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LAHORE: Honorable Chief Guest Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Caretaker Federal Minister of Information & Broadcasting, addressing at seminar on "Political participation and empowerment of Youth, women, transgender and cultural minorities" organized by PID.

India's Aug 5, 2019 illegal, unilateral actions on IIOJK violate int'l laws, UN charter

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has said that India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019 in IIOJK were a blatant violation of international law including the UN Charter, 4th Geneva Convention and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. "India has since been

engaged in efforts to further entrench these illegal measures through a series of steps aimed at altering the demographic structure and political landscape of IIOJK," the prime minister said in a message on the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5. He said that the "Kashmir Solidarity Day" was annually observed on the 5th February to express Pakistan's unwavering support to the Kashmiri people's just struggle for realization of their right to self-determination. It was also an occasion to pay rich tribute to the sacrifices made by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters during the last seventy-six years,

he added. The prime minister said that Pakistan has consistently maintained that a lasting solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute was possible only in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people. "Pakistan will continue to extend its unstinted moral, diplomatic and political support for this just cause," Prime Minister Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying. He further said that the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions provided that the final disposition of Jammu and Kashmir would be

made in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the United Nations. However, the caretaker prime minister said, over the last seventy-six years, India had carried out a relentless campaign to intimidate and suppress the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In IIOJK, the iron-fisted Indian approach frequently manifested itself in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions and custodial torture, he added.

Bilawal urges people to bury politics of hatred, division with their votes

HYDERABAD (APP): Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has urged the people to defeat the politics of division and hatred by supporting his party in the upcoming general elections.

Addressing a large public meeting in Hussainabad area here on Sunday evening, Bilawal blamed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and other parties for continuing to sow division and hate for political gains.

"If any city has seen the politics of hatred, divide and terror, Hyderabad is one such city whose people have suffered losses and have given sacrifices too," he observed, referring to the ethnic tensions which prevailed in the city in the 1980s and 1990s.

"But the peaceful people of Hyderabad did not back out or surrender to those tactics for which I want to salute you," he said.

He alleged that while the PML-N had indulged itself in the politics of hate and divide at the center, MQM-P was doing the same in Hyderabad and Karachi.

The PPP's chairman added that those parties had turned politics into personal revenge, a deed which had always resulted in losses to the country, democracy, federation and the public.

"But they aren't worried about it. They just want to become prime minister for the fourth time," he said, referring to PML-N's leader and former PM Nawaz Sharif.

He appealed to the people that while making decision about their votes

they should consider which political party could serve them without discrimination. Bilawal said the PPP only wanted to tackle the problems like poverty, inflation and unemployment with the support of the public.

Revisiting the PPP's 10-point charter of economy, he promised to double the income of Pakistan's people; to build 3 million homes for poor families with ownership rights for women; and supply up to 300 units free solar electricity. He assured the women that he wanted to serve them the way a son served his mother. According to him, the PPP's government at the center would not only enhance grants under Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), it would also provide interest free loans to women to establish small businesses.

Solangi says Pakistan to become strong, prosperous when minorities given equal rights

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Sunday that minorities play an important role in the nation-building process and Pakistan will become strong and prosperous only when the minorities are given equal rights as envisaged by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Constitution.

Delivering his speech at a seminar organized by the Press Information Department (PID) regarding elections 2024 he said only those nations that have made rapid strides towards development and prosperity believed in diversity.

"Pakistan will be strong only when we give equal civil rights to minorities," Murtaza Solangi said.

He remarked that the

creation of Pakistan in itself was the negation of the concept of majoritarian rule as All India Congress leadership wanted to impose the will of a certain group over the other people on the basis of the majority.

He said that minorities had played a significant part in the achievements of Pakistan, especially as they were playing an active role in the health and education system.

The minister said that the present caretaker government was a constitutional and legal set-up which would ensure the conduct of free and fair elections in the country on February 8.

In the preamble of the Constitution of Pakistan, it is written that this country will be run by its elected representatives who come to power through elections, he maintained.

Armed forces pay tribute to Kashmiris

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Armed Forces of Pakistan, CJsSC & Services Chiefs paid rich tribute to people of Kashmir for their resolve & valiant struggle, consistently braving grave human rights violations and inhumane lockdown in IIOJK under Indian occupation forces.

Kashmir remains a long pending unresolved issue on UN agenda since 1948. The issue has to be resolved as per the aspirations of the people of Kashmir and in accordance with UN Resolutions providing for their right to self-determination.

Decades of atrocities by Indian occupation forces have failed to diminish the spirit of the Kashmiri people and their legitimate freedom struggle. The night is indeed the darkest before dawn - the heroic struggle for Azadi is destined to succeed, InshAllah.

SAPM inaugurates welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 bln for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Jawad Sohrab Malik on Sunday inaugurated a series of welfare projects worth Rs 1.8 billion for Industrial and Mine workers in Balochistan.

He said these initiatives, funded by the Workers Welfare Fund (WWF), are poised to significantly enhance living standards and educational opportunities for mine and industrial workers across the province, said a news release issued here.

He further said the cornerstone of these projects is the establishment of a Girls High School with Staff

Residences in Muslim Bagh, Balochistan, designed to provide quality education to the children of 5,605 mine and industrial workers, symbolizing a substantial leap towards gender inclusivity and educational accessibility in the area.

Constructed over 63,000 square feet and with an investment of Rs 700 Million, the school and residences represent a beacon of hope for the future generation of Balochistan, he said and stressed on ensuring that the project is completed within 24 months.

Addressing the pressing need for adequate housing, Malik also laid the foundation stone for 100 worker residence quarters in Muslim Bagh.

Govt, people of Pak condole demise of President of Namibia

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government and the people of Pakistan were deeply saddened at the passing of President Hage G. Geingob of Namibia, said a Foreign Office Spokesperson in a statement on Sunday.

She said, "President Geingob was a visionary statesman, a leading icon of the liberation struggle of Namibia and the chief architect of the Constitution of Namibia."

"President Geingob will always be remembered for his services to the Namibian nation and his distinguished legacy as a leader of the Global South. Our heartfelt condolences to President Geingob's family and the people of Namibia," she added.



HYDERABAD: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a election meeting.

Justice Minallah calls for holding 'genuine elections'

LONDON (INP): Justice Athar Minallah of Supreme Court has maintained that freedom of speech was the basic human right and without it progress of a society start to diminish, reported on Sunday.

Justice Minallah remarked that Pakistan lost her arm due to lack of freedom of speech in 1971.

Addressing a moot on Future of Pakistan here, Justice Minallah opined that Pakistan should hold "genuine elections" and not just for the sake of elections.

Justice Minallah said it is a test case for the courts to get their verdicts implemented and restore their

credibility in the eyes of the masses.

The apex court judge observed that missing persons issue would be highlighted as an issue had it been surfaced in Punjab. Since the issue has emerged in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa so it is not considered as an issue, he analysed. Justice Minallah said the Constitution was abrogated several times in Pakistan but no one was punished for it.

He said he cannot speak about actions and performance of the courts but he expressed the hope that young judges will bring changes to the system.

People reject who ruined country: Sherpao

PESHAWAR (APP): Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Sunday said the people must not vote for the ones, who undermined the country and ruined its economy.

Addressing a gathering at Gandheri Union Council in Charsadda, he said the nation must not forget the ones, who staged attacks on the government buildings and military installations.

Criticising the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), he said its leadership polarized the society and created divisions.

He said the PTI had turned political differences into personal vendetta.

"Imran Khan misguided the youth and provoked them to attack the military installations," he said.

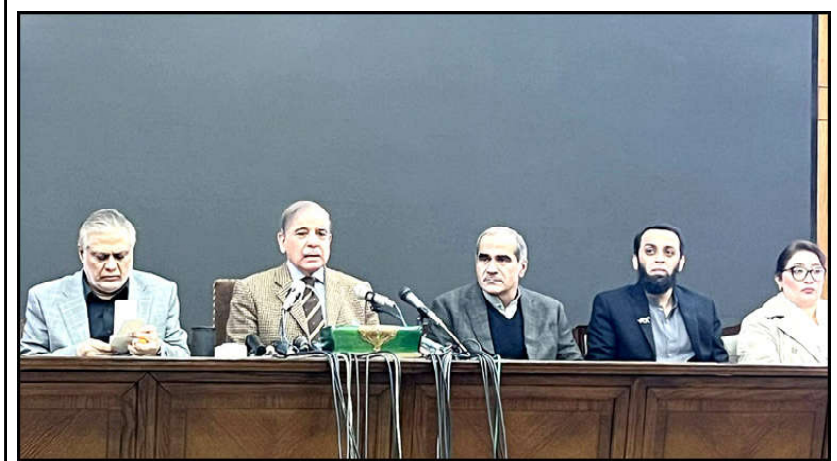
Calling for reconciliation, Aftab Sherpao said that after the election the political parties should join hands to come up with a common agenda to revive the economy and put the country on the path to development.

He said the country could not afford political instability as enough damage had been done by indulging in politics of hatred.

He said the poor were grappling with a host of issues, including skyrocketing inflation and unemployment.



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Jawad Sohrab Malik Unveils Welfare Projects Amounting to Rs. 1.8 Billion for Balochistan.



LAHORE: President PML (N) Mian Shahbaz Sharif alongwith other party leaders addressing a Press conference.

Karachi rains enough to compare performance: Shehbaz to Bilawal

LAHORE (INP): PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday mocked PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari over his repeated invitation for a live debate, as he cited the example of heavy rain in Karachi which has paralysed life in the megacity, which, he said, was enough to compare the performance of two parties.

Media persons were reporting just few weeks ago that the PML-N leadership could not face the people and had decided to stay at home, he recalled and noted that the massive rallies held in different towns and cities were a proof of how much love and support the masses

had for Nawaz Sharif - the three-time prime minister who is eyeing a record fourth stint in office.

Addressing a press conference, he said it seemed that the people would give a clear mandate to the PML-N to govern the country for the next five years.

About the alleged political victimisation of the PTI founder, Shehbaz said the same person used to claim that he won't spare anyone and send everyone to prison, as the rivals were booked in bogus cases, at a time when he himself resorted to corrupt practices.

Democracy doesn't mean that a person involved in illegal activities

should be forgiven, he asserted.

In response to a question, Millions of voters would decide their future through use of ballot on February 8 which his party was going to accept, Shehbaz said, as he listed the achievements of his party under Nawaz Sharif's government in the past.

Shehbaz said Pakistan witnessed billions of dollars of investment - the largest in the country's history - during elder Sharif's 2013-17 government, but the corruption perception index measured by the Transparency International came down.

ECP to wrap up delivery of 260M ballot papers to 859 constituencies by today

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is set to conclude the ongoing distribution of 260 million ballot papers to the Returning Officers (ROs) of 859 constituencies nationwide by Monday.

An ECP spokesperson said in a statement that the Commission has concluded the printing of ballot papers in three government printing presses for the upcoming Feb 8 elections.

Reprinting of ballot papers in particular controversial constituencies has been finalized, following the directives of the superior judiciary in specific court cases.

Envoys of Pakistan, Japan discuss ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ambassador to Iran Muhammad Mudassir on Sunday held meeting in Tehran with Japanese Ambassador Tsukada Tamaki and discussed matters of mutual respect.

In a post on X, he said, "I met Japanese Ambassador HE Tsukada Tamaki today. We had excellent exchange of ideas on a range of global & regional issues with a view to promote greater understanding & explore views to help promote peace & development."



MULTAN: Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) Chairman Jahangir Tareen addressing a press conference.

Ready to work with Nawaz Sharif: Jahangir

MULTAN (INP): Jahangir Tareen, the Chairman of the Isteqam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), declared at an election rally in Multan that in the event of the government formation, he will collaborate with Nawaz Sharif, who will serve as their leader.

Addressing the crowd, Tareen, rooted in Multan, expressed his commitment to improving the local economy, ensuring salary increments for workers, and working collectively to make the country prosper.

He emphasized the need for prayer and unity, stating that regardless of political affiliations, everyone must work together for the nation's betterment. Tareen predicted economic growth, job creation, and national development under Nawaz Sharif's leadership, aiming for a brighter future post-February 8. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz President and former Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif countered allegations of corruption during a press conference.

ANP, QWP announces seat adjustment in Charsadda

PESHAWAR (APP): Awami National Party (ANP) and Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) on Sunday announced seat adjustment in Charsadda for general elections 2024.

The formal announcement of seat adjustment was made in a joint press conference by ANP's Provincial President Aimal Wali Khan and Aftab Ahmad Sherpao chief of QWP. The seat adjustment between the two parties took place in Charsadda's two national constituencies, NA-24 and NA-25. In NA-24, ANP's candidate Irfan Alam withdrew in favor of QWP's candidate Aftab Sherpao while in NA-25, QWP's candidate Qaisar Jamal withdrew in favor of ANP's candidate Aimal Wali Khan.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Last leg

We are now in the home stretch. This past week saw a flurry of political activity as parties started to dig in and brace for their final showdown, scheduled for next Thursday.

Though we had not seen the same level of feverish campaigning that usually precedes general elections in Pakistan, there was some welcome improvement over the last few weeks, even if it has seemed at times that it is just two parties swapping the limelight between them.

The PTI, the third main contender, remains absent from TV screens. There has been very little if it has been allowed to do, and jalsas would have been out of the question with the state trying to suppress it. The smaller parties, too, seem to have largely avoided expending much time or effort on elections 2024. This lack of enthusiasm has left the polls looking like a three-way fight — albeit one in which one of the main contenders has been handicapped.

How will the results shape up? It is anyone's guess. A number of factors are in play, going for and against each party. The PML-N and PPP look strong on paper. Their traditional networks within the zaat-biradari system and the state apparatus are active. The state is keeping the PTI in check. The two can also campaign freely; they may put up banners, organise corner meetings, hold jalsas, get TV airtime and, most importantly, seek votes with the help of recognised poll symbols.

The PML-N enjoys the further advantage of being perceived as the 'favoured' party, which is expected to boost its prospects in areas where thana-katcheri politics rule the day. The PTI, meanwhile, is banking mainly on public sympathy to turn the tide. It is tapping into public discontent against the status quo and hoping the youth vote can swing the election in its favour.

A lot will also depend on voter turnout: a high turnout is expected to favour the PTI. Will it be able to get its voters out? How each party manages election day activities will also matter. Can they mobilise and ferry enough voters to the booths? Can polling agents protect their candidates' votes during the counting process? Given how vitiated the pre-poll process has been, should we expect a changed atmosphere on polling day? There is a lot riding on these elections, and the path to power, as ever, lies through Punjab.

Will we see a new victor emerge? The PML-N is looking to break out of central Punjab and make inroads in the north and south. The PPP is hoping to regain the ground it lost a decade ago. And the PTI is refusing to back out of the fight. It promises to be a contest that will be remembered for a long time.

Fight to forgive

Muna Khan

Could you forgive your daughter's murderers, and then hire two of them to come work for the organisation set up in her name?

This is what Linda and Peter Biehl did in South Africa following the stoning and stabbing of their daughter Amy by a mob in Cape Town in 1993. Amy, then 26 and a Fulbright scholar, was helping educate previously disenfranchised voters ahead of the historic 1994 elections that would see Nelson Mandela become president. Four men were found guilty of Amy's murder but they applied to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for amnesty. Amy's parents, who attended the hearing, did not object to their release in 1998. Later, they met two of the murderers and then hired them to work in the foundation they created in Amy's name to continue her dream of imagining a world where reconciliation was possible.

In September last year, the Amy Biehl Foundation marked 30 years since her murder at one of the schools they've built in Cape Town. Linda was there along with two of her daughter's murderers, who continue to work with the foundation; one of them told the media his relationship with the Biehls allowed him to become the person he is today and also allowed him to forgive himself. They have all shown what reconciliation looks like, and how it can extend to, and then allow, a community to move forward.

But getting there is a difficult process. In order to learn how to let go of hurt feelings, I have been practising alternative forms of

therapy and reading ancient texts. We have much to learn from our elders.

The Buddhists, for example, say forgiveness ends suffering. It is ultimately for yourself, for your peace of mind, to let go of the pain you carry. Most religious teachings echo similar sentiments.

No one advocates holding on to anger unless they find gain in it, and that thinking is not beneficial for societies. I believe we, as a nation, desperately need to let go of anger, resentment and hurt caused by a myriad of leadership failings and mistrust.

The challenge is to forgive the very people or institutions that caused the mistrust in the first place. It is complicated, especially when no one is asking for forgiveness or, they are forced to say sorry to avoid punishment and then banished. This happens with one-time favoured groups who run afoul of the powerful; their 'crime' is a damnation until it is not, and then all is forgotten. This script is old and tiresome but there are too many players who happily acquiesce in going along as they gain power. Forgiveness will not work without accountability. But who has the power to forgive? What is deemed forgivable?

Lucy Allais, a philosopher at Johns Hopkins University who studies forgiveness and punishment, told Vox in 2022 that "forgiveness is most fundamentally a release from blame and anger".

There is certainly a lot of that in Pakistan right now and it is proving a stumbling block to our progress. The anger is both online and on the streets.

I watched a lot of folks share videos of

journalists unable to contain their excitement at the disqualification of Nawaz Sharif in 2017.

The video of a reporter showing viewers the inside of the former prime minister's fridge resurfaced as did the video of a journalist in a tub. "Do they feel shame now that Imran Khan has been convicted," screamed half of Twitter?

I don't know what answer — or apology, if it came — could have pacified the outraged mob.

Does social media cause this anger or does it reveal it, as Allais herself asks. We've seen how quickly a mob comes together to "cancel" people in social media trials. There is no room for atonement in the virtual world while in the real world, the judicial system seems to be failing people.

In this atmosphere, can one even talk of forgiveness and reconciliation? We are days away from elections whose results will be rejected by X percentage of the population. This is the self-perpetuating cycle that does not allow room for reconciliation. Those to blame can also offer a way out.

These stakeholders must reckon with their past and accept that the only way forward is to come together as leaders invested in Pakistan's progress, with different ideas on how to get there. They can teach us how to disagree without being disagreeable. People tend to assume the best of themselves and the worst of their opponents. "We need to see people as potentially better than the worst things they've done," says Allais. It is a tall ask but one worth attempting. We will eventually get it right. This hope is worth fighting for. -- Courtesy Dawn

Securing borders

Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry

Pakistan's national security has lately been under threat on its eastern as well as western borders. On the eastern frontier, India's attitude towards Pakistan has unfortunately hit a new low. The Modi regime is constantly innovating prickly ways to assert its growing hubris in the neighbourhood and beyond. Its latest practice is to deploy assassins on foreign lands to kill so-called anti-India elements. The evidence shows that Indian intelligence operatives managed to have not only Mohammad Riaz and Shahid Latif assassinated on Pakistani soil, but many more Pakistani citizens too, for which investigations are underway. This is in line with what Indian operatives did in Canada and the US when they targeted Sikhs calling for an independent state of Khalistan.

Using assassins to kill on foreign soil is a variant of the earlier policy of sending in Indian operatives, such as Kulbhushan Jadhav, who would enter Pakistan under fake identities to destabilise the country. However, the cause of regional peace will not be served if India continues to commit state terrorism while accusing Pakistan of cross-border terrorism. Both countries would do well to eliminate transnational terrorism through cooperation rather than confrontation.

Pakistan's western frontiers are also in the grip of cross-border terrorism. Last month, Iran attacked a target inside Pakistan, ostensibly to eliminate an alleged hide-out of Jaish al-Adl, an anti-Iran Sunni militant group active in Sistan-Baluchestan. Pakistan responded with a strike against Baloch terrorist

elements in the border town of Saravan. Both governments swiftly resolved the matter through diplomacy. But soon after, nine Pakistanis were murdered in Saravan. The Iranian foreign minister has since visited Pakistan to calm tensions. Ultimately, the root cause, which is the alleged presence of terrorist elements on both sides of the border, would need to be addressed to avert the recurrence of such incidents.

Ever since the Taliban came to power in Kabul in 2021, the TTP has been reinvigorated. The group had been beaten in operations in Swat, South Waziristan and North Waziristan as well as the countrywide intelligence-based operation Raddul Fasaad. The TTP's resurgence resulted from the Afghan Taliban rulers' release of TTP prisoners in the name of facilitating talks with Pakistan. A tentative ceasefire was agreed to, leading to senior TTP leaders being freed from prisons in Pakistan and the resettlement of hundreds of TTP fighters in the country.

Instead of appreciating the gesture, the TTP used the opportunity to regroup and resume its attacks against targets in Pakistan, particularly the security forces. Despite this setback, Islamabad has, prudently, maintained its contacts with Kabul at multiple levels to stress that Afghanistan's strategic interests would be better served if Kabul restricted the space given to the TTP for cross-border terrorism, and reoriented its policies to focus on peace and development.

Ever since the launch of CPEC in 2015, Pakistan's detractors have tried to carry out acts of terrorism against Chinese nationals working on CPEC projects

here. At the request of China, Pakistan's steadfast friend, the government constituted a strong force to safeguard CPEC projects and Chinese nationals. This has improved the security situation, although occasional terrorist attacks still occur.

All this requires an in-depth review of our security and foreign policies. An opportunity will arise when a new government is elected this month. After holding consultations with think tanks, academia, and intelligentsia, the elected government must institute a mechanism to undertake such a review on a new agenda of peace that should be pursued with not only our neighbours but also other powers of relevance to Pakistan.

Recently, a national conference was convened in Islamabad by the Sanobar Institute in collaboration with two partners from academia and the think tank community to prepare a strategy manifesto for the new government with recommendations for Pakistan's security and foreign policies. Similar efforts are currently underway in several universities and think tanks, born of a desire to see our country achieve the glory that Pakistan's founder had envisioned for it. Based on the Quaid's advice, and the imperative to stabilise its borders, Pakistan must address the internal and external reasons of militancy. Internally, militant, extremist, sectarian and sub-nationalist forces need to be dealt with politically first, and kinetically later if required. Externally, we should engage with all neighbours such that it builds their stakes in Pakistan's stability. In the medium to long term, this approach can ensure border stability and progress. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Governor KP says: Gemstones is a valuable sector, need development through comprehensive planning

PESHAWAR (APP): With the development of natural resources like minerals, tourism, gemstones, the province can be taken out of the backwardness and made a major contributor to the country's economy, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said during his visit to All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) in the city of Namak Mandi.

The Governor, during his visit met with the business community dealing in precious stones, representatives of APSIA, the people of the area and urged upon of making a comprehensive planning and police for this valuable

sector development that could play a key role in Pakistan economy in general and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Ghulam Ali said that economic stability can be brought only by the provision of facilities to all the business community of the province, including those associated with the gemstone sector, and the promotion of business and industry in the province.

Significant development can be made possible in this sector, he added. He said, in this context, the business community associated with the Gemstones sector

should get the support of students who have graduated from universities who are familiar with modern technology, so that the youth can get employment with the precious stones of the province.

Exports can be increased along with introducing tourism at the global level, the Governor said, during his visit to the office of All Pakistan Commercial Exporters Association (APCEA) located in Namak Mandi, a congested area of inner city Peshawar.

During the meeting with the representatives and officials of the present association.

Economists pilloried for getting forecasts wrong

PARIS (AFP/APP): Economists are taking flak after missing the mark on inflation, failing to anticipate disruptions in global supply chains and forecasting a recession that has not materialised.

European Central Bank president Christine Lagarde joined the chorus of criticism at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last month. "Many economists are actually a tribal clique," she said, referring to a lack of openness to other scientific disciplines.

"They quote each other—men more than women but that's another story," the former IMF chief and French finance minister said. "But they don't go beyond that world because they feel comfortable in that world."

Economists need to get out of their comfort zone of Excel spreadsheets and rigid models, some economists say about their own kind.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali talking to Gem Stone traders during his visit to All Pakistan Commercial Exporter Association at Namak Mandi.

Pak economic prospects look promising: Meher

LAHORE (APP): Coordinator of Minister of State and Federal Tax Ombudsman, Meher Kashif Younis Sunday said the future economic prospects of Pakistan look promising but their actual realisation would depend on successful integration into the global economy, sound macro-economic policies and close coordination between academia, industrialists and policymakers at all levels in addition to political stability and good governance. Speaking here at a workshop on "Impact of Tripartite Collaboration for Economic Growth", he said under a constellation of these favourable

conditions, it would be possible to add 2 to 2.5 percent points to the current trend growth rate whereby per-capita income would double in next decade. Meher said Pakistan's future direction should focus on analytically examining the issue by bringing together government policy, industries and academia, co-evolving socio-economic systems and focusing on industries core role in the development process. The Coordinator said Pakistan's geographic location has not been cashed effectively for intra-regional trade and investment, to realise its future potential.

Political stability guarantees sound economy: Malik

LAHORE (APP): SAARC chamber of commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said that political stability is pre-requisite for sound economy which will promise greater weal for the people from different strata of the society.

Talking to a delegation of traders, he said that at present, Pakistan cannot endure political turmoil or instability, asserting that uninterrupted stable democracy is needed for sustained economic growth to cope with the multiple challenges in the country.

He said that politics of confrontation and violence is not the solution. He said time has changed as now the influential nations are paying more attention to financial warfare to continue their dominance. These countries are successfully using their weapons of economic destruction to weaken economies of poor nations to achieve their unholy designs. "It is indeed important to increase our exports and for that purpose we need to reduce our cost of doing business so that our products remain competitive in the world markets," he added.

Korea to provide seed potato to Pakistan for producing virus-free seed

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Republic of Korea under its Technical Cooperation Projects (TCP) would provide 160,000 tons of certified seed potatoes to Pakistan during five years.

The initiative maiming at to ensure the availability of virus-free seeds potatoes and contributing significantly to the agricultural sector development, said Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali.

Talking to APP here on Sunday, he said that

four aeroponics greenhouses, 32 screenhouses and supplying a cold store and 100 KW solar systems to meet goals would also be established.

The PARC) in collaboration with Korean Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) was working on aeroponic technology, which will transform Pakistan's potato production, he added.

PARC-KOPIA were also working for achieving self-sufficiency in potato seeds, which would reduce the reliance on imported

seeds. He further informed that only 2% of Pakistan's potato seed requirement was being fulfilled locally and we relied on importing 98% of its seed demand.

With the implementation of this cutting-edge facility, Pakistan is poised to achieve self-sufficiency in potato seed production, he added.

Dr Ali said that the aeroponic technology, which can yield 50 to 60 potato seeds per plant compared to just five from conventional methods.

51 power pilferers netted across MEPCO region

MULTAN (APP): Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) teams have raided and caught 51 more power pilferers in a day during ongoing operation across the region on Sunday.

The taskforce teams have raided at various places and got registered 27 new cases against power pilferers and caught three more power pilferers with red handed.

Over Rs 2.7 million fine was imposed on power pilferers. Rs 31.3 million was recovered from running and dead defaulters in a day.

The recovery from domestic, commercial, industrial and tubewell defaulters was made during the ongoing operation.

KPBOIT inks MoU with Chinese group for investments in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): In order to enhance investment opportunities in mines and minerals sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a Memorandum of Understanding has signed by Vice Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade Engr. Said Mahmood and Mr. Jianxin Hou, Chairman Shandong Xinxu Group Corporation, China.

The MoU signing ceremony was held the other day, in Shandong in China, and was witnessed by the high profile public and business community of the province. On this occasion during his speech, the Vice Chairman of KP-BOIT shared various

opportunities in value addition in the mines and minerals sector for Chinese investors and ensured full facilitation from the KP government side.

Through this MoU both parties may, to the best of their mutual endeavor and capabilities, strive to enhance investment in value addition in the mining sector of KP Province, provide specific product/project information, identification of joint venture partners, facilitating procedural matters with respective authorities remaining within respective legal mandate. Similarly, partners may conduct matchmaking meetings.



LAHORE: People are busy buying warm clothes and jackets in Landa bazaar at Shadman Sunday weekly bazaar in Provincial Capital.

Livestock Dept issues 20 licenses to businessmen

MULTAN (APP): Livestock Department's counter at the Business Facilitation Center (Multan) successfully issued 20 licenses within one week of inauguration, facilitating the Livestock and Poultry business community.

The ceremony chaired by Director Muhammad Ashraf, attended by elated license holders, showcased the department's commitment to streamlining processes and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.

Director Livestock Multan Division, Dr

Muhammad Ashraf, revealed that since its inception, the Livestock Department's counter received 57 applications, marking a significant milestone.

Expressing their gratitude, license holders namely Farman Ali, Muhammad Akram, Akhtar Hussain, Mohsin Raza, Liaqat Ali, Ghazanfar Abbas, Muhammad Kashif and others commended the efficiency of the new system, highlighting the elimination of time-consuming and costly visits to various offices.

Chairs 39th cabinet meeting CM Punjab approves upgradation of Bab-e-Azadi

Independent Report
LAHORE: Punjab Caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi presided over the 39th Punjab cabinet meeting at CM Office, here on Sunday.
Another national and historical decision had been taken in the Punjab cabinet meeting which pertains to undertaking the upgradation of the Bab-e-Azadi at Wahga border crossing, which would be redesigned on the pattern of the Lahore Fort. The cabinet granted an approval for extension and redesigning project of Bab-e-Azadi, the Parade

Ground, along with issuance of funds.
The CM said that Bab-e-Azadi would be upgraded on the pattern of Lahore Fort and the entrance gate would be designed on the pattern of Alamgiri Gate of the Lahore Fort. Mohsin Naqvi ordered to install big LCDs for showing parade at the Bab-e-Azadi. He said excellent facilities would be provided along with undertaking extension of the Parade Ground, adding that the parking area would be made further spacious.
It was informed that during the briefing that

seating capacity of the people in the Parade Ground would be enhanced approximately up to 18,000 after its upgradation and the height of Bab-e-Azadi project would be approximately 120 feet. Approval for the issuance of funds was accorded in the meeting to undertake remodelling of Liberty Chowk along with making an agreement with the Bank Alfalah for the biggest National Flag of South Asia and undertaking construction as well as extension of the Lahore Metro Bus Service corridor.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister of Punjab Mohsin Naqvi inaugurates up gradation and renovation of Punjab Dental Hospital.

Steps to ensure for a democratic, peaceful election: Minister

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: The Minister of Information and Public Relations for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, emphasized the crucial collaboration needed from both candidates and the public to ensure the success of the upcoming general elections.
Speaking at a press conference in Nowshera, he highlighted the need for cooperation with the administration, police, and election commission staff to

guarantee security and seamless logistical arrangements.
Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, and Inspector General of Police, Akhtar Hayat Khan, have undertaken comprehensive reviews of security and administrative preparations by visiting various districts across the province. Barrister Feroze Jamal Shah Kakakhel, in conjunction with the Chief Secretary and IGP, affirmed the government's dedication to conducting peaceful general elections on February 8.

Two women die in road accident

FAISALABAD (APP): Two women were killed in a road accident in the area of Dijkot police station.
A Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a speeding bus hit a motorcycle near Jahangir Mor on Sammudri Road. As a result, Khalida Perveen (53) and Chashman Shehbaz (21) received serious injuries and died on the spot whereas Rescue 1122 shifted Shehbaz (32) of Chak No.253-RB Islam Nagar to Allied Hospital-II (DHQ Hospital) in a critical condition. The area police took the bodies into custody while an investigation is under progress, he added.

Governor for investing more in education sector

Independent Report
BAHAWALPUR: Governor Punjab Engineer Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman has said that education is pivotal for the development and prosperity of a nation and we must focus on providing quality education to our youth.
Talking to APP, he said that it is the need of the hour to invest more in the education sector. He said that unfortunately, the PTI government gradually reduced funds for educational institutions for four years, affecting the quality of education.
He told that annual grants for Cadet College Hassan Abdal, Lawrence College Ghora Gali, and Sadiq Public School Bahawalpur were planned to be cut down to zero by the PTI government, however, recently the grants of these educational institutions were increased substantially.
He said that a high-level financial committee has been formed to resolve the financial issues of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.
He told that initially grants of Rs 55 million are being planned to be given to the Islamia University of Bahawalpur. In response to another question, Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman told that the Punjab University's annual budget had a deficit of Rs 2 billion for which suggestions have been sought by the university administration.

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LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Education Mansoor Qadir meeting with Punjab Governor Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman.



LAHORE: Honorables Mr. Tariq Mehmood Khan, Executive Director General PIO, receiving shield from Ms. Bushra Bashir, Director PID Lahore at Seminar on "Political Participation and Empowerment of Youth, Women, Transgender and Cultural Minorities".

Rwp Ring Road project to prove game changer for people: Commissioner

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta has said that Rawalpindi Ring Road project would prove to be a game changer for the people of Rawalpindi and the plantation drive on both sides of Rawalpindi Ring Road would be started from February 15.
The Commissioner said that the ring road project would be completed within stipulated time frame as over 20 percent physical work of the ring road project had been completed. After the traffic network design to link the ring road with the motorway, work on Thalian Interchange would be started, he added.
Swan Bridge should be completed as soon as possible, he directed the authorities concerned.
The rest area being built on the ring road would be developed on the pattern of Bhera rest area, Liaquat Ali Chatta informed.
Liaquat Ali further informed that the project would be completed before October.

Pakistani nation to express solidarity with Kashmiris in their struggle

PESHAWAR (APP): The people of Pakistan inside the country and across the world is observing Kashmir Solidarity Day tomorrow (Monday) to express solidarity with Kashmiris in their struggle for the right to self-determination. Since 1990, the Nation of Pakistan observes February 5th as Kashmir Solidarity Day.
Political parties, civil society organizations, lawyers, students and traders are all set to stage rallies and processions to express solidarity with Kashmiris brethren in their struggle for independence from the Indian occupation and reiterate their persistent

support and send a loud and clear message to the world that Kashmiris are not alone in their struggle against the occupying forces.
Talking to APP, Professor Dr Aziz Hilali of the Abasyn University, Peshawar said that Pakistan remains the big freedom supporter of Kashmir since the conflict had begun.
They call for international community to intervene in the matter of Kashmir and save innocent lives from the Indian fascist government. Many of the freedom fighters have lost their lives while fighting for the right of self-determination and Pakistan show solidarity with those people and

Pakistani nation stands with Kashmiris and it is the firm belief of the nation that the Kashmiris will succeed in their struggle to secure freedom from oppression and illegal occupation. Pakistan remains the big freedom supporter of Kashmir since the conflict had begun.
They call for international community to intervene in the matter of Kashmir and save innocent lives from the Indian fascist government. Many of the freedom fighters have lost their lives while fighting for the right of self-determination and Pakistan show solidarity with those people and

observe a national-wide holiday.
Professor Hilali, who is an expert on international affairs, said that the Jammu & Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest items on the agenda of UN Security Council and it can be called the unfinished agenda of the partition. The dispute remained unresolved due to India's refusal to honour its commitments and its disrespect for fundamental human rights and international law.
He added that Kashmiri people are facing New Delhi's inhuman tactics, draconian laws to oppress the people, who are innocent and armless.

They are using state-terrorism against the Kashmiris including extra-judicial killing and arbitrating detentions, fake encounters, stage crackdowns and search operations, custodial torture and enforced disappearance and forced arrest of the Kashmiris leaders using pellet guns and destruction of houses.
As per the statement of the Martin Sugarman, the correspondent of the Daily Loss Angles and Indher Torai that over 900,000 Indian forces made Kashmiris one of the biggest open prison house. India's illegal and unilateral action of 5th August 2019, the removal of the Article 370 and 35 (A).

DC Murree says: Traffic management plan being implemented to facilitate tourists

RAWALPINDI (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) Murree, Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, has said that the traffic management plan is being implemented to facilitate tourists and avoid gridlock on the roads of Murree. He said that 13 tourist facilitation centers were established at different places in Murree, and a control room had also been made fully functional.
The DC said that the district administration had made excellent arrangements

to promote tourism in the region besides helping and assisting the tourists.
A large number of tourists visit 'Queen of Hills', Murree, to enjoy the snowfall in winter, he said, adding that solid steps were taken by the district administration to provide assistance and guidance to the tourists. He informed me that on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Liaquat Ali Chatta, the administration.

International News

US retaliatory strikes in Iraq, Syria claim 40 lives

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States launched air strikes in Iraq and Syria against more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly killing nearly 40 people, in retaliation for a deadly attack on US troops.
The strikes, which included the use of long-range B-1 bombers flown from the United States, were the first in response to the attack last weekend in Jordan by Iran-backed fighters, and more US military operations are expected in the coming days.
The strikes intensified a conflict that has spread into the region since the Oct 7 Gaza conflict.
Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson Nasser

Kanaani said in a statement the attacks represented "another adventurous and strategic mistake by the United States that will result only in increased tension and instability."
Iraq summoned the US charge d'affaires in Baghdad to deliver a formal protest.
Iraq's Popular Mobilisation Forces, a state security force including Iran-backed groups, said 16 of its members were killed, including fighters and medics. The government earlier said civilians were among 16 dead.
In Syria, the strikes killed 23 people who had been guarding the targeted locations, said Rami Abdulrahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which reports on war in Syria.

US Lieutenant General Douglas Sims, the director of the Joint Staff, said the attacks appeared to be successful, triggering large secondary explosions as the bombs hit "militant weaponry".
He said the strikes were undertaken knowing that there would likely be casualties among those in the facilities.
Despite the strikes, the Pentagon has said it does not want war with Iran and does not believe Tehran wants war either, even as Republican pressure has increased on US President Joe Biden to deal a blow directly.
US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said after the strikes that Biden had directed additional action against the IRGC and those linked to it. "This is the start of our response," Austin said.



Security forces inspect a damaged car at the site of a U.S. airstrike in al-Qaim, Iraq.

At least 28 people died when shelling hit a bakery in Russian-occupied Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Moscow-installed officials say Ukrainian shelling killed at least 28 people at a bakery in the Russian-occupied city of Lysychansk.
At least one child was among the dead Saturday, local leader Leonid Pasechnik wrote in a statement on Telegram. A further 10 people were rescued from under the rubble by emergency services, he said.
Ukrainian officials in Kyiv did not comment on

the incident.
Both Moscow and Kyiv have increasingly relied on longer-range attacks this winter amid largely unchanged positions on the 1,500-kilometer (930-mile) front line in the nearly 2-year-old war.
However, Ukrainian forces have come under intense Russian attack over the past 24 hours, with continuous assaults along the front line, Ukraine's General Staff said in a statement Sunday.

Civilians to replace Indian troops in Maldives

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI: India will remove its troops in the Maldives by May, the Maldivian Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, as the two countries seek agreement on a pullout that has strained ties. The roughly 80 soldiers stationed in the Indian Ocean archipelago will be replaced by civilians, officials from both countries said.
As global powers jostle for influence in the Asia-Pacific region, India and China have wooed the Maldives, which has traditionally been close to neighbour India. New Delhi's ties with Male have under strain since Mohamed Muizzu was elected president of the Maldives last year, pledging to end the country's "India First" policy.
He has called for the withdrawal by March 15 of the troops stationed to provide support for military equipment given to the Maldives.
Russia has recently



South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol presides over the central integrated defence meeting in Seoul, South Korea.

15 killed as Ukraine shells Russia-held city

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: A Ukrainian attack on the eastern occupied city of Lysychansk killed at least 15 people and wounded 10 others, Moscow-installed authorities said Saturday, adding that there were likely more dead in the rubble underneath a bakery that was struck.
Lysychansk, in the Lugansk region, fell to Russian forces after a brutal battle six months into Moscow's offensive in 2022.
Russia's forces said that Ukraine had struck a

building housing a popular bakery and that it believed more victims were buried in the rubble.
"According to current data as a result of the shelling of a bakery in Lysychansk 15 people died and 10 were wounded with varying degrees of severity," the Russian-installed health minister of the Lugansk region, Natalia Pashchenko, said on Telegram.
"Rescuers have also found, preliminarily, around 10 people under the rubble."

Turkey completes homes in devastating earthquake hit area

Monitoring Desk
ANKARA: Turkey on Saturday handed over keys to newly-completed homes to some of those left homeless after last year's devastating earthquake, one year after the country's deadliest disaster in its modern history.
Powerful quakes on Feb. 6, 2023 in southern Turkey killed more than 50,000 people in 11 provinces and left millions homeless.

S. Korea summons Russian envoy over 'rude' remarks

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea summoned Russia's ambassador on Saturday to protest "rude and ignorant" remarks after Moscow's foreign ministry blamed Seoul for rising tensions on the peninsula. Nuclear-armed North Korea has this year declared Seoul its "principal enemy", closed agencies dedicated to reunification and outreach, and threatened war over "even 0.001 millimetres" of territorial infringement.
Russia has recently

formed closer ties with North Korea, with the South and United States claiming Pyongyang has shipped weapons to Moscow for use in Ukraine.
Moscow's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said this week the heightened tension on the Korean peninsula was "primarily due to the brazen policy of the United States and its allies, including the Republic of Korea and Japan", referring to South Korea by its official name.

Knife attacker wounds three at Paris train station

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: Three people were injured on Saturday in a knife attack at Paris's Gare de Lyon railway station, a major travel hub, police said, adding that a suspect with psychiatric problems had been arrested.
The man, a Malian national living in Italy, went on a stabbing spree at 7.35am (0635 GMT) at the station, which operates domestic trains as well as those heading to Switzerland and Italy.

Israel pummels Gaza cities as air strikes kill 100 Palestinians

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: Israeli air strikes killed almost 100 Palestinians in the Gaza cities of Rafah and Deir Al Balah on Friday night and Saturday, health officials said, as residents of the enclave feared Israel would expand its ground offensive into those last remaining areas where people have sought shelter.
Rafah is on Gaza's southern border with Egypt and more than half the enclave's 2.3 million people have fled there as the Israeli military presses its four-month-old operation against the Hamas group. Health officials said an Israeli air strike on a house in Rafah killed 14 people, including women and children.
Authorities in Gaza said on Saturday that more than 27,000 Palestinians have been confirmed killed since the start of the crisis

on Oct 7, 107 of them in the past two days, with thousands more feared lost amid the rains.
Tens of thousands of people have arrived in Rafah in recent days carrying belongings in their arms and pulling children on carts, since Israeli forces launched one of their biggest assaults to capture nearby Khan Yunis, the main southern city.
Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant had said on Thursday forces would now press on to Rafah. "The place turned black, I couldn't see what's in front of me. It was all dust and dirt. I was touching my surroundings, I was looking for my mobile to use the flashlight to look for my children, where are they? I found them under the rubble," said Ahmed Bassam Al Jamal, whose son was killed in Rafah.

Yemen's Houthis vow response after US, British strikes

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States and Britain launched strikes against 36 Houthi targets in Yemen, in the second day of major U.S. operations against Iran-linked groups following a deadly attack on American troops last weekend.
The strikes late on Saturday hit buried weapons storage facilities, missile systems, launchers and other capabilities the Houthis have used to attack Red Sea shipping, the Pentagon said, adding it targeted 13 locations across the country.
They are the latest blows in a conflict that has spread into the Middle East since Oct. 7, when the Palestinian militant group Hamas stormed Israel from the Gaza Strip, igniting a war that has drawn Tehran-backed groups into attacks on U.S. and Israeli targets on several fronts.
The Houthi military

spokesperson Yahya Sarea said the strikes "will not pass without a response and consequences."
"The building I live in shook," said Fatimah, a resident of Houthi-controlled Sanaa, adding that it had been years since she had felt such blasts in a country that has suffered years of war.
The Houthis did not announce any casualties.
The Yemen strikes are running parallel to an unfolding U.S. campaign of retaliation over the killing of three American soldiers in a drone strike by Iran-backed militants on an outpost in Jordan a week ago. On Friday, the U.S. carried out the first wave of that retaliation, striking in Iraq and Syria more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly killing nearly 40. The violence has added to concerns of the potential for further escalation.

