

Independent

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Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan maintains: Interim Govt ensured holding of peaceful elections, defended rights of province at every forum

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki has stated that the interim provincial government not only ensured holding of general elections in extraordinary circumstances of the province but also defended its rights at every forum.

He said provision of healthcare, education and other basic facilities to the people and above all establishment of law and order in the province was no less than a challenge.

The caretaker Chief Minister also said that the interim govern-

ment played key role for resolving the public issues besides executing pending development projects.

Mr. Domki was addressing the gathering of dinner reception hosted for the administrative secretaries and other high ups here on Friday.

The caretaker Chief Minister praised the co-operation of senior and hard working officers in resolving the public issues besides conducting the general elections in the province in peaceful manner.

He referred different projects completed in short span of time of caretaker set up.

He said that we

completed certain collective nature projects in short span of time which otherwise were pending in the province.

He said that we did our best to provide maximum relief to the people every possibly by improving service delivery system.

He stressed that we have to think better for the province and set our direction afresh.

The senior bureaucrat Dostain Jamaldini on the occasion appreciated the performance of interim provincial government under leadership of the Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Domki.



QUETTA: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki photographed with Senior Officers, Secretaries of Provincial Government and Inspector General of Police after a dinner hosted in their honour

Kartarpur Corridor symbol of peace, Sikh Yatrees always welcome in Pakistan: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said the Kartarpur Corridor was a symbol of peace and Pakistan always welcomed Sikh Yatrees to visit their sacred places, extending them all possible facilities.

During his visit to Kartarpur Corridor in Narowal, the president said that Pakistan, through the corridor, had conveyed a message to the world, expressing its desire for peace.

He said such additional steps of inter-religious harmony would eventually

promote peace and stability in the region.

"Sikhism has always taught peace and unity, bringing people together", President Alvi said adding Pakistan's initiatives for the convenience of Sikh pilgrims, were commendable.

On the occasion, Chief Executive Officer of the Project Management Unit briefed the president on the measures taken to facilitate Sikh pilgrims in Kartarpur Sahib.

President Alvi was informed about the Sikh religion and the history of Kartarpur Sahib.

Dr. Amir Muhammad Jozgezi meets Zubair Jamali: Performance of LEAs lauded for provision of peaceful environment during elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi has appreciated the



performance of law enforcement agencies for providing peaceful environment to the voters during general elections in the province. Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi was speaking to the caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali during a meeting on Friday. The caretaker Minister for Health on the occasion congratulated the caretaker Minister for Home and his whole team on peaceful holding of the elections in Balochistan.

Meanwhile, Mir Zubair Jamali apprised Dr. Jozgezi about different steps taken for public welfare.

During the course of meeting, different administrative matters and situation of law and order were also discussed.

Kiran Haider, Akhtar Bibi, Izbal Zehri and Aliya Kamran elected as MNAs on seats reserved for women

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) got two seats reserved for women in National Assembly from Balochistan.

Similarly, Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) secured one seat each reserved for women in the National Assembly from the province, as per the notification issued here by the

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday. According to the ECP's notification, PML-N's Ms. Kiran Haider and Akhtar Bibi were declared winner on the seats reserved for women in the National Assembly.

Similarly, PPP's Izbal Zehri and JUI-F's Ms. Aliya Kamran were also elected as the members of National Assembly from Balochistan province.



NAROWAL: President Dr. Arif Alvi being briefed about the Kartarpur Corridor.

BAP, NP & ANP obtain one reserved seat each: PML-N, PPP secure four each, JUI-F gets two reserved seats in Balochistan Assembly

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) secured four each reserved seats of women and minorities in Balochistan's provincial assembly.

Similarly, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-F (JUI-F) obtained three reserved seats while Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), National Party and Awami National Party (ANP) got one each reserved seats for women in the provincial assembly.

According to the notification of the reserved seats in Balochistan Assembly issued by the Election Commission of Pakistan on Friday, the PML-N's Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Hadia Nawaz and Rubaba Khan Buledi were elected as members of the provincial assembly on the seats reserved for women in the provincial assembly.

While on the other hand, as far seats reserved for minorities, PML-N, PPP and JUI secured one seat each.

The PML-N's Patrick Sant Maseeh, PPP's Sanjay Kumar and JUI's Ravi Pahuja were declared successful on the seats reserved for minorities in the provincial assembly.

It may be mentioned

here that PML-N and PPP had secured 10 general seats each in the Balochistan Assembly. However, their total strength reaches 13 and 12 after five more members-elect joined the two parties respectively. Three members-elect joined PPP while two joined PML-N increasing the tally of members to 13 each.

JUI-F's nine candidates were elected members of provincial assembly in the February 8 elections. BAP, NP and ANP secured four, three and two general seats in the elections respectively.

One each candidate of BNP-Awami, BNP-Mengal, Jama'at-e-Islami and Haq Do Tehreek had also won the general elections from their respective constituencies.

Results of three seats of the provincial assembly including PB-7, PB-14 and PB-21 have been postponed / stayed, stated in the notification of ECP.

Earlier, the PA session started two hours behind its scheduled time of 10 am. Punjab Assembly Secretary Amer Habib, on the directions of the Chair, announced the Panel of Chairman comprising MPAs Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, Syed Ali Haider Gilani, Saima Kanwal and Raheela Naeem. The Secretary also announced

the announced a schedule of the election to the office of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker PA.

According to the schedule, the nomination papers for the Speaker and Deputy Speaker may be submitted by 5 pm on Friday (today). The scrutiny of the nomination papers for the Speaker will be held at 5.10 pm while scrutiny of the Deputy Speaker's nomination papers will be at 5.20 pm. The election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be held on February 24, 2024 (Saturday) through secret ballot in the assembly chambers.

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The minister said these remarks during his visit to the Press Gallery of the Parliament House.

He also held one-on-one meetings with the journalists in the press gallery.

The minister said journalists were a mirror for the society who inform the public about the facts.

Solangi said the caretaker government had taken steps to promote freedom of expression in the country, adding

the caretaker government had fulfilled its responsibilities under the constitution and law by holding free, fair and transparent elections in the country.

The journalists in the press gallery thanked Murtaza Solangi for visiting the press gallery.

BAP spokesperson Senator Kohda Babar Friday informed media persons that a delegation of BAP had met PM-nominated Mian Shehbaz Sharif in Lahore.

BAP president Nawabzada Khalid Magsi led the delegation that also included Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani and others. He said formation of government and other issues were discussed during the meeting adding BAP leadership had decided to support PML-N at the Center and in Balochistan.

Similarly, the PPP's Ms. Ghazala Gola, Mina Majeed and Shahnaz Umrani were elected as the members of provincial assembly on the reserved seats for women while JUI-F's Ms. Shahida Rauf and Ms. Safia were also elected as the members of provincial assembly on the reserved seats for women.

Ms. Farah Azeem Shah of BAP, Ms. Umme Kalsoom and ANP's Salma Bibi were also elected as the members of provincial assembly on the seats reserved for women in the provincial assembly.

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To ensure macroeconomic stability IMF hints at working with newly elected government of Pakistan

Says during the tenure of the interim government, authorities "maintained economic stability"

ISLAMABAD (INP): A day after the PTI said founder Imran Khan would write to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) urging it to call for an independent audit of the Feb 8 general elections, the Fund stated that it is looking forward to engaging with the new government on policies to ensure "macroeconomic stability and prosperity for all of Pakistan's citizens".

On Thursday, PTI's Senator Ali Zafar had told reporters that a letter would be sent from Imran to the international lender. He said the IMF, the European Union and other

organisations had a charter that stated that good governance was needed for working in the country or giving a loan. "The most important condition for good governance is democracy," he said, adding that the people's mandate was stolen "in the darkness of the night" during the Feb 8 polls. He said that if elections were not free and fair, any organisation would avoid giving a "loan" to such a country. "Because that loan will further burden the people," he said. He said the PTI wanted an audit of the election results and that condition would be put in front of the IMF.



QUETTA: Director Audit Local Government Balochistan Syed Naseebullah presenting Audit Report to Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Punjab MPAs take oath in inaugural session of assembly

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Assembly Speaker Muhammad Sibtain Khan administered oath to the newly-elected members of the Punjab Assembly (PA) during the 42nd session at the assembly chambers here on Friday.

The speaker chaired the session and felicitated the 315 members provincial assembly (MPAs) on taking oath of their. He expressed the hope that they will discharge their duties to the aspirations of the masses.

Earlier, the PA session started two hours behind its scheduled time of 10 am. Punjab Assembly Secretary Amer Habib, on the directions of the Chair, announced the Panel of Chairman comprising MPAs Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, Syed Ali Haider Gilani, Saima Kanwal and Raheela Naeem. The Secretary also announced



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Pakistan declares Israeli actions in Gaza against int'l laws, human rights

Law Minister calls Israeli occupation of West Bank, East Jerusalem illegal; Pakistan supports two-state solution; Terms Israel settlement policy making ending its prolonged occupation more difficult

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan on Friday joined over 50 countries in advancing its argument in the historic proceedings being conducted by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague to rule on the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel.

The case was triggered by a request from the UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 30, 2022, when a majority of members voted to seek the court's opinion on the legal consequences of the continuing Israeli occupation of Palestine. Arab countries, Russia, and China voted in favour of the move, while Israel, the US, Germany, and 24 others voted against it.

The ruling would take several weeks and would not be binding, but many observers believe that if the ICJ declares the occupation

illegal, that would certainly put pressure on Tel Aviv. The proceedings kicked off on February 19 and would continue until February 26.

As many as 52 countries have been presenting their arguments before the 15-member ICJ. Israel declined to give oral arguments, while the US and UK were the only countries so far that came out in open support for the Jewish state.

Pakistan was represented by its Law Minister Ahmed Irfan Aslam, who reiterated the country's stance, "Pakistan presented its oral statement before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague today in the context of the ongoing hearing on the Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

15th Pakistan Pediatric Conference begins in Quetta: Provision of basic healthcare facilities at doorstep of people big challenge, says Governor

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that it is a big challenge for the government to provide basic healthcare facilities to the people at their doorstep mainly due to scattered population in the province.

The Governor regretfully pointed out that our innocent children are seen while working at different shops, hotels, garages and garbage dumps. He said that the illiterate people who are in the trap of poverty can't do anything for education and treatment of their children. Mr. Kakar also noted with great concern that hundreds of people die of the treatable diseases such as malaria, hepatitis, polio and tuberculosis every year in the

province in the present developed era.

Then it is really difficult task for us to speak on the modern topic of neurology.

The Governor expressed these views while addressing the inaugural session of the 15th Pakistan Pediatric Conference held here at a local hotel on Friday.

The caretaker Provincial Minister for Health, Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jozgezi, President Pediatric Neurology, Professor Dr. Shahnaz Ibraheem, Chairman Organizing Committee, Professor Dr. Habibullah Babar, Professor Dr. Jamal Raza, Dr. Attaullah Bizenjo and Dr. Tipu Sultan were present on the occasion.

JCP recommends Justice Afghan's elevation to SC, Justice Shahzad as LHC CJ

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) has recommended the elevation of Balochistan High Court (BHC) Chief Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan to the Supreme Court and appointment of Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad

Khan as chief justice of the Lahore High Court (LHC). Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa chaired the JCP meeting which was held in Islamabad on Friday.

Both the recommendations were made with the consensus of the JCP members.

As far as performance is concerned, Sindh Govt should have to compete with Federal and other provincial governments, Bilawal maintained. He said Agha Siraj Durrani performed well as Speaker Sindh Assembly and now we have decided to get our young members to lead the provincial legislature.

Bilawal said oath-taking of Sindh Assembly members will be held tomorrow (Saturday) and the process for the formation of the new elected government will be started.

He urged the nominated CM Murad Ali Shah to show better performance than the previous tenure and strict actions should be taken against corruption.

Murad Ali Shah nominated as Sindh CM

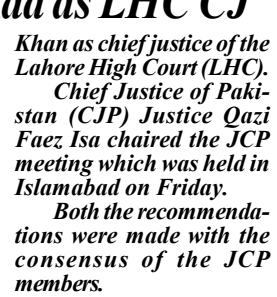
KARACHI (APP): Pakistan People's Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday formally announced that Syed Murad Ali Shah will be the next Chief Minister Sindh while Syed Awais Shah and Naveed Anthony will be the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker of Sindh Assembly. Addressing PPP Sindh's Parliamentary party meeting here at Bilawal House, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said the provincial government will have to show better performance and those educational institutions (Schools) destroyed during 2022 floods should be rehabilitated.

As far as performance is concerned, Sindh Govt should have to compete with Federal and other provincial governments, Bilawal maintained. He said Agha Siraj Durrani performed well as Speaker Sindh Assembly and now we have decided to get our young members to lead the provincial legislature.

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Members of Pakistan Youth Ittehad are holding protest demonstration against Israeli cruel and inhumane acts and express unity with the innocent people of Palestine, at Quetta press club.



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Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

What next for PTI?

The incoming government has been carved up. With the major offices apportioned between the PML-N and PPP, the political hyenas will also be thrown a few bones.

One of them wants a few ministries; the other whatever morsel the new government can still spare. The incoming minority government will need as many lawmakers as it can afford by its side. Within days, this new political alliance will take control. On the other hand, the opposition, led by the PTI, has yet to find its feet. Since far exceeding expectations in the Feb 8 elections, it has not seemed too sure about what to do with its numbers. Though its government in KP is secure, it had also made claims on both Islamabad and Punjab. It has yet to show how it ever planned on forming the governments there after the ECP's results put it well short of a simple majority in both assemblies.

The PTI could go on making a 'moral' claim on the two assemblies, but that is not how executive power is secured. In the interim, its only option was to secure enough votes for its candidates from other parties. It chose not to. Further, though it merged with the Sunni Ittehad Council, that hardly improved its prospects. It is good for the party that, barring a handful, it managed to keep most of its elected lawmakers, and the merger will prevent any further defections; however, it seems unlikely it will get a share of reserved seats despite this move.

Therefore, barring a very significant revision in the ECP's announced results, the party seems destined to sit on the opposition benches. Is it prepared to do so? It needs strong leaders to guide the party in the assemblies and organise an effective opposition. Most of its old guard is gone, and its leader is in jail.

Perhaps the party really had not expected to be handed such a large mandate — this may explain the disarray within its ranks since the results. Perhaps it never intended to form the government, knowing well the difficult conditions in which it would be taking over; consider that neither did the PML-N and PPP seem too enthusiastic about their decision, till they were 'convinced' by higher powers. However, even the opposition needs coherent strategies if it wants to assert itself strongly. Even with the number of seats the PTI officially has, it remains in a good position to make things quite difficult for the PML-N, especially when the PPP's support for the government is subject to terms and conditions. Will it be able to capitalise, though? The opposition's success will hinge on a leadership that is reasonable and able to talk to other parties. Will the PTI be able to overcome itself?

Seeking IMF's help; PTI's Misguided Move

By Qamar Bashir

Former Press Secretary to the President; Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France; Former MD, SRBC



The decision by the former PTI chairman to petition the IMF for an electoral audit of disputed election results struck many, including myself and various opinion leaders, as a startling and misguided move. This request, especially coming from a party with a strong legal cadre, seemed out of place given the IMF's well-defined mandate. The IMF focuses on international monetary stability and economic support, dealing with financial assistance, economic stability, and growth through policy reforms.

It does not involve itself in a nation's electoral matters or judicial grievances, which are sovereign issues. The appeal to the IMF for electoral scrutiny not only deviates from its established role but also risks diminishing our standing by misunderstanding the scope of international institutions.

The decision by PTI's leadership to seek IMF intervention in electoral matters might reflect a profound mistrust in national institutions. This disillusionment could stem from various grievances: the establishment's overt antagonism, the Elec-

tion Commission's invalidation of PTI's internal elections and subsequent stripping of its election symbol, which critically weakened the party's standing. Additionally, the overwhelming legal challenges faced by the PTI chairman, with over 200 cases lodged against him, and a perceived judicial ineffectiveness, where court orders seem disregarded and the only recourse for arrested and humiliated PTI members appears to be public disavowal of their allegiance, further exacerbate this trust deficit.

The erosion of trust in the judiciary was compounded when the Supreme Court confirmed the Election Commission's decision to strip PTI of its election symbol. This sentiment deepened with a landmark ruling that invalidated Imran Khan's marriage to Bushra Bibi, a decision unprecedented in the context of Islamic jurisprudence. Successive convictions of Imran Khan in high-profile cases, such as the Cypher, Toshakhana, and the legality of his marriage, further alienated PTI supporters, especially as numerous other legal challenges loom on the horizon.

The disillusionment with the country's institutions extended to the pre-election phase, where PTI faced considerable obstacles in organizing public gatherings. When these events did proceed, media coverage was often suppressed. The shift to digital campaigning saw further challenges, with internet and mobile services being disrupted or throttled. This not only targeted PTI but also impacted businesses, trade, and the broader populace, exacerbating the already compromised reputation of the nation.

Some may argue that involving an international entity like the IMF could introduce transparency and impartiality into the audit process, addressing the trust deficit with domestic institutions. This approach might not only ensure fairer electoral practices but also spotlight alleged irregularities on a global stage, fostering international advocacy for democratic integrity in Pakistan. Conversely, this strategy might displease even some PTI supporters who favor internal resolution of issues, fearing it could fragment the party's unity.

They contend that despite the flaws of national institutions, struggles should remain within the constitutional and legal boundaries, advocating for a domestic, democratic push for reform without foreign intervention or influence on sovereign matters. Critics argue that while such actions might not directly harm the establishment, judiciary, or government officials who would continue to receive

their salaries, the real brunt of economic fallout from a halted IMF negotiation, prompted by PTI's request, would be borne by the common people. This could exacerbate unemployment and inflation, already at record highs, pushing millions more into poverty. They suggest learning from past experiences, like the repercussions of alleged foreign involvement in regime change, which cost PTI its government and led to legal troubles for its members. Instead of risking further isolation and legal action by engaging with international bodies like the IMF in domestic political disputes, they advocate for a more cautious approach that avoids giving the government and establishment reasons to target PTI and its leadership.

Critics might argue that soliciting foreign intervention in political and electoral issues could be perceived as undermining national sovereignty, potentially fueling nationalist and anti-PTI sentiment. Such a move risks politically isolating the PTI both within Pakistan and on the international stage, as it could be viewed as an excessive measure or a misuse of international institutions for domestic political conflicts.

This strategy could arm opponents with grounds to accuse PTI of treason, leading to possible le-

gal actions against its leaders, a ban on the party, and the nullification of its electoral achievements in 2024. Furthermore, there's concern that this approach could prompt a coordinated media and civil society backlash against PTI, labeling the act as unpatriotic and anti-state.

Prime time TV shows might be pressured to denounce PTI's actions, while ad campaigns across traditional and social media could further condemn the party. Engagement of civil society groups to criticize PTI could lead to a significant loss of the political capital the party gained following its strong performance in the 2024 elections, especially if media outlets that had previously shifted their support towards PTI due to perceived election rigging and the treatment of its members reverse their stance.

Media analysts might critique PTI for its tendency to repeat past mistakes without considering the broader implications for national sovereignty and dignity. Despite PTI's professed commitment to upholding the country's honor, its actions, perceived as impulsive, often put its narrative and principles at risk.

This pattern of behavior, as observed by commentators, suggests a cycle where lessons from previous setbacks are

not fully absorbed or integrated into future strategies, challenging the party's ability to maintain its narrative consistency and political credibility.

Now that the arrow has been fired, and damage has been done, the PTI should adopt a comprehensive and sustained strategy to damage control.

They should give positive spin to this blunder by framing PTI's decision to internationalize the issue of electoral integrity in Pakistan to the party's commitment to transparency and fair play, highlighting how this unprecedented step could pave the way for more accountable electoral processes.

The narrative could focus on the need for impartial oversight in the face of domestic challenges and frame the move as a proactive approach to safeguarding democracy. This spin would portray PTI as a forward-thinking party willing to explore all avenues to ensure the sanctity of the electoral process, thus aligning its actions with global best practices for democratic governance.

Open dialogue, transparency in their actions, and a unified front from leadership at all levels will be crucial in navigating criticism and reinforcing the party's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's democratic processes.

Commerce News

Punjab Governor says: Caretaker Punjab govt taken commendable steps for the welfare of the people

Independent Report
LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister, Ibrahim Hasan Murad paid a farewell call on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House Lahore. During the meeting, the provincial minister briefed the Governor Punjab in detail about the measures taken to improve the performance of the departments of Local Government, Transport, Livestock and Mines as the caretaker provincial minister.

Caretaker Punjab government has taken commendable steps for the welfare of the people under the leadership of caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, in a short period of time. He said that the government formation phase has started, it is hoped that the newly elected government will bring more improvement and stability in the country. He further said that political stability is indispensable for economic stability in the country.

prosperity of the country and the nation while keeping their personal interest aside.

Caretaker Provincial Minister Ibrahim Hasan Murad said that he did not take privileges as a Caretaker Provincial Minister. He said and added that he and the Caretaker Cabinet tried hard to serve the people in a short period of time and bring improvements in the system.

He said that as a provincial minister, he made various reforms in his respective departments, which increased the revenue of the departments.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that the

He said that all political parties should play a positive role for the development and



LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Sardar Muhammad Sibtain Khan talking with media persons during first session of Punjab Assembly in the Provincial Capital.

ANF recovers 331 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover over 331 kg of drugs and arrested 11 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday. He informed that 10.5 kg heroin was recovered from a parcel being sent to the UK at Cargo Office Islamabad while an accused was also arrested.

Courier Office. 68 Ice-filled capsules were recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Islamabad Airport. 1.8 kg hashish was recovered from a Doha-bound passenger, arrested at Peshawar Airport. 330 grams of cocaine was recovered from a parcel sent from Nigeria at Lahore Airport.

255 kg opium was recovered from the Galikank Mustang area and 29 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects arrested from M-Sri Lanka at the Lahore

World Bank delegation visits GCU

LAHORE (APP): A delegation from the World Bank, led by Senior Economist Ms. Inga Afanasieva and Education Specialist Ms. Tashmina Rahman, visited the GC University Lahore along with the Higher Education Development Project (HEDP) team led by Project Director Dr. Mahmood Ul Hassan Butt.

The delegation engaged in discussions with Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Adnan Ahmad and university officials, including Prof. Dr. Hamid Mukhtar, Director of the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC), Dr. Fouzia Shahin, Director of Academic Planning & External Linkages (AP&EL). The World Bank and HEDP teams were briefed about the operations of GCU's administrative and academic departments, the implementation of the revised Undergraduate Education Policy (UEP), including student internship support mechanisms, and the role of HEDP in promoting academic reforms.



NAROWAL: President Dr Arif Alvi visiting different sections of the Kartarpur Corridor.

Federal Ombudsman for Insurance organizes national conference

LAHORE (APP): The Federal Ombudsman for Insurance organized a two-day 4th annual national conference at its regional office, focusing on reviewing the department's performance over the previous and current years.

The conference also included a briefing on the redressal of public complaints related to insurance companies. The event was attended by all regional heads of the

DIG for ensuring foolproof security on Shab-e-Barat

LARKANA (APP): DIG Larkana Aftab Nasir has put the Larkana police range on high alert while directing all the SSPs to ensure safe security on the night of Shab-e-Barat.

The police spokesman informed here on Friday that the SSPs had been directed to deploy policemen at all the mosques, imambargahs, shrines and graveyards. He added that the DIG had emphasized taking strict action against aerial firing and the sale as well as the use of fireworks.

PDC celebrates white coat ceremony

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Peshawar Dental College (PDC) hosted its prestigious White Coat Ceremony, a significant event attended by esteemed figures in the medical field, dedicated faculty members, enthusiastic students, and proud parents.

audience, Prof. Dr. Hafeez ur Rahman extended heartfelt congratulations to the students, commending their achievement in gaining admission to the esteemed dental profession. He emphasized the importance of cultivating a positive attitude of gratitude, professional competence, ethical values, and a profound love for learning while maintaining respect for teachers.

The event featured key personalities, including CEO Dr. Ifthikhar Husam, Prof. Dr. Hafeez ur Rahman, Dean, PMC, Prof. Dr. Saeed Anwar Executive Director, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Aman Khan, Principal, PMC, and Prof. Dr. Shamim Akhtar, Principal, PDC. Dr. Saba Siraj skillfully managed the proceedings as the stage secretary. Addressing the

Prof. Dr. Shamim Akhtar highlighted PDC's commitment to providing state-of-the-art facilities and attitudinal training to produce well-mannered doctors. The ceremony also witnessed Dr. Nashia Mottahir administering the oath to the budding dentists.



LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Minister, Ibrahim Hasan Murad paid a farewell call on Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at Governor House.

Call for showcasing KP's historical significance through digital media

PESHAWAR (APP): Pass. Bakhtzada Khan, senior research officer, archeology department told APP on Friday that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa carried one of the richest histories in the subcontinent where followers of almost all religions had come and stayed for the accomplishment of their political, trade and business objectives.

Resultantly, different religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Christianity gained roots for many years in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa before Islam. He said the discovery

of human remains in Soan Valley in Pakistani Punjab province as evidence of the stones and bones' tools dating from around (2 million to 90,000 years before present) of the Early Paleolithic period had signified that people were living here. "Sangaro cave's excavations at village Mian Khan in Mardan district conducted by renowned archeologists Ahmad Hasan Dhani and Farid Khan in 1963 had revealed the presence of people's remains in the Middle Paleolithic period (9,000 to 27,000 years before present) in KP."

These people were living in stones-made

caves, who fulfilled their food's needs mostly from hunting of birds and animals. The discoveries of primitive rocks, bones and hunting tools dating back of Mesolithic or Middle Stone Age (10,000 to 8,600 years before present) during excavations at Khanpur in Haripur district and Sangaro Cave signified presence of humans' life in Swat and Dir where every stone speaks about their life style, culture, livelihood and civilizations, he informed. It was found that people started making clay and stones made pots, crockery and others related

utensils for kitchen during Neolithic period or commonly known as new stone-age dating back some 8,000 years before as evident from excavations of historic Mehar Gharh in Balochistan of the Indus Civilization, Rehman Dheri Di Khan and Sheri Khan Tarkai Swabi.

These strong evidence had magnified that people were living in the stone and mud houses in those primordial era.

The graves of Aryans invaders were also discovered at Aligram Swat, Sangota Chitral and Timergara Dir Lower dating back of the Dark Ages period of around 2,000BC.

Commerce Minister's visit to Saudia strengthens bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): The caretaker Federal Minister for Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz led a delegation to Saudi Arabia from February 21-22 to strengthen the robust bilateral relationship between the two countries and to explore new opportunities for collaboration and economic growth.

According to a press statement issued by the Ministry of Commerce here Friday, the delegation members included Punjab Investment Minister, S.M. Tanveer and other senior officials from the Ministries of Commerce, Interior, Board of Investment, and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

During the visit, the Minister held bilateral

meetings with the Minister of Interior, Prince Abdul Aziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, the Minister of Commerce, Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Kassabi, and the Minister of Investment, Eng. Khalid bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih.

He also met Saudi Finance Minister, Mohammed Al-Jadaan and held a meeting with the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the statement said adding that Prince Mansour bin Muhammad bin Saad Al-Saud, hosted a dinner in honour of the Minister and his delegation at his residence in Dirriyah, Riyadh. During his bilateral engagements with the Ministers of Commerce and Investment, Dr. Gohar Ejaz was also

accompanied by members of the private sector delegation including Arif Habib (Arif Habib Group), Fawad Mukhtar (Fatima Fertilizers), Muhammad Ali Tabba (Lucky Group), Raza Jaffar (Global Sustainability Network), Shahid Soorty (Soorty Enterprises), Bashir Jan Muhammad (Dalda Foods Ltd.), Asim Siddiqui (Pakistan Intermodal Limited), Shahbaz Malik (Hilton Pharma), and Anwar Ghani (Ghani Glass).

Saudi Commerce Minister, Dr. Majid Al-Kassabi underscored the importance of strengthening business and trade relations between the two countries and appreciated the efforts of Dr. Ejaz for bringing an important business delegation to Riyadh.



SIALKOT: A group photo of H. E. Mr. Tapas Adhikari (Ambassador of Nepal) to Pakistan and President SCCI Abdul Ghafoor Malik with exporters at Chamber of Commerce.

Ambassador says: Nepal keen to promote trade ties with Pakistan

SIALKOT (APP): Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan Tapas Adhikari has urged the Sialkot exporters to come forward and explore the untapped international trade markets of Nepal to promote the bilateral trade between both countries.

He stated this while addressing a meeting of Sialkot exporters held at Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Friday. President Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry Abdul Ghafoor Malik,

SCCI's Vice President (VP) Amer Majeed Sheikh and Sialkot business community were also present on this occasion.

Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan Tapas Adhikari pledged full support to ensure the easy access of Pakistan business community to international trade markets of Nepal.

The Ambassador appreciated the role of Sialkot in the Economic Development of the Country. He said that undoubtedly Sialkot is the

hub of manufacturing surgical goods, sports goods and different kind of items. He shared that on March 7-11, 2024 a Nepal Chamber Expo 2024 is going to be held in Nepal, and suggested that the business community of Sialkot should participate in that for B2B meetings.

Moreover, he also shared that on April 27, 2024 Nepal Investment Summit is planned in Nepal which will prove to be a great opportunity for investors from Pakistan.

Pakistan's cotton yarn exports to China surged by 46.7% in 2023

BEIJING (APP): In 2023, China's import of cotton yarn from Pakistan reached a record high of \$ 695,622,837, marking a significant surge of 46.7% during the year 2023, data from China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textile and Apparel (CCCT) showed.

Recently, the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA) released a report stating that due to the decline in production capacity has affected the demand for intermediates, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

As per CCCT, due to

the large price difference between domestic and foreign cotton yarns after the second quarter, the importers' order intentions continued to rise, resulting in the recent arrival of imported yarns, which pushed up the imports.

Among them, India, Pakistan and Uzbekistan increased their exports of cotton yarn to China by 243.2%, 351.1% and 867.1% respectively last December.

And for the whole year, cotton yarn from Pakistan accounts for 15.8% of China's cotton yarn imports.

Malik Sohail says: Govt to regularize salt trade, develop branding mechanism to sell item in Intl market

ISLAMABAD: The special focus being given by the government of Pakistan to regularize salt trade and develop a branding mechanism to sell the commodity in international market at

Meilander, VP Operation and Martyn Element. The meeting was attended by a large number of people from mineral and mining and other sector of Pakistan prominently Dr. Afshan Malik, Adviser to President FPCCI, Mr.



competitive price will definitely give a new impetus to the industry, this was stated by Malik Sohail, Chairman Coordination of FPCCI on behalf of President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh in a meeting with President and Chairman of Board of Directors of Miracle Salt Collective Inc. USA who visited FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad along with CEO of the company Mr. Robert Harrison and Mr. Tad Ballantyne, Vice President Global Financing, Mr. Jaffery

Arham Ikram Convener FPCCI Standing Committee, Mr. Mr. Shokat Masood, Mr. Johar Ali raki former Vice President FPCCI, Mr. Ahmed Khan President IIA, Mr. Shakeel Munir, Zahid Maqbool Former President ICCI, M. Arif But, Farukh Alvi, Syed Arieque Ahmed Gilani, Ghulam Nasir, Abdul Wahab Bezinjo and other. While highlighting the pivotal role of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).



LAHORE: Vendors arranging and displaying strawberry to attract the customers.

Unlocking Pakistan's digital future: Insights from Telenor Asia's Digital lives decoded study

ISLAMABAD (APP): Telenor Asia unveiled the findings of its second-year study of "Digital Lives Decoded," shedding light on the pivotal role of mobile devices in shaping daily life in Pakistan.

The study identified several key drivers behind mobile use, including forging healthy social connections, opening new opportunities, ensuring online safety, fostering skill development, and

promoting environmental consciousness, said a news release issued here on Friday. The first Digital Lives Decoded study in 2022 came at a time when Pakistan was emerging from a global pandemic and the pace of digital adoption accelerated. Building upon the foundation laid by its predecessor, Digital Lives Decoded 2023 offers a comprehensive analysis of mobile usage and its impact on key facets of daily life.

Call to solve issues of SME sector

FAISALABAD (APP): The SME sector is the growth engine of the national economy and problems of this sector it must be resolved on top priority basis, said Dr Sajjad Arshad, Acting President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI).

He along with Vice President Hajji Muhammad Aslam Bhalli, Mian Muhammad Tayyab and Hajji Muhammad Abid visited the Small Industrial Estate (SIE) on the special request of Mr. Sanaullah Niazi, Convener FCCI Standing Committee on SIE Nalka Kohala. Dr Sajjad appreciated the efforts of Mr. Sanaullah Niazi to resolve the long pending issues which were hampering the smooth functioning of the SIE. He said that the FCCI would take measures to resolve the issues. In this connection, a comprehensive feedback system has been introduced to remain in touch with departments concerned till the final disposal of the issues.

Jazz, EFU life introduce Takaful to broaden financial inclusion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, Pakistan's leading digital operator has collaborated with EFU Life Assurance Ltd., the nation's premier insurance company to introduce the industry's first Takaful (Shariah-complaint) offering for its subscribers.

Through this collaboration, Jazz subscribers can opt for low-cost Takaful products with unique benefits including a health wallet, cancer protection, and

coverage for female major medical illnesses, said a news release issued here on Friday. In addition, the customer's entire family will be able to utilize virtual healthcare benefits. Sharing his thoughts on the development, Kazim Mujtaba, Chief Commercial Officer at Jazz, said, "We are excited to partner with EFU Life to include a full suite of industry's first Shariah-complaint products within a single program.

Gold rates decrease by Rs 1,200 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold decreased by Rs 1,200 and was sold at Rs 214,100 on Friday compared to its sale at Rs 215,300 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 1,029 to Rs 183,556 from Rs 184,585 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 168,260 from Rs 169,203, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

International News

Pompeo says: West must return to imposing cost on Iran's 'malign activity' to restore Mideast stability

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Taking away Iran's ability to create instability in the Middle East was the driving force behind the 2020 Abraham Accords, and US policy needs to move back toward imposing a cost on Tehran's malign actions, former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on Thursday.

The accords were agreements signed by the UAE and Bahrain to normalize relations with Israel, brokered by then-US President Donald Trump. Sudan and Morocco also later agreed to establish ties with Israel.

Pompeo told the Future Investment Initiative Priority forum in Miami

that the process of formulation to signing the accords happened due to a "central thesis" held by all involved that Tehran was the "malign actor" in the region.

"You should know, I'm hopelessly biased as they're still trying to kill me. If you see me walking around with a security team, it's not because I enjoy it but because I still need it," he said. "I think that's telling. You can see (Iran's) hand in what happened in Gaza. They supported, funded and essentially facilitated the capacity for Hamas to carry out the barbaric attacks (on Israel) which took place on Oct. 7."

"Today, without the Iranian support you'd still

have shipping through the Red Sea, instead of transit having to move some other way because you've got missiles being launched into (the area) with relatively good accuracy. "Nearly all the instability that takes place in the Middle East is as a direct result of that regime in Iran. The United States had the lead in deterring them and we've lost that."

Pompeo praised Saudi Aramco for stabilizing oil markets following an attack claimed by the Iran-backed Houthis on its facilities in Abqaiq-Khuras in eastern Saudi Arabia, but pinpointed that attack as the beginning of the end of the US and the West being able to deter Tehran.



Palestinian men check whatever is left of the homes in a building hit by over-night Israeli air strikes in Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip.

UN agency for Palestinian refugees at 'breaking point': chief

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: New York: The UN agency for Palestinian refugees warned Thursday it has reached a critical juncture as it struggles to cope with the war in Gaza. "It is with profound regret that I must now inform you that UNRWA has reached a breaking point," chief Philippe Lazzarini said, as donors freeze funding. Israel exerts pressure to dismantle the agency and humanitarian needs soar.

"The Agency's ability to fulfill the mandate given through General Assembly resolution 302 is now seriously threatened," he said in a letter to the assembly.

That is the resolution under which the agency was founded in 1949, following the creation of Israel. UNRWA employs some 30,000 people working in

the occupied territories, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.

Several countries including the United States, Britain, Germany and Japan have suspended funding to UNRWA in response to Israeli allegations that some of its staff participated in the October 7 attack on Israel. In an interview published over the weekend, Lazzarini said \$438 million has been frozen the equivalent of more than half of expected funding for 2024. He said Israel was waging a concerted effort to destroy UNRWA. The UN fired the employees accused by Israel and has begun an internal probe of UNRWA. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has also tasked an independent panel with assessing whether UNRWA acts neutrally in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



Police move a makeshift barricade at the site of a protest as farmers march towards New Delhi to push for better crop prices promised to them in 2021, at Shambhu Barrier, the border between Punjab and Haryana states, India.

Von der Leyen: EU plans to unlock €137 billion for Poland

Monitoring Desk
Warsaw: The European Union is to release €137 billion of withheld funds from Poland due to rule of law concerns, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday.

Next week, the commission "will come forward with two decisions on European funds that are currently blocked for Poland," von der Leyen said at a press briefing in Warsaw. "These decisions will free up €137 billion for Poland."

Concerns about judicial reforms under Poland's previous nationalist government prompted the commission to withhold money from the EU budget that would normally have been spent in Poland.

But in October, the nationalist Law and Justice Party (PiS) was ousted by a centrist coalition led by former European Council President Donald Tusk, who has sought to undo the changes PiS made and restore Poland's EU funding.

Moon landing: US clinches first touchdown in 50 years

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: A spacecraft built and flown by Texas-based company Intuitive Machines landed near the moon's south pole on Thursday, the first U.S. touchdown on the lunar surface in more than half a century and the first ever achieved by the private sector.

NASA, with several research instruments aboard the vehicle, hailed the landing as a major achievement in its goal of sending a squad of commercially flown spacecraft on scientific scouting missions to the moon ahead of a planned return of astronauts there later this decade.

But initial communications problems following Thursday's landing raised questions about whether the vehicle may have been left impaired or obstructed in some way. The uncrewed six-legged robot lander, dubbed Odysseus, touched down at about 6:23 p.m. EST (2323 GMT).

EU imposes new sanctions on Russia

MOSCOW (Online): The European Union has adopted its 13th package of sanctions against Russia, the European Council said in a press release on Friday.

The measures targeting 106 individuals and 88 entities were introduced ahead of the second anniversary of the start of Russia's military operation against Ukraine, the document noted.

The new sanctions primarily target the military and defense sectors, along with associated individuals, as well as members of the judiciary.

The measures against the listed persons and entities include asset freezes and a travel ban. They also forbid EU citizens and companies from making funds available to them.

The new sanctions also restrict trade in dual-use goods as well as technologies and electronic components that could be used by Russia's military and industrial complex. Components for the development and production of unmanned aerial vehicles have also been added to the list of restricted items. Some of the sanctioned entities are located in third countries, such as India, China, and Türkiye, the document adds.

Top German adviser in China for high-level talks

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: A top adviser to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz is in China for talks focusing on the conflict in Ukraine and on bilateral ties.

Foreign and security policy adviser Jens Plötner told China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing that the talks would also be an opportunity to discuss the war in the Middle East, and the tensions in North Korea.

According to Plötner, the German government attaches "great importance" to its relationship with China and plans to further develop economic relations.

Ukraine, Denmark finalize long-term security agreement

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: President Volodymyr Zelensky and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen signed a 10-year agreement on security cooperation between Ukraine and Denmark on Feb. 23 in Lviv, Deputy Head of the Presidential Office Ihor Zhovkva said.

The U.K., Germany, and France have earlier signed similar deals to help Ukraine repel Russia's aggression based on a pledge made by the Group of Seven (G7) last July.

Denmark is the first non-G7 country to finalize the deal. Copenhagen announced already on Feb. 22 that it is signing the treaty with Kyiv. The deal, concluded on the eve of the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion, allocates 1.8 billion euros (\$1.95 billion) in Danish support for Ukraine in 2024.

Sweden has around 62,000 persons linked to criminal gangs, police say

S T O C K H O L M (Internews): About 62,000 persons are active in, or have connections to, criminal networks in Sweden, the police said on Friday, where the authorities have struggled for years to contain violence linked to organised crime. Deadly shootings have more than tripled over the past decade in this Nordic nation of 10 million people.

Immediate cease-fire in Gaza is imperative: Chinese envoy

UNITED NATIONS (INP): A Chinese envoy said that an immediate cease-fire in Gaza is imperative and that the essence of any Security Council action is to achieve an immediate cease-fire.

The U.S. veto of an Algerian-drafted resolution on Tuesday meant that the Security Council missed yet another opportunity to push for a cease-fire in Gaza.

The continuation of the conflict even for another day would cause even more civilian casualties and lead to a greater catastrophe.

An immediate cease-fire in Gaza is an urgent imperative to save innocent lives and to prevent a wider war, said Zhang Jun, China's permanent representative to the United Nations.

"An immediate cease-fire is the common wish voiced by the international community and the consensus of the Security Council's overwhelming majority," he told the Security Council.

China is aware that the United States has tabled its own draft resolution. China hopes that the United States will show a responsible attitude, respond positively to the international call and respect the established consensus among Security Council members, said Zhang.

"We need to point out that the essence of any action of this council is to achieve an immediate cease-fire."

Any message sent out via our action must be clear, unequivocal, unambiguous, and unmistakable, rather than prevaricate or beat about the bush," he said.

"At this point, the Council needs to demonstrate a strong resolve rather than negotiating skills only." The military offensive into Rafah must cease immediately, he said, according to XINHUA.

CPEC projects underway in Pakistan to help local economy

BEIJING (APP): A number of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects are making renewed progress as the CPEC, a flagship project under the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), enters its next phase, helping the country to alleviate energy shortages and empowering its economic growth. "Entering 2024, CPEC projects have achieved new progress," the Global Times reported. "The Karot hydro-power project, a 720 megawatt (MW) hydropower plant developed on the Jhelum River in Pakistan and the first ever large-scale hydropower project under the BRI, has generated a total of 3.1 billion kilowatt

hours of electricity in 2023," China Three Gorges Corporation, which is invested in and is leading construction of the project, announced on its website. In December, two China-donated projects, including a seawater desalination plant and the upgrade of the Pak-China Friendship Hospital, were inaugurated in the Gwadar district of southwestern Balochistan province. The desalination plant will provide 5,000 tons per day of potable water to help address a severe drinking water shortage, while the Pak-China Friendship Hospital has boosted its capacity to 150 beds from the original 50. "At the Karachi

Nuclear Power Plant, the K2 and K3 units that both use Hualong One, China's third-generation nuclear power reactor with full intellectual property rights, are churning out a combined 20 billion kilowatt hours each year, satisfying the production and residential electricity use of two million people while saving energy equivalent to 6.24 million tons of standard coal," the Global Times learned from China National Nuclear Corporation. In July last year, Unit 5 (C-5) of the Chashma Nuclear Power Plant broke ground, marking the 7th nuclear reactor exported from China to Pakistan. "Pakistan is on the right side of history by



PESHAWAR: Activists of Markazi Muslim League (PMML) are holding protest demonstration against supreme court ruling, at Peshawar press club.



NAROWAL: President Dr Arif Alvi being briefed about Kartarpur Corridor at Zero Line/International Border.

AJK PM urges UN to resolve long-pending Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to occupied Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq has urged the United Nations to take measures for settlement of the long-pending Kashmir dispute for permanent peace in the region. He also urged the United Nations to take effective notice of India's expansionist designs in the region. Referring to the disputed nature of the Kashmir dispute, the AJK Prime Minister said, "India cannot change the status of the disputed territory unilaterally. He said that India's August 5th move was the worst example of fascism." Reacting to Indian

ECP allocates Punjab's reserved NA women seats

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has unveiled the allotment of 20 reserved seats for women in the National Assembly from Punjab, with the majority going to the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). The ECP spokesperson mentioned that the commission is currently reviewing the issue concerning the allocation of reserved seats for the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC). According to the ECP, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) received 17 seats, with one seat each allocated to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the Pakistan Muslim League, and Istehkame-Pakistan Party.

All possible facilities to be ensured for Hujjaj intending hajj 2024: Aneeq

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Friday said that all possible facilities will be provided to Pakistani pilgrims during this year's hajj where special training programs were also being conducted at the district level through camps managed by the religious affairs ministry. In an exclusive interview with PTV news channel, he said that under the supervision of the Pakistan Hajj mission special catering companies were being arranged to feed pilgrims under a government scheme and will ensure quality and safety standards at every step. Minister said that this year Pakistan Hajj mission is offering simplified transportation services to Pakistani pilgrims with standard buses ensuring round-the-clock, adding that, the transport department will fully dedicate themselves to the sacred duty. A comprehensive transportation guidelines had also been issued at each building, he added. The caretaker government had introduced several new services for the pilgrims to help them perform the rituals with comfort and ease, he mentioned. Monitoring Cell has been put in place to closely

monitor and address any potential issues of the private Pilgrims, he said, adding, furthermore, various other specialized units, such as a Wheelchair Desk have been established to cater to the specific needs of different groups of pilgrims. Replying to a question, he said in a bid to improve the Hajj pilgrimage experience for travelers in 2024, the federal government has also unveiled a comprehensive update to the Hajj package, adding that, first time in history government has introduced a shorter 20 to 25-day Hajj program in which we will provide pilgrims with a more concise.

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Majlis Fikr-o-Danish calls for forming empowered & trusted Provincial HEC

Independent Report QUETTA: The Quetta Majlis Fikr-o-Danish (think tank) has underlined the need to form an empowered and trustworthy Provincial Higher Education Commission (HEC) for complete overhauling and cleansing of the public sector universities in the province. In a statement issued here on Friday, it was regretfully pointed out that the deteriorated situation of the public sector universities and higher institutions of the research has turned more serious due to the negligence and carelessness of the previous governments. As a result of which, the materialization of dream of creation of useful and constructive environment is seen nearly impossible. Due to the situation, the mother educational institution of the province

i.e., University of Balochistan is heading towards closure while the overall situation of higher technical educational institution i.e., Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUTEMS) has also become worst. While on the other hand, the only women university (SBKWU) has also become hub of male interference and political and wisdom weakness. It was also stated that there's a question of survival of the institutions in case of the non-payment of salaries of the employees. It was stressed that there is also dire need to stop wastage and plundering of the resources for building scientific narrative besides promoting research and creativity.

Masood lauds contributions of Pak diaspora in US

ISLAMABAD (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Masood Khan has said Pakistani professionals are not only making their mark in their respective fields but are also proving themselves as the most abiding link between Pakistan and the United States. He made these remarks during an e-meeting with the leadership of NUSTIAN-US which is a network of around 1200

US-based alumni of National University of Sciences and Technology. He said we are proud of the contributions of our diaspora in the United States as well as in the country of their origin. The Ambassador said the Embassy is actively engaged in connecting professional organizations of Pakistani Americans who are serving the country in various walks of life.

PTI founder, Bushra could not be indicted in 190m pounds scam

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Nasir Javed Rana of Special Accountability Court of Islamabad has adjourned hearing of Al-Qadir Trust case based on 190 million pounds financial scandal against PTI founder and his wife Bushra Begum till February 27 without proceedings. Due to it both the accused persons could not be indicted. Both of the accused were present in the court along with their lawyers Usman Gull and Zahir

Tharabi Lake contract: Court sends Imran Riaz to jail on judicial remand

LAHORE (APP): A local court on Friday sent anchorperson Imran Riaz Khan to jail on judicial remand in a case of acquiring the Tharabi Lake contract at reduced prices. Earlier, the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Punjab officials produced the anchorperson before Judicial Magistrate Imran Abid, in district courts, and requested a 14-day physical remand for investigations. However, Imran Riaz's counsel argued that the case was registered in violation of the law, adding that no evidence was available to prove the charges. The court, after hearing detailed arguments of parties, reserved its judgement on the remand plea for a short while. Later, the court, announcing the reserved verdict, turned down the plea for physical remand and sent the anchorperson to jail on judicial remand.

Free treatment of heart patient kids starts at SMBZAN ICQ

Independent Report QUETTA: The free treatment of heart patient children has been started at the Sheikh Muhammad Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (SMBZAN) Institute of Cardiology Quetta (ICQ) here. According to an official handout issued here on Friday, the free treatment of the children suffering from heart diseases has been started in collaboration with the National Institute of

Cardiology and Vascular Diseases (NICVD). The treatment of patients would remain continued from March 9-10. The Head of Pediatric Cardiology, NICVD, Dr Abdul Sattar Sheikh would provide services at the OPD. Moreover, the expert doctors of NICVD would also perform the operations, angioplasty and other complicated procedures of the heart patient children.

DEO distributes appointment orders among 16 relatives of employees in Lasbela

QUETTA (APP): District Education Officer (DEO) Lasbela Muhammad Anwar Jamali on Friday distributed appointment orders among 16 relatives of employees who had died in Education Department Lasbela. The ceremony was attended by District Officer Education (Male) Lasbela Haji Naveed Ahmed Hashmi, GTA Lasbela Chairman Abdul Wahid Soomro, Ahmed Khan Ronjho and others organized by DEO of Lasbela. On this occasion, District Officer Education (Male) Lasbela Haji Naveed Ahmed Hashmi, Chairman of GTA Lasbela Abdul Wahid Soomro spoke and congratulated the candidates recruited on the quota.

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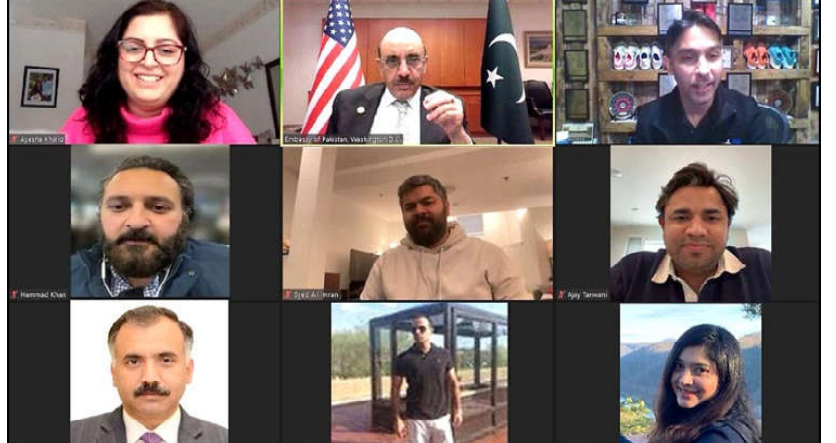
DC Duki reviews steps of annual admission drive in govt schools

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Duki Captain (Rtd) Fayyaz Ali on Friday chaired a meeting of the District Education Group to review measures of Annual admission drive in government schools in the area. The meeting was attended by District Education Officer (DEO) Naseebullah Nasir, Education Manager Ubaid Khan Tareen, DDOE Thal Faqirullah Tareen, Senior Clerk Mujibur Rahman Tareen, CPD Officer Muhammad Aslam and

others. It was decided in the meeting that action will be taken against the absent officers of District Education Group and the Annual enrollment campaign would be vigorously pursued so that more and more children could be equipped with the jewel of education. The meeting said that the target of 1384 of children would be achieved during the drive saying that he would cooperate with the district administration and Education Department to get the target of campaign for interest.

Five injured in Darazinda motorbike blast

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Five people were injured in an explosion that occurred in the main Bazaar of Teshil Darazinda on Friday. According to a Rescue 1122 spokesman, the explosive device, planted on a motorbike parked near a local hotel in the Bazaar exploded due to which five people got injured. The medical teams of Rescue 1122 immediately reached the site and shifted the injured people to the hospital. Two of the injured persons are in critical condition.



UNITES STATES: Ambassador Masood Khan e-meeting with Dr. Muniba Agboatwalla Founder & Chairperson of HOPE Pakistan and its Director Ambreen Siddiqui.

Maryam Nawaz vacates NA-119 seat

LAHORE (INP): PML-N leader and the Punjab chief minister-elect, Maryam Nawaz, has announced her resignation from the National Assembly's NA-119 seat. This decision comes amidst her nomination and subsequent decision to take up the office of chief minister of Punjab, marking a significant shift in the political landscape of the province. Maryam Nawaz's resignation from NA-119 Lahore III was confirmed by sources close to the politician. In the February 8 general elections, Maryam Nawaz had won from this constituency with 83,855 votes against PTI-backed candidate Shehzad Feroq, who clinched 68,376 votes. Among the other candidates for the seat were Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan's Muhammad Zaheer and Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Ifthikhar Shahid.

UoG's Art and Film making competition wraps up with glitzy ceremony

Independent Report QUETTA: The Art and Film Making competition concluded with a grand finale over two eventful days at the Gwadar University. The event showcased an array of creativity and talent from budding artists and filmmakers. The closing ceremony was held at the main seminar Hall of the University. The event was attended by esteemed personalities including Moulana Hidayath Ur Rehman, Worthy Vice-Chancellor of Gwadar University Prof Abdul Razzaq Sabir, Deputy Commissioner Gwadar Aurang Zaib Badini, Principal GDA Raja Imtiaz Hussain, Registrar University Dolat Khan, Dean Faculty of Social Science Prof Dr. Jan Muhammad, Competition Judges, guests, Senior Faculty members and students. More than a hundred participants participated in the competition. The two-day event was attended by a large number of people who witnessed fierce competition in various categories ranging from painting and sketches to short film production. During the closing ceremony, the Vice-Chancellor of the university Prof Dr. Abdul Razzaq Sabir com-

mended the participants for their exceptional talent and dedication to the arts. He emphasized the importance of such events in fostering creativity and innovation among the youth, urging the participants to continue pursuing their artistic endeavors. The Vice-Chancellor appreciated the efforts of the organizers of the event. He also congratulated the winners of the inter-university level competition which was organized by NAB Balochistan last year. The chief guest of the event, newly elected MPA Gwadar Maulana Hidayath ur Rehman said that Gwadar should be recognized not only because of CPEC but also because of our talented youth. Humans can reach the sky with their hard work and abilities. The region needs talented people and universities are the only institutions that produce talented people. Deputy Commissioner Gwadar, Aurang Zaib Badini, also graced the occasion with his presence, lauding the efforts of the university in organizing such a vibrant and inclusive competition. He highlighted the significance of art and filmmaking in cultural expression and community development.



QUETTA: Members of Jhalawan Awami Penal (JAP) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, at Quetta press club.

PML-N fields Malik, Zaheer for PA speaker, deputy speaker posts

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has fielded Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan and Zaheer Iqbal Channar for the posts of speaker and deputy speaker of the Punjab Assembly. The party has already nominated Maryam Nawaz as the chief minister Punjab. The Punjab Assembly will meet on Saturday to elect the speaker and deputy speaker to the House during the 42nd session at the assembly chambers. Incumbent Speaker Muhammad Sibtain Khan has convened the PA session at 4 p.m. on Saturday (tomorrow) in the assembly chambers and he'll chair the session. The PML-N is the majority party in the PA, and its nominees—Malik Muhammad Ahmed and Zaheer Channar—have submitted their nomination papers for their election as the speaker and deputy speakers. On the other hand, Sunni Ittehad Council nominees, Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar and Moeen-ud-Din Riaz Qureshi have also submitted their nomination papers for the speaker.

Country to make progress: Dar

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Senator Ishaq Dar said on Friday that he was not sure that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder had written any letter to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or not. Talking to the media here, Dar said he had heard this on the media and if the PTI founder had written any letter to the IMF it was highly condemnable. Ishaq Dar said: "If any one does such thing and prefers personal political interest over the country's economic interest it is not only regrettable but also strongly condemnable action." He said with the grace of Allah, the Almighty, the country would make progress.



QUETTA: Provincial Secretary Health Abdullah Khan presiding over a meeting regarding Physiotherapy department.