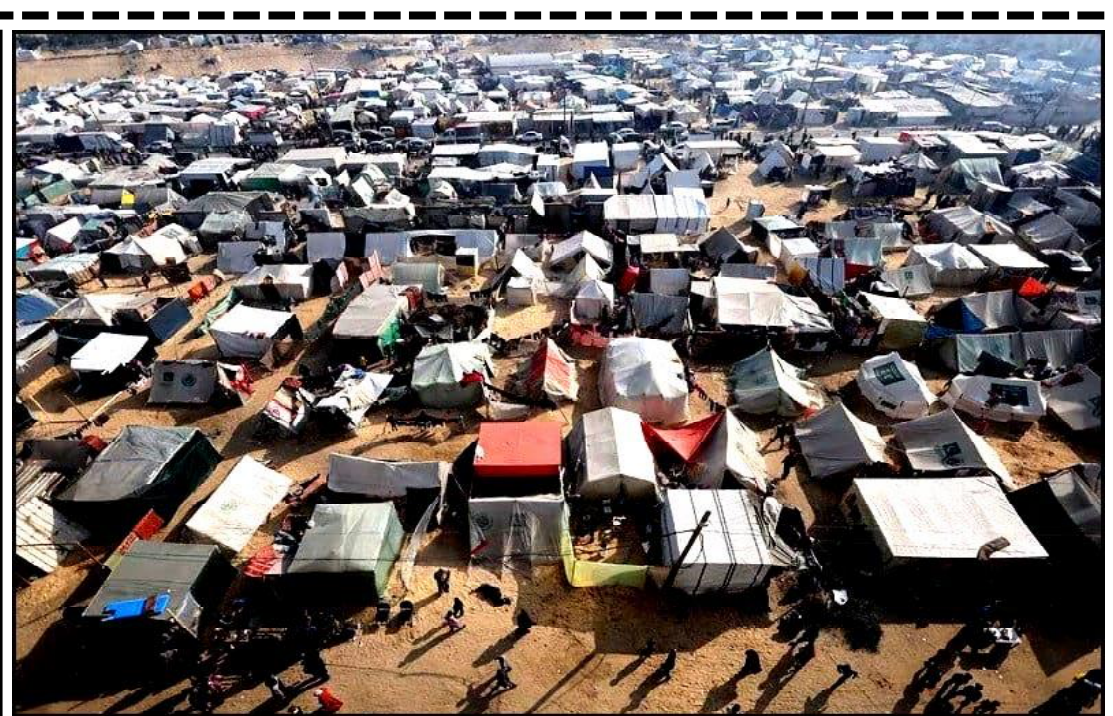
Tehran-backed fighters in Yemen have attacked Red Sea shipping, drawing a US military response, and an Iranian warship has sailed into the waterway, Iranian media reported on Monday.

The Gaza war was triggered by a surprise Hamas attack on Israeli towns on Oct. 7 that Israel says killed 1,200 people. Palestinian health authorities in Hamas-run Gaza say Israel's offensive there has killed more than 21,978 people.

The scale of suffering in Gaza, where the bombardment has driven almost all inhabitants from their homes, has led Israel's Western allies, including the US, to urge it to scale down its offensive.

"My wish for 2024 is not to die... Our childhood is gone. There is no bathroom, no food and no water. Only tents. There is nowhere safe. There is nothing. Our wish is to go back to our homes and end this," 11-year-old Layan Harara said in Gaza's Rafah.

Residents of Sheikh Radwan district in Gaza City, in the northern part of the enclave that Israel's offensive focused on first, said tanks had withdrawn after what they described as the most intense 10 days of warfare since the conflict began.



Displaced Palestinians, who fled their homes due to Israeli strikes, shelter in a tent camp, in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip

Nobel winner Yunus convicted in Bangladesh labour law case

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus was convicted on Monday of violating Bangladesh's labour laws in a case decried 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.

Hasina has made several scathing verbal attacks against the internationally respected 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, who was once seen as a political rival.

Yunus and three colleagues from Grameen Telecom, one of the firms he founded, were accused of violating labour laws when they failed to create a workers' welfare fund in the company.

A labour court in the capital Dhaka convicted and sentenced them to "six months' simple imprisonment", lead prosecutor Khurshid Alam Khan told AFP, adding that all four were immediately granted bail pending appeals.

All four deny the charges. Dozens of people staged a small demonstration of support outside the court for Yunus, who left without speaking to media. "This verdict is unprecedented," Abdullah Al Mamun, a lawyer for Yunus, told AFP. "We did not get justice."

Yunus is facing more than 100 other charges over labour law violations and alleged graft. He told reporters after one of the hearings last month that he had not profited from any of the more than 50 social business firms he had set up in Bangladesh.

China's Xi terms Taiwan reunification 'inevitable'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: China's "reunification" with Taiwan is inevitable, President Xi Jinping said in his New Year's address striking a stronger tone than he did last year with less than two weeks to go before the Chinese-claimed island elects a new leader. The Jan. 13 presidential and parliamentary elections come at a time of fraught relations between Beijing and Taipei, as China has been ramping up military pressure to assert its sovereignty claims over Taiwan.

China considers Taiwan to be its "sacred territory" and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under Chinese control, though Xi made no mention of military threats in his speech carried on state television.

"The reunification of the motherland is a historical inevitability," Xi said, though the official English translation of his remarks published by the Xinhua news agency used a more simple phrase: "China will surely be reunified."

"Compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait should be bound by a common sense of purpose and share in the glory of the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," he added. The official English translation wrote "all Chinese" rather than "compatriots".

"Resilient economy"

During his address, the Chinese president also said the country's economy had grown "more resilient and dynamic" in 2023, despite financial figures continuing to disappoint as post-Covid recovery stalls.

Xi has endured a challenging 2023 at the helm of the world's second-largest economy, with his administration struggling to sustain an economic rebound since rapidly dumping its onerous zero-Covid policy a year ago.

But he said on state broadcaster CCTV the economy had "weathered the storm" and become "more resilient and dynamic than before", hailing the promotion of "high-quality development" and emerging industries such as electric vehicles, lithium batteries and solar panels.

He said next year "we must... consolidate and enhance the positive trend of economic recovery, and achieve long-term economic stability".

UN mission in Mali completes its withdrawal

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, MINUSMA, is poised to complete its withdrawal from the country on Sunday, the United Nations said in a statement.

Security experts warn the area could now become the focus of a struggle in the north as rebel groups and the army seek to take areas that the UN has left, further destabilising Mali, where fighters linked to Al Qaeda and the militant Islamic State group also roam.

Violence in Mali has spiked since June when the military junta which took power in a 2021 coup ordered the UN's decade-old peacekeeping mission to leave. The UN said only a small team will stay behind to oversee the transportation of assets and disposal of UN-owned equipment.

"UN funds, agencies and programmes were in Mali well before the deployment of MINUSMA and will stay in Mali well after the withdrawal," MINUSMA chief El-Ghassum Wane said.

Kim tells army to 'annihilate' South Korea, US if they initiate conflict

PYONGYANG (INP): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un told his top military officers to use maximum force against South Korea and the United States if they initiate a military confrontation, state media reported Monday.

Seoul and Washington have ramped up defence cooperation in the face of a record-breaking series of weapons tests by Pyongyang over the past year.

At a meeting with North Korea's major commanding officers in Pyongyang on New Year's Eve, Kim said his military should "annihilate" the enemy if provoked, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported. "If the enemy opt for military confrontation and provocation against the DPRK, our army should deal a deadly blow to thoroughly annihilate them by mobilizing all the toughest means and potentialities without moment's hesitation," Kim said.

Kim's comments echo his threats made during year-end party meetings of a nuclear attack on Seoul and orders for a military arsenal build-up to prepare for a war that he said could "break out any time" on the peninsula.

During the meetings to set the policy agenda for 2024, the North Korean leader accused the United States of posing "various forms of military threat".

He also called on armed forces to "suppress the whole territory of south Korea mobilizing all physical means... including nuclear forces" in case of a "great event", referring to an armed conflict.

Kim told the meeting he would no longer seek reconciliation and reunification with South Korea, noting the "uncontrollable crisis" that he said was triggered by Seoul and Washington. South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol vowed Monday to keep Pyongyang's military provocations at bay with a joint extended deterrence system with Washington, scheduled for the first half of 2024.

The deterrence system will "fundamentally deter any North Korean nuclear and missile threat", Yoon said in his New Year's Day address.

36 projects completed so far under CPEC: Senate informed



LAHORE: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar receives briefing about the overall working and current progress of the Business Facilitation Center.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Muhammad Sami Saeed on Monday said that 36 projects with a cumulative value of 24 billion dollars have been successfully completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Additionally, 22 projects with a total investment of five billion dollars are currently under construction, he said while concluding a debate on motion under rule 218 in Senate, focusing on the underdevelopment of Balochistan despite the claims of successive governments to promote the region's growth through CPEC and other Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) projects.

Providing further insights in CPEC at the national level, the minister informed the House that negotiations are underway for 26 projects, totalling 27 billion dollars under the CPEC framework. Furthermore, 27 other projects dedicated to the social and economic development of Balochistan are actively under implementation.

Sami Saeed highlighted the significant allocation for Balochistan in the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP), emphasizing that the province has received a higher share compared to other regions in recent years. For the current year, the PSDP stands at Rs. 950 billion, out of which 400 billion is allocated to national projects. Specifically, 15 percent of the program is dedicated to Balochistan, with an additional 14 percent for province-specific projects. This totals to one-third of the PSDP, amounting to 285 billion rupees, earmarked for projects related to connectivity, roads, and water, including the implementation of various dam projects.

The development of Gwadar city and Gwadar port remains a central focus of CPEC, as the minister outlined the completion of 36 projects worth 24 billion dollars and the ongoing construction of 22 projects with a budget of five billion dollars. Additionally, 26 projects, valued at 27 billion dollars, are under negotiation within the CPEC framework, while 27 other projects aimed at Balochistan's social and economic development are actively underway. Providing specific updates on Gwadar, Sami Saeed stated that significant milestones, such as the completion of the master plan for Gwadar

For participants to exchange best practices Exercise BARRACUDA-XII valuable platform: CNS

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Naveed Ashraf, on Monday said the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) through Exercise BARRACUDA-XII would afford a valuable platform for the participants to exchange best practices, share experiences and learn from each other.

In his message at the commencement of Exercise BARRACUDA-XII, the Naval Chief said oceans played a vital role in providing sustenance, livelihood, regulating climate patterns and nurturing unparalleled biodiversity.

As a responsible member of global maritime fraternity, Pakistan had fostered collaboration with regional countries and engaged in global partnerships to safeguard marine conservation initiatives, he said.

The Naval Chief added that as part of its commitment to the international maritime regulatory framework, Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), being sole maritime law enforcement agency in the country, ensured safety of life at sea and preserved nation's marine resources.

Pakistan Navy, being the premier stakeholder of national maritime defence, extended all out support to PMSA and augmented Maritime Domain Awareness for preservation of seabased resources and enduring ecological balance, he said. In the mix of contemporary maritime challenges, environmental complexities have added another layer to maritime security.

These challenges not only jeopardized marine biodiversity but also had

cascading effects on global climate patterns and livelihood of coastal communities. Among these environmental challenges, the looming specter of oil spills posed a critical concern and necessitated the coordinated response by international and national stakeholders. In pursuit of these objectives, Pakistan Navy & PMSA had embarked on conducting the international series of exercises code named 'BARRACUDA' under the overall ambit.

of National Marine Disaster Contingency Plan. The aim of these exercises was to crystallize national response mechanism against oil spill disasters and contingent SAR requirements in collaboration with international partners, he added.

"Exercise BARRACUDA-XII will provide the opportunity to review and align our response procedures to attain the shared objective of pristine marine environment and safety of life at sea", he said.

Pakistan condemns ban on Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Party in IIOJK

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condemns the Indian authorities' decision to declare the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir (TeH) as an "unlawful association", for a period of five years. The TeH is the second Kashmiri party banned under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in less than a week's time.

With its banning, the total number of outlawed Kashmiri political parties increases to six. The party was founded by iconic Kashmiri leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who passed away in 2021 during a protracted house arrest. His death body was ruthlessly snatched by the occupation authorities, and his near and dear ones were not allowed to attend his funeral. Banning of political parties is part of India's relentless campaign to subjugate the Kashmiri people, suppress dissent, and consolidate its occupation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). These actions blatantly violate democratic norms and international human rights and humanitarian law.

India must remove the ban on all the political parties illegally outlawed in IIOJK; respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the Kashmiri people; release all the political prisoners and dissenters; and faithfully implement the UN Security Council resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar in a group photo with students of Turbat during their visit to Governor House

Special prayer service held at Methodist Church Quetta

Independent Report
QUETTA: The special prayer service was held at the Methodist Church located on Zarghoon road here between the night of Sunday and Monday.

Arranged in the mid-night, the special prayer service was attended by a large number of people belonging to the Christian community.

The participants of special service were included the women and children besides the Christian community.

Similar prayer service was also arranged at different other churches of Quetta city.

The participants offered special prayers for the stability, security and prosperity of the country.

PEC says: Training of 52,234 polling staff continues in different phases all over Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: The training of polling staff is continued for conducting general elections in Balochistan.

According to the Provincial Election Commissioner, Ejaz Anwar Chohan, the training of 52,234 polling staff is being conducted all over the province in different phases.

The polling staff includes Senior Presiding Officers, Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers and Polling Officers.

The PEC informed that there are 41,586 Assistant Presiding and Polling Officers being trained for the elections.

The training of polling staff would remain continued till January 11, 2024.

It may be mentioned here that the training of polling officers was started on December 25, 2023.

Moreover, the training of Presiding and Senior Presiding Officers would be conducted between January 13 to February 1, 2024.

ECP plans to establish over 92,500 polling stations for General Elections

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has planned to establish over 92,500 polling stations nationwide, with the official polling scheme to be revealed 15 days before the scheduled February 8 general elections.

For the upcoming general elections, it has been determined that Punjab will have 51,821 polling stations across 438 national and provincial constituencies, while Sindh will have 19,236 polling stations for its 191 seats.

For the election of 66 seats in Balochistan, 5,015 polling stations will be set up, and for the 160 seats in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 15,737 polling stations will be established. Additionally, 990 polling stations will be set up for three constituencies in Islamabad.

ANF foils major bid of smuggling of huge quantity of narcotics

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) foiled major attempt of smuggling of narcotics from different parts of the province.

According to the spokesman of ANF, the crackdown against smuggling of narcotics was carried out in different areas of the province.

In the operation conducted in Maizai addah area of Killa Abdullah, 1460 kilograms of charas and 215 kilograms of heroin were recovered. Similarly, 690 kilograms of charas was recovered from two different areas of Pishin while 300 kilograms of charas was recovered from Toba Achakzai of Chaman.

Senate informed NAVTTC empowers Balochistan youth with advanced skills

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Federal Education, Madad Ali Sindhvi on Monday apprised the Senate that the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) had successfully imparted advanced skills to numerous youth in Balochistan, with a commitment to sustaining such initiatives.

This announcement came during the conclusion of the debate on a motion under Rule 218, initiated by BAP Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri.

Minister Sindhvi emphasized that NAVTTC was operating programs under the Prime Minister's package and it had implemented various programmes. Notably, 9,856 males and 9,210 females had already benefited from these initiatives, receiving advanced skills to enhance their employability. The programmes, spanning six-month and three-month, had been launched, and their continuity was assured, fostering positive outcomes.

The motion was about the need to devise and launch technical training programmes for the youth of Balochistan to equip them with advanced skills to secure employment opportunities worldwide as well as in the proposed FDI projects in the province including CPEC projects, he added. Minister Sindhvi acknowledged the recommendations put forth by Senators, assuring that these suggestions would be duly considered in the planning and execution of various programmes.

JUI's election campaign office inaugurated in Chaman District

Independent Report
CHAMAN: The election campaign office of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) was established in border town Chaman on Monday.

The Ameer of JUI Chaman district, Maulana Abdul Rahim Mazhari inaugurated the election office of the Jamiat located on College road.

The Ameer of JUI Maulana Abdul Mannan presided over the ceremony.

Also present on the occasion were the central finance secretary of Jamiat and candidate for National Assembly, Maulana Salahuddin Ayubi, provincial finance secretary and candidate for Provincial Assembly, Ghousullah Achakzai, Maulana Hafiz Gul, Maulana Muhammad Ayub, Maulana Khair Muhammad, besides other leaders and large number of workers.

Addressing the inauguration of election campaign of JUI, the speakers urged the workers to spread the message of Jamiat at every door.

They said that the JUI always remain at the forefront to serve the masses.

Ministry for crackdown against individuals implicated in passport, visa scam

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Interior Ministry has underscored the imperative to crackdown on individuals implicated in the counterfeit passport and visa scam, aiming to enhance transparency in visa and passport procedures. This commitment was reaffirmed during a meeting on Integrated Border Management System Version 2, chaired by the Interior Secretary on Monday, said a press release.

The directives were issued to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the passport office.



QUETTA: Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) Administrator, Jabbar Baloch in a meeting with Municipal Corporation Officers held at QMC.

JUI (N) leaders say Strengthening of democratic system connected to transparency in election

Independent Report
QUETTA: Rejection of nomination papers filed for election-2024 without any solid justification was undemocratic and unconstitutional act which was a question mark on the transparency of election.

It was stated by central Naib Ameer, Markazi Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Nazriyati, Maulana Abdul Qadir Luni, central General Secretary, Maulana Ahmed Ali Sani, central Deputy General Secretary, Mufti Shafi-ud-Din, central patron-in-Chief, Maulana Ajmal Qadri, central Naib Ameer, Maulana Abdul Rauf, Najeem Khan Advocate, central Joint Secretary, Maulana Mehmood-ul-Hassan Qasimi, Naib Ameer, Maulana Aziz Ahmed Shah Amroti and central Secretary Information, Syed Haji Abdul Sattar Shah Chisti in a joint statement issued here on Monday.

They said rather than the rule of law, there was the rule of might in the country, adding that instead of learning lessons from the mistakes of past, mistakes were being repeated.

They said equal opportunity be provided to all the political parties to take part in the election, adding that undue interference in the election and favouring dear ones had always made the election controversial in the country.

They said strengthening of democratic system was connected to transparency in election, but uncheckable ego and unserious behaviour of political parties had caused irreparable damage to the country.



QUETTA: Hazara Democratic Party Chairman and Constituency PB-42 candidate, Abdul Khaliq talking to the media persons during press conference outside the Hazara High Court.

PML-N unveils an economic revitalization plan for 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Muhammad Asif has outlined a comprehensive strategy to address the pressing economic challenges facing the nation in 2024.

Talking to a Private news channel, the PML-N leader expressed confidence in the party's ability to lead the charge in improving the country's economic landscape. Emphasizing that economic stability takes precedence over political consolidation; Asif highlighted the urgency of reviving Pakistan's economy as a top priority for the nation.

As part of their proposed solution, PML-N plans to enhance tax collection mechanisms, tackle energy-related issues, and eradicate corruption through systemic reforms. By undertaking these measures, the party aims to obviate the need for external financial assistance, asserting that the first step is to set their own house in order. Asif addressed the lingering impacts of the past four to five years, stating that the nation is still reeling from the aftermath.

He stressed the need to rebuild the state's foundations, emphasizing that PML-N is poised to take the helm in this reconstruction effort.

Asserting that there is no magic switch to remedy the country's woes, Asif stated that meticulous attention is required to rectify the situation comprehensively.

He contended that by rejuvenating the state apparatus and addressing the root causes of economic challenges, the nation can overcome its current predicaments and pave the way for success.

RO issues written order on rejection of nomination papers of Sheikh, nephew

RAWALPINDI (Online): Syed Nazarat Ali Returning Officer (RO) of NA-56 (Rawalpindi-v) has issued written order on rejection of nomination papers of former interior minister Sheikh Rashid and his nephew. In the decision the two have been declared defaulter and guilty of concealing assets.

Jail trial of Fawad in contempt of EC case: EC, respondents put on notice

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued notice to respondents including Election Commission (EC) on the petition filed by Fawad Chaudhry against his jail trial in Contempt of EC case besides seeking replies from them.

The court also issued notice to jail administration on harassing female lawyer.

A single bench of IHC led by Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz heard the case.

Faisal Chaudhry appeared in the court on behalf of Fawad Chaudhry.

He took the plea that Jail trial by EC in contempt of EC case runs contrary to the law. EC is not authorized to hold jail trial in contempt of EC case.

He said jail trial of his client is also being conducted due to jail trial of PTI founder.

The female lawyer was harassed by jail administration in previous hearing.

The court summoned reply from the respondents.

The court while issuing notice to jail administration on harassing female lawyer adjourned the hearing of the case.

Shehbaz summoned by commission probing Faizabad sit-in

ISLAMABAD (INP): Former prime minister and President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shehbaz Sharif was summoned by commission probing Faizabad sit-in on Monday.

According to details, Shehbaz Sharif has been summoned by the Faizabad probe commission as the then-Punjab chief minister.

The PML-N President has been asked to appear before the probe commission on January 3 to record his statement.

It should be mentioned here that the government formed a new commission to probe the Faizabad sit-in after report of the fact-finding committee was rejected. Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt. General (retired) Faiz Hameed and others have already been summoned by the commission for recording of their statements. On November 08, 2017,

Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) had organized a sit-in at Faizabad interchange against the amendments.

In the Election Bill 2017, changing the word oath to declaration.

The protesters demanded the resignation of the then-Minister for Law and Justice Zahid Hamid to "protect the identity of the country".

As a result of the protest, the then PML-N government had to sack its law minister Zahid Hamid. The Supreme Court had taken suo motu notice of the sit-in on November 21, 2017.

Later, a division bench led by Justice Qazi Faez Isa on February 6, 2019, unveiled its verdict in the sit-in case, criticizing the role of intelligence agencies in the saga. Soon after assuming office of the chief justice of Pakistan (CJP) in September, last year, Justice Isa listed for hearing the petitions that had been filed against the SC's February 2019 verdict.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (retd) Muhammad Zubair Khan Jamali inaugurating Pak-Afghan-Iran Corridor Management System.