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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.

It should be mentioned that Pakistan averted default

last summer thanks to a short-term IMF bailout, but the programme expires in April and a new government will have to negotiate a long-term arrangement to keep the economy stable.

During a press briefing held early on Friday, Julie Kozack, the head of the Communications Department at the IMF, was asked about whether Pakistan was on track to secure the third tranche of the stand-by agreement reached in June 2023.

She was also asked whether the IMF would entertain any letter by Imran calling for investigations into election irregularities.

In her response, Kozack said: "On January 11, the IMF Executive Board approved the first review of the Stand-By Arrangement, with Pakistan that brought total disbursements under the Stand-By Arrangement to \$1.9 billion. The Stand-By Arrangement is supporting the authority's efforts to stabilise the economy and to, of course, with a strong focus on protecting the most vulnerable."

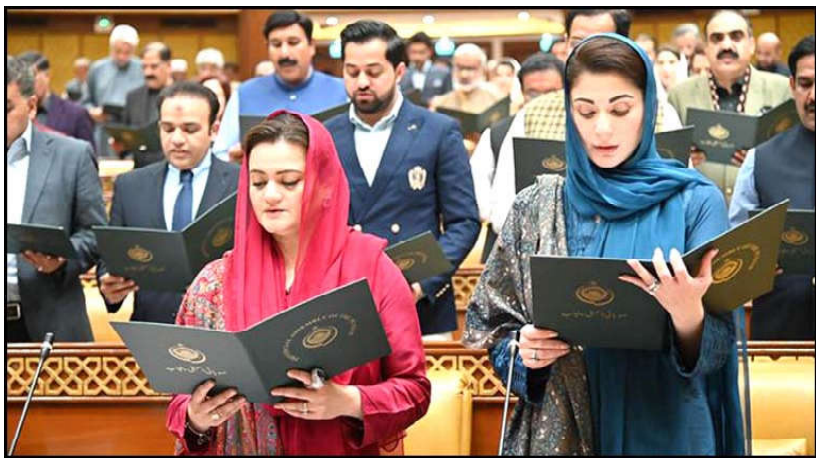
She said that during the tenure of the interim government, the authorities had "maintained economic stability".



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

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 Naem. 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.

Solangi says Journalists pillar of democracy, freedom of expression

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Friday that journalists were the main pillar of democracy and freedom of expression in the country.

The minister made 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.

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

taker 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.

The journalists also appreciated Murtaza Solangi's role as Federal Information Minister during the caretaker government.

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

Bilawal Bhutto said Sindh Govt's competition would be with Federal as well as other provincial governments. Water is a major issue and Syed Murad Ali Shah should have to take up this matter with the federal government and the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) so that it could be resolved at the earliest, Bilawal added.

Unity vital to steer country out of challenges: Shehbaz Sharif

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz President Shehbaz Sharif said on Friday that forging unity was essential to steer country out of existing challenges.

In a statement issued here, he said that collective efforts were direly needed for country's development and prosperity.

Shehbaz Sharif said that ensuring economic stability in the country was his top priority.

He said that country could not tolerate instability, adding that continuous steps would be taken to strengthen the country and provide relief to people.

"PML-N would take the country out of crisis under the dynamic leadership of PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif", he maintained.

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.

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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-religion 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.

Later, he visited various places in Kartarpur Sahib and appreciated the arrangements for pilgrims. The president also visited the museum and anchorage (Langar Khana).

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. The recommendations have now been forwarded to the Parliamentary Committee for Judges for final approval.

CCoE approves work on Pakistan's section of IP gas pipeline project

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCoE) on Friday approved work on the 80-kilometer segment of the Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project inside Pakistan.

The committee recommended, on a summary of the Petroleum Division "to start work on the 80 km segment of the pipeline inside Pakistan i.e. from Pakistan border up till Gwadar in the first phase," a press release said.

The project will be executed by Inter State Gas Systems (Pvt) Ltd. and will be funded through the

Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC).

All the concerned divisions gave a positive nod to move ahead with the project to ensure gas supplies to the people of Pakistan, addressing the increasing energy needs of the country. "This will not only boost the energy security of Pakistan but would enhance the confidence of the local industry who would be ensured with the enhanced gas supplies," it said.

The project would also catalyze the economic activity in the province of Balochistan and will contribute to the economic progress of Pakistan.

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 policies as apartheid at UN court; Israeli 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, including East Jerusalem," said a statement issued by the Foreign Office.

Delivering the oral statement on behalf of Pakistan, the Federal Minister for Law and Justice said that Israeli occupation continued to severely impede the exercise of the right to self-determination by the Palestinians. "Through its illegal settlement policy, Israel is trying to create irreversible facts on the ground; perpetuate its illegal occupation, and deny access to the Holy places in Jerusalem. Israeli policies and practices amounted to systematic racial discrimination and apartheid against the Palestinians. The ICJ would fail to discharge its judicial functions if it did not stop Israel from profiting "from its own continuing grave wrongs," the statement added.

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LAHORE: A delegation of MQM including Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori, Syed Muastafa Kamal and Farooq Sattar meeting with PMML-Q Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

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 Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party. The reserved seat winners for PML-N include Tahira Aurangzeb, Shaista Pervaiz, Mariam Aurangzeb, Nuzhat Sadiq, Musarrat Asif Khawaja, Seema Mohi ud Din Jamili, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Wajaha Qamar, Zeb Jaffar, Kiran Imran, Anusha Rahman Ahmad Khan, Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Asia Naz Tanoli, Saba Sadiq, Farah Naz Akbar, and Shahnaz Saleem Malik.

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 Abbas.

Deputy Prosecutor General (DPG) NAB Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi also appeared along with his team.

Former chairman PTI embraced Bushra Bibi in the court room as soon as they came face to face as both of them met each other after two and half weeks in the court. Both the accused were to be indicted. However the law-

yers of the accused filed application in the court for providing them copies of the reference.

Upon it the court fixed February 27 for indictment.

The PTI founder came on rostrum and said he has to consult dentist for check up.

The court remarked doctor is available there in jail too. You can approach him for check up.

Former chairman PTI said 7 months have passed and I have not approached doctor even once during this period. Lest jail doctor should extract my teeth because I have to get check up my teeth in the age of 70. The court directed give the application and we will issue appropriate order.

Upon it Imran Khan requested for his meeting with his wife in addition to check up of teeth.

The court accepted the plea for his meeting with his wife



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

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.

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 legal 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.

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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.

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



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

Motorway Islamabad.

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

department, advisors, consultants, and CEOs of insurance companies, says a press release issued here on Friday.

Chaired by the Federal Ombudsman for Insurance Dr. Khawar Jameel and hosted by Regional Advisor in-charge Lahore Abdul Basit Khan, the conference emphasized the need to expedite measures for providing quick and efficient justice to complainants regarding insurance companies.

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.

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

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.

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 is a unique province that witnessed the oldest civilizations including Ghandhara requiring proper projection on digital media to attract foreign investment imperative for rural development.

Being a gateway to the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa having about 3,000 years old history carried a unique geographical location, archaeological heritage and primitive history that saw an onslaught of invaders who marched to India through historic Khyber

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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.

whelming 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.



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.

Senators perturbed over PMDC's lopsided criteria for foreign medical graduates

ISLAMABAD (APP): The members of the Upper House of the Parliament on Friday expressed their resentment over the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC)'s lopsided criteria set pass house job license examination meted out for medical graduates of foreign universities.

Taking the floor on the matter of public importance during the fourth meeting of the 355th Senate session, Senator Taj Haider of Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarian (PPP) apprised the forum that none of the foreign universities' graduated MBBS students had passed the PMDC examination.

Senator Haider said it was a matter of public importance that the MBBS doctors graduated from foreign universities require a license from PMDC for house job for which the passing marks criterion set was 70 percent and no student managed to achieve it in the recent examination.

However, for students graduates from Pakistani universities and medical

colleges the passing marks were 50%, he said, adding, "The matter should be sent to the Senate Committee on Health."

While commenting on the issue, Senator Humayun Mohmand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) apprised the House that the matter was discussed earlier around 3-4 times in the committee.

The forum had directed the then newly restructured PMDC alongwith its Academic Council to look into the matter.

"As chairman committee, I directed to send the matter to privilege committee, as it is unjust to discriminate the MBBS graduates of foreign universities where many private medical colleges in Pakistan have lower standard than the foreign universities, and its graduates have been permitted 50% passing marks," he said.

Senator Mohmand termed the issue as a violation of Article 25 of the Constitution that demanded to ensure equal

opportunities to all at the same level.

He recommended that the PMDC should have a unified standard in this regard.

"During the farewell meeting of the Senate's Health Committee, the PMDC said their academic council has kept this issue on its next meeting agenda," he added.

Senator Sardar Muhammad Shafiq Tareen of Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) said the PMDC had turned a deaf ear to the recommendations of the Committee and the House should give ruling on this issue to resolve the matter.

Senator Prof. Dr. Mehr Taj Roghani of PTI said the issue of young doctors was a serious problem as there was globally 50% passing marks criteria while the PMDC had set a 70% benchmark that was not achieved by a single foreign graduate of the country which was regrettable.

She also raised the issue of massive increase in drugs prices.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi, cutting ribbon to inaugurate the ceremony of Islamabad Model School (I-V) E-7 sector in Federal Capital.

BISP launches annual reports for FY 2022-23 on key initiatives

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) has launched its Annual Reports for the fiscal year 2022-23, highlighting the progress and achievements in key initiatives such as the National Socio-Economic Registry, BISP Taleemi Wazaif, and BISP Nashonuma.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary of BISP, Amer Ali Ahmed expressed his gratitude to the officials for their continued support and collaboration.

He emphasized BISP's commitment to transparency and its primary focus on providing additional support to the most deserving families across the country, said a news release.

The Secretary BISP informed the development partners that the financial support to 9.3 Million households has been increased to Rs.10500 quarterly.

Highlighting the significance of transparency, Amer Ali Ahmed underscored the authenticity and

reliability of BISP's database, attributing it to the program's success. He also announced the expansion of payment mechanism through collaboration from two to six banks, aimed at ensuring efficient utilization of resources, with an estimated saving of Rs. 2 billion to be redirected towards core initiatives. Moreover, Amer Ali Ahmed outlined BISP's plans, particularly the expansion of Mobile Registration Vehicles, with 25 vans already deployed in remote areas of Sindh and Balochistan.

PML-N accuses PTI rivals of deliberate controversy in Islamabad election results

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz's (PML-N) MNA-elect, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, on Friday said that the results of three Islamabad constituencies were intentionally made controversial by rival Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidates.

Talking to media outside the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), he said the three victorious MNAs-elect from PML-N possess Form 45 and are prepared to furnish these forms at any appropriate forum. Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that the suspension of the success notification for PML-N's

MNAs-elect from Islamabad resulted from the continuous false actions of PTI's unsuccessful candidates in Islamabad.

According to the law, he said election complaints are exclusively handled by the Election Tribunal, not the High Court. Neither the High Court nor the Election Commission serve as trial courts for election-related issues, he added.

He said once tribunals are established, all election complaints are directed to them; other courts do not proceed with such cases. He said PTI leaders falsely claimed in the High Court that tribunals had not been set up.

Non Sharia Nikah PTI founder, Bushra file appeal plea against court decision

ISLAMABAD (Online): PTI founder and his wife Bushra Bibi have filed appeal in District and Sessions court Islamabad against the decision in Non-Sharia nikah case. Bushra Bibi has filed appeal plea in District and Sessions Court Islamabad through her lawyers Usman Gill, Khalid Yousof and Suleman Saifdar. Federation and Khawar Manika have been made respondents in appeal plea. The petition said the decision announced by civil judge Qudrat Ullah on January 02 runs contrary to the facts.

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 hydropower 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 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.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmed, along with DG NSER, Naveed Akbar, during the launch of Annual Reports of National Socio-Economic Registry, BISP Taleemi Wazaif (CCT Education), and BISP Nashonuma (CCT Health & Nutrition) for the FY 2022-23 at BISP Headquarters.

AJK PM urges UN to resolve long-pending Kashmir dispute

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister of Azad 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.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Anwar-ul-Haq in a statement issued in Muzaffarabad said that the world highest forum should take tangible measures to implement its resolutions

on Kashmir so that the people of Jammu and Kashmir could decide their political future in a proper manner. Reacting to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the AJK prime minister said, "India cannot mislead the world community through its baseless narratives. He also urged the United Nations to take effective notice of India's expansionist designs in the region."

AIOU launches spring plantation campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched spring plantation campaign of Year 2024.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood inaugurated the campaign by planting apricots in the lawn adjacent to the new ICT building.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that planting was the most important need and Allama Iqbal Open University was trying to play its full role every year.

He said that the gardeners of the university had maintained this tradition for which they deserve congratulations. Deans, principal officers and faculty members have planted Japanese fruit, pear, peach, plum, apricot, sweet and citrus trees. Director Follow-up and Coordination, Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Shah, while briefing the Vice Chancellor on the planting campaign, said that as a result of the hard work of gardeners, AIOU secured first position in all three categories of flower exhibition in Rose and Jasmine Garden organized by the Islamabad.

Iranian Ambassador highlights humanitarian collaboration in meeting with PRCS chairman

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Dr. Reza Amiri, the Ambassador of Iran to Pakistan, reaffirmed the crucial importance of humanitarian service, expressing a steadfast dedication to advancing humanitarian efforts in Pakistan through cooperation with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS). In a meeting held at the PRCS National Headquarters, Dr.

Amiri and the Chairman of the Red Crescent, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, emphasized the significance of joint efforts in improving public health services across Pakistan.

Dr. Amiri detailed strategies for fostering bilateral collaboration with the aim of bolstering fraternal ties, particularly through healthcare endeavors in Pakistan in partnership with PRCS. He highlighted PRCS's advancement under the dynamic and forward-thinking leadership of Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, affirming Iran's eagerness to contribute to public health infrastructure. He underscored the potential for setting exemplary precedents in the realms of education and healthcare.

Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, while conversing with Iranian Ambassador Dr. Reza Amiri, emphasized the importance of Iran's participation in public health projects and the provision of dialysis facilities for individuals afflicted with kidney diseases. Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari expressed gratitude to the Iranian Red Crescent for sending relief supplies to the flood-affected individuals in Balochistan. He stressed the urgency of cooperation from Iran in training and enhancing the skills of medical professionals. The discussions also emphasized the need for cooperation in training and enhancing the capabilities of medical personnel, particularly in addressing common diseases. Both leaders discussed the significance of robust public health infrastructure in benefiting communities with limited capabilities.



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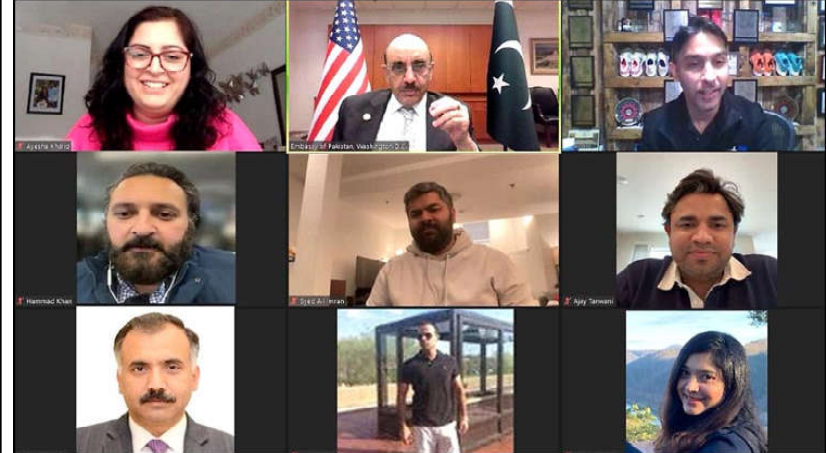
Maryam Nawaz vacates NA-119 seat

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 Farooq, 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) Iftikhar Shahid.



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

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.

Tariq appointed MD, PBM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Syed Tariq Mehmood ul Hassan has been appointed as the Managing Director of Pakistan Bait ul Mal (PBM) for two-year term.

According to a notification signed by Cap (Retd) Malik Shahbaz Waheed, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Tariq Mehmood ul Hassan will serve the PBM on an honorary basis with immediate effect.

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.

70 newly elected MNAs completed registration process at NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): After successfully making their way to the Lower House of the Parliament, so far 70 newly elected members of the National Assembly (MNAs) have completed their registration process at the Secretariat.

The process of registration of the newly elected MNAs was continued in the facilitation center established in the National Assembly Secretariat, the Spokesperson of the National Assembly said in a news release.

He said the Facilitation Center had been established in Committee Room No. 2 of the National Assembly.

Provision of land by CDA for IIU Case: SC directs CDA, Intl company to resolve the matter jointly within month

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) has directed CDA and International Company EN Point to jointly resolve the matter again regarding provision of land by CDA for International IT University (IIU) in Islamabad within a month.

The court remarked an agreement of lease against Rs 483.960 million was reached between international company and CDA in connection with 41.2 acres land on Kurri Road Islamabad. The respective company made payment of Rs 170 million and the remaining was to be paid by it. The said land

will not be used for some purpose other than university. This order has been issued by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa while presiding over a three members bench of SC on Friday.

It has been further said in the order CDA board should hold its meeting and decide the matter in consultation with the applicant. In the event of execution of agreement again, CDA will give possession to company subject to payment of additional amount.

Justice Musarrat Hilali inquired this is the same land where IT university was being constructed.

ICCPO holds online Khuli katcheri

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCPO) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan on Friday held an online khuli katcheri to give the residents direct access to the police high ups, a public relations officer said.

He said that the ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan responded to the public queries via phone calls from 02:00pm to 03:00pm.

ICCPO Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan listened to the problems of the callers and directed the concerned officers for their immediate solution. Most of the problems that were mentioned were the citizen's personal and were related to police stations.

Speaking to the citizens, the ICCPO said that the police were striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible. He said the purpose of such initiatives was aimed at bridging the gap between police and the public.

People from across the city put their proposals before the ICCPO. Most of the issues were related to citizen personal matters, investigation matters, early disposal of cases and others.

The Capital Police Chief told the viewers that the federal capital has witnessed a clear reduction of crime incidents due to effective policing measures, hard work of the cops and swift action on "Pucar-15" calls.

Citizens are also requested to cooperate with the Islamabad Capital Police and report any suspicious activity on Pucar-15 helpline.

IESSI hosts free medical camp for ICTI's brick kiln community

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of the International Day of Social Justice, the Islamabad Employees Social Security Institution (IESSI) with the collaboration of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Pakistan and the Labour Department ICT organized a free medical camp for the brick kiln community here on Friday.

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Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani presiding over a meeting of the Senate Finance Committee at Parliament House, Islamabad.