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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.



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



ISLAMABAD: A view of first sunrise of year 2024 through Khana Pul.

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 re-

gional 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.

Bilawal convenes CEC meeting on Jan 3 to discuss election strategy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to discuss the strategy for February 8, general elections has convened the Central Executive Committee (CEC) meeting on Jan 3 (Wednesday).

Presided over by the Chairman PPP, the meeting would be held at Bilawal House, Lahore.

Overall political situation of the country will come under discussion in the CEC meeting to be attended by the senior leadership of PPP. PPP manifesto and election campaign for the Feb 8 polls will also come under discussion during the meeting.

thorities, 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.

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 dead body was ruthlessly snatched by the occupation au-

Pakistan, India swap lists of prisoners, 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 Attacks against Nuclear Installations and Facilities between Pakistan and India, inter alia, provides that both countries shall inform each other of their nuclear installations and facilities, falling within its definition.

In another handout, the Foreign Office said today, Pakistan and India exchanged the lists of prisoners in each other's custody through diplomatic channels.

The simultaneous exchange of lists took place in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008. Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange the lists of prisoners in each other's custody on January 1 and July 1, every year.

The Government of Pakistan handed over a list of 231 Indian prisoners in Pakistan (47 civilian prisoners and 184 fishermen) to a representative of the High Commission of India in Islamabad, the statement read.

The Indian government shared the list of Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails with an officer of Pakistan High Commission, New Delhi. According to the list, there are a total of 418 Pakistanis in Indian jails (337 civilian prisoners and 81 fishermen).

Election tribunal refuses to hear appeal of PTI's Firdous Naqvi

KARACHI (INP): An election tribunal comprising Justice Arshad Hussain has refused to hear the appeal of PTI's Firdous Naqvi against rejection of his nomination papers.

After his refusal, the appeal will now be heard by a bench comprising Justice Khadim Hussain Tunio.

It may be recalled that Naqvi's nomination papers were rejected from the Na-

tional Assembly constituency NA-236.

Meanwhile, the tribunal comprising Justice Tunio issued notice to the Election Commission (ECP) and the Returning Officer for January 4 on the appeal of Mazhar Junejo against rejection of his nomination papers in Sindh Assembly constituency PS-86 as an independent candidate.

32 injured in New Year celebratory firing in Karachi

KARACHI (INP): At least 32 people including women and children were injured in the celebratory fire that rang through Karachi on New Year's Eve.

According to details, the injuries from aerial firing on New Year's Eve were reported from Nazimabad, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Aziz Bhatti, Korangi Industrial Area, Zaman Town, Landhi, Shah Faisal Colony, Tariq Road, Sea View, Liaquatabad, Saudabad, Baldia, Karimabad, Clifton, Zaman, Tower and other areas of Karachi. The injured include four women, three boys and two girls. Meanwhile, the Karachi police took 59 people over aerial firing and recovered weapons. Earlier, Karachi Police Chief Khadim Hussain Rind said that the charges of attempted murder and terrorism will be included in the cases lodged against those involved in aerial firing on New Year's Eve.

The police official highlighted the importance of strong and successful actions against hooliganism and aerial firing, bringing those involved under the grip of the law.



KARACHI: Inspector General Police (IGP) Sindh, Dr. Riffat Mukhtar Raja presides over a high-level meeting regarding the control of law and order situation on the occasion General Election 2024, held at CPO Headquarters in Karachi.

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

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

sage of time, President Xi's globalization-based ideology will gain momentum.

He said that Pakistan's relations with China entered a new era after the start of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

The minister said due to the cooperation of the People's Republic of China and China's leadership, Pakistan has made progress through CPEC.

When CPEC was launched, the focus was on energy and infrastructure projects, Murtaza Solangi said and added currently,



of development come only when development is not limited. No country can progress in isolation", Murtaza Solangi maintained.

Welcoming the message of the President of the

globalist ideology is gaining ground," he said.

Central Asian countries, Solangi added were already implementing Belt and Road Initiative projects.

He said with the pas-

work was being done in many new areas under CPEC. Wishing Happy New Year to the people of China he said relations between Pakistan and China have always been exemplary.

Victims of encroachment in Baldia Town being given alternative residential plots: Mayor

KARACHI (APP): Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab has said that the victims of encroachment in Baldia Town Sector 13 are being given alternative residential plots which they were allotted in 1992-93.

In the second phase, alternative plots will be given to more allottees, the journey of improvement will continue, and problems of people will be solved, he said this while addressing a ceremony to hand over the papers of

alternative plots to the affected families of Baldia Town Sector 13 on Monday.

Deputy Mayor Karachi Salman Abdullah Murad, Karamullah Waqasi, Dil Muhammad, Jumman Darwan, Director land

KMC Sabah ul Islam and others were also present on this occasion.

Barrister Murtaza Wahab said that owners of more than 400 plots that were encroached upon in

Baldia Town Sector 13 have been given 166 plots of 80 yards in the first phase today. These plots were allotted 30 years ago and today Bilawal Bhutto's PPP solved this problem and gave land to the affected people, he said. He said that we have built a sports complex in Kakri Ground, ground in Gizri, Ibrahim Haideri and Landhi, will inaugurate the football ground and cricket stadium in Malir Kalaboard in the next few days.

36 projects completed so far under CPEC: Senate informed

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 na-

tional 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,

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 of 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 decides. 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', displaying 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 turncoats, 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 willfully 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.

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



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.

APP here on Monday, 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 his 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 Javeed, 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 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.

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.

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 Javeed, Mian Shokat Masood, Amir Waheed, Sohail Malik.

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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 Nour 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 Nour 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. The event witnessed a meticulous parade inspection by the distinguished chief guest, who bestowed medals, shields and the coveted sword of honour upon outstanding cadets excelling in academics and sports. The ceremony showcased a splendid march past by the cadets who saluted the chief guest. Adding a dynamic touch to the celebration, the cadets exhibited remarkable gymnastics and athletic prowess, earning enthusiastic applause from the captivated audience.

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

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

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.

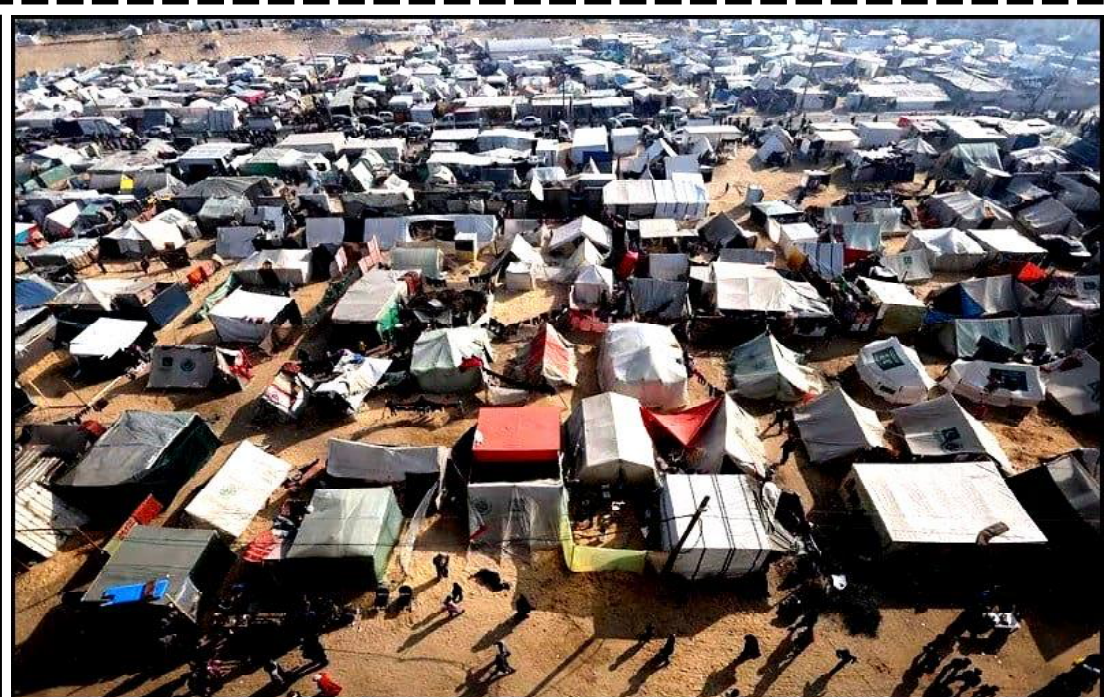
International News

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

Monitoring Desk

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 ar-

senal 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 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.

Senate adopts resolutions about negative propoganda against armed forces

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Senate of Pakistan on Monday adopted two resolutions recommending the government to award strict punishment to those involved in negative propoganda against armed forces and ensure reform in the higher education curriculum to apprise students of the consequences and risks of drug usage.

Sponsored by PPP Senator Bahramand Khan Tangi, a resolution recommended the government to take necessary steps to award severe punishment as per law to those involved in malicious propoganda

against the armed forces and other security agencies on various social media platforms.

According to the text of the amended resolution, "Cognizant of the huge sacrifices of Armed forces and other security agencies in the war against terror and for the Defence and protection of the country's borders; Acknowledging the fact that strong army and other security agencies is indispensable for the Defence of the country, especially in view of the hostile neighborhood; Expressing deep concern on the negative and malicious propoganda

against the armed forces and other security agencies on various social media platforms; The Senate of Pakistan, therefore, recommends to the Government to take necessary steps to award severe punishment as per law".

BAP Senator Samina Muntaz Zehri moved another resolution recommending the government to take immediate steps to cater needs of all students with diverse cultural backgrounds and to reform the higher education curriculum to apprise students of the consequences and risks of drug usage.

It also demanded to devise a monitoring mechanism in all the universities for enforcement of the "Policy on Drug and Tobacco Abuse in Higher Education Institutions 2021" in letter and spirit. Another resolution of PTI Senator Seemee Ezdi was not taken up due to the absence of lawmaker which recommended the government to prioritize climate change projects in its development Budget and allocate sufficient funds for climate change adaptation.



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

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 Muntaz 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.

PRs generates Rs 41 bln revenue in first half of FY 2023-24

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Railways has generated record revenue of Rs41 billion in first half of financial year 2023-24 with increase of Rs 13 billion against same period of last fiscal year.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pakistan Railways, Aamir Baloch said, "Things will get better after the launch of the ML1 project."

He further stated that the timeliness of salary disbursements for railway employees has been improved, ensuring that delays have been minimized, and payments will be dis-

bursed timely.

CEO PRs Aamir Baloch expressed that this year the railway will try to further enhance its services and an expansion of travel facilities.

Last year in December, Pakistan Railways has significantly raised the Right of Way (ROW) charges for a single-track crossing to Rs. 3.8 million for five years which would help the department to generate more revenue.

Historically, Pakistan Railways charged Rs. 100,000 per track crossing

for 10 years when telecom operators installed fiber broadband, the state news agency reported.

In 2007, they said the charges were increased to Rs. 2.7 million for five years, as the use of fiber broadband expanded.

However, in 2022, the PTI-led government reduced the crossing charges to Rs. 600,000 per crossing for a lifetime to promote fiber broadband.

They said that in contrast, cable TV operators continue to pay only Rs. 100 per year.

HESCO anti theft campaign: 297 more connections involved in electricity theft detected

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) in its ongoing anti-theft campaign detected 297 more connections involved in electricity theft during last twenty-four hours across the region.

The power body authorities submitted 246 letters at various police stations to register FIRs against those involved in power theft, as a result, 14 FIRs were filed.

According to the HESCO spokesperson, the

connections involved in power theft including 14 commercial, one industrial and 297 residential were disconnected, and involved consumers were issued detection bills of about 1,98,022 units, valued at 4.315 million rupees.

The spokesman stated, during this campaign, which has been ongoing since September 7, 2023, over 9,759,089 million rupees were recovered, while fines of more than 408.3 million rupees had been imposed on electricity thieves so far.



LARKANA: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Larkana, Syed Abdul Rahim Shirazi addresses to media persons during press conference held at his office in Larkana

Crackdown against illegal stockists, traders and distributors

Independent Report

KARACHI: Under the steadfast directives of Ms. Ismat Gul Khattak, Director General, Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA), the team of PSQCA cracked down against illegal stock of Non-License Products of Forvil Cosmetic Products.

The operation was prompted by complaints received by the Economic Journalist Forum, highlighting concerns about the quality of Forvil Cosmetics Products in the market. The Team was headship by Mr. Sajid Mian Bhutto Dy. Director (CAK), PSQCA. The crackdown launched on directions of Director, Conformity Assessment (South Zone), PSQCA Karachi against illegal stockists/distributors/traders. The Inspectors of the Authority targeted and investigated several stockists, distributors, and traders, seizing substantial quantities of Forvil

products in which 1: M/s. M.K. Enterprises, North Nazimabad, Karachi, and found substantial stock of un-license different brands Bio Amla Shampoo, Bio Amla Schet, Prima Hair Color (Black & Brown), Bio 7 Day Cream, Bio Nikhar Cream Jar and Bio Nikhar Tube stocks and seized at the spot. During the crackdown M/s. 3B Traders, Chanti Line, Karachi, found to keep the substantial stock of Bio Amla Shampoo and Bio SD Shampoo stocks and seized at the spot.

M/s. Qadri Traders, Main Joria Bazar, Karachi found to keep the substantial stock of Seven Day Cream, Bio Amla Shampoo and Bio Amla Shampoo Sachet stocks and seized at the spot. M/s. A.A. Traders, Medicine Market, Karachi also found to keep the substantial stock of Bio Amla Shampoo and Bio Amla Shampoo Sachet stocks and seized at the spot.

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.

Bullet riddled body of youth found

KARACHI (INP): Bullet riddled body of a youth was found from garbage dump near Al-Asif Square Punjab Adda in Karachi, police said on Monday.

According to details, body of a youth stated to be aged between 18 to 30 years was found from Kachra Kundi at Super Highway.

Police said that the deceased was shot dead from close range and later body was dumped in garbage.

The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case into the incident started an investigation.

'Lyari gang war operative' arrested in police encounter

KARACHI (INP): A culprit affiliated with the Lyari gang war arrested after an encounter with police in the early hours of Monday in the vicinity of Kalri police station.

The Kalri police officials revealed that the arrested accused identified as Farhad Ahmed - an operative of the Lyari gang war's Badshah group - is allegedly involved in several criminal activities including target killing, kidnapping, and extortion.

Upon receiving four complaints of extortion, Kalri police officials took action and arrested the key suspect accused of criminal activities in the metropolis. The police further revealed that the alleged gang war operative was using a vehicle with a 'fake' govt number plate for kidnapping while writing several extortion letters to the traders.

Last year in June, the superhighway police claimed to apprehended another key member of the 'Lyari gang war'.

According to details, another member of the Lyari gang war, identified as Fahim, also known as Bahari has been arrested, by the Site Super Highway Police. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Zubair Nazir stated that a hand grenade was also recovered from the possession of the suspect Fahim Bahari. He further added that the culprit was involved in serious crimes and had extorted money from several businessmen on behalf of the Lyari gang war.

Indian troops martyred 120 Kashmiris in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred 120 innocent Kashmiris including four women and as many boys during the year 2023 in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). According to a report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service (KMS), today, 41 of the martyrs were killed in fake encounters and custody. The Indian police also killed one

Hindu in custody in Jaurian police station in IIOJK and another Hindu was killed by Indian troops in Showara Khour Akhnoor area of Jammu district.

The report said, the killings by the troops, paramilitary and police personnel rendered 18 women widowed and 58 children orphaned while 7 women were molested, abused or disgraced by the Indian forces during the year.

728 polling stations to be established in Ghotki district

By Tanveer Ahmad Soomro

MIRPUR MATHELO: Preparations for General elections in Ghotki district, 728 polling stations will be established, 910,000 people will have the opportunity to exercise their right to vote, DHO has been ordered to prepare a health emergency plan. Decision to send a report to the Election Commission against the employees who did not join the training session.

According to the details, an important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner/District Returning Officer Ghotki Agha Sher Zaman in the committee room of his office to review the arrangements related to the general elections. In which SSP Anwar Khetran and District Election Commissioner Parvez Ahmed Kalhor, returning officers of two national and four provincial constituencies, including District Monitoring Officer and officers of related departments participated. On this occasion,



Deputy Commissioner/DRO Ghotki said that during the general elections, 728 polling stations will be set up for 9,10,662 voters in the district, in which 200 will be reserved for men and 200 for women, while 328 will be common. Similarly, 2620 booths will be established, of which 1381 will be for men and 1339 for women.

He said that during the general elections, a total of 9,316 employees including 728 presiding officers, 5240 assistant presiding officers, and 2620 presiding officers will perform their duties. pay. On this occasion, he directed the DHO and said that a health emergency plan should be prepared in connection with the general elections, all the ambulances should be operational and any kind of negligence in this regard will not be acceptable.



NAUNDERO: View of foggy weather on early morning on the arrival of winter season, captured over the horizon of Naundero

Int'l institutions double minded over post-election situation: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that international financial institutions were double minded what may happen after the election as the newly-elected administration might undo the reforms.

Talking to businessmen community on Monday, he said that the new government will be under pressure to reverse reforms and make popular decisions, which will push away multinational financial organizations.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that international organizations also want timely elections in Pakistan and are also afraid of the post-election situation as the government formed as a result of the election can stop the process of reforms to increase its popularity.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said

that the concerns and reservations of the international organizations that are playing a major role in saving the country from bankruptcy must be addressed.

He said that there was no option other than accepting the dictates of international organizations to save the country from default. Problems will increase for the country's economy if the reforms are reversed, and foreign investors will also stop planning to invest in Pakistan.

The business leader noted that some international organizations believe that the benefit-seeking elements have become active even before the elections, and they are making efforts for subsidies, tax exemptions, various types of packages, etc.

These influential classes will resist an increase in the tax base and pile up unnecessary imports into the country, widening the current account deficit and making the economy lean again for personal gains.

KU to facilitate students thru SAF

KARACHI (APP): The University of Karachi is facilitating students who have secured their admissions but cannot pay the admission fee due to financial difficulties with the Students' Admission Fund.

The KU initiated the SAF project during the COVID-19 pandemic and since then the University of Karachi has been facilitating such students.

The in-charge KU Directorate of Admissions Dr Saima Akhtar said that such students can get/submit the form from the SAF Counter till January 04, 2024.

She mentioned that the SAF Counter is established in the campus gymnasium hall and would remain open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. According to her, students who want to avail of the Students Admission Fund should submit the income certificate of the father/guardian, other relevant documents including a photocopy of the computer national identity card of the student as well as the father/guardian CNIC, form B along with the online admission form and directed them to attach photocopy and last month's utility bills including electricity, gas, water, telephone, and tenancy agreements if any. She said that the SAF was created on the special directives of the KU Vice Chancellor.

Police crackdown against aerial firing on new year's eve, arrest 91 in raids

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Police, acting upon directives from Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh Riffat Mukhtar Raja conducted a crackdown in the various districts against the accused involved in aerial firing during New Year celebrations. This initiative resulted in the registration of 85 cases and the arrest of 91 individuals, according to a spokesman for Sindh Police on Monday.

Among the seized items were 57 pistols, 7 rifles, 4 repeaters, 2 MP5s,

1 shotgun, 1 SMG, 489 rounds, 12 empty rounds, and firecrackers.

Breakdown by districts: Karachi South conducted 13 cases and 13 arrests, East with 26 cases and 32 arrests, West with 34 cases and 32 arrests, Hyderabad with 4 cases and 4 arrests, Shaheed Benazirabad with 3 cases and 3 arrests, Mirpurkhas with 2 cases and 2 arrests, and Larkana with 3 cases and 5 arrests. Additional 16 individuals were detained on New Year's Eve, as per the report.

SRB tax collection registers 35% growth in first half of FY 2023-24

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) collected taxes amounting to Rs 108.6 billion from July 23 to December 2023 depicting 35% growth over the corresponding period of the previous year.

According to a statement issued here on Monday, tax collection by the Sindh Revenue Board in the first six months of the financial year 2022-23 remained at Rs 80.2 billion.

During December 2023, SRB made a record revenue collection of Rs 21.3 billion as compared to Rs 17.5 billion collected during December 2022, depicting a growth of 22%,

it said.

The success in achieving the phenomenal revenue growth during the period under review was attributed to the continued trust and cooperation of SRB taxpayers, the continuous support by the government of Sindh and the relentless efforts of SRB officers and staff, said a SRB spokesperson.

Sindh Revenue Board is focused on achieving the assigned revenue target of Rs 235 billion for the current financial year 2023-24 despite all the adverse factors affecting the national economy, he added.