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Vows to deal with terrorists with full might No one will be allowed to sabotage elections: Military top brass

RAWALPINDI (APP): Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir on Wednesday said that Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity were sacrosanct and inviolable.

"Pakistan believes in peaceful co-existence with all states, however, there would never be any compromise over country's sovereignty, national honour and aspirations of Pakistani people," he said while chairing the 262nd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters.

According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs), including officers and men of the Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies and the

citizens who have laid their lives for ensuring peace and stability in the country.

The forum resolved that terrorists, their facilitators and abettors, working on behalf of hostile forces to destabilise Pakistan, would be dealt with full might of the state. The conference was briefed on the callous Indian campaign of extra-territorial and extra-judicial killings, perpetuating state-sponsored terrorism and targeting Pakistani citizens. It agreed that blatant violation of international laws by India and its real face be exposed to the world. The international community has already shown serious concerns over the criminal behaviour of India and its use of state apparatus for killing spree around the world," the forum noted.



ISLAMABAD: President, Dr. Arif Alvi exchanging views with Major General (Retd) Faheem-ul-Aziz, High Commissioner-Designate of Pakistan to Sri Lanka during meeting held at Aiwan-e-Sadr

Pak HC-designate to Sri Lanka calls on President Alvi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to Sri Lanka Major General (Retd) Faheem Ul Aziz called on President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday.

During the meeting, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its bilateral relations with Sri Lanka, which spanned over seven decades of the strong bonds, according to a President House news release.

President Alvi stressed the need to further promote the people-to-people and cultural contracts between Pakistan and Sri Lanka, besides consolidating the ties

in the fields of economy and education.

He said that bilateral trade volume with Sri Lanka must be increased to its full potential, adding the good-will feelings of the two countries towards each other should be converted into strong economic ties.

President Alvi said that Pakistan had Buddhist heritage sites which were of great importance for the promotion of tourism activities in the country.

The president congratulated Major General (Retd) Faheem Ul Aziz on his appointment as Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka.

Maryam continues to fire salvos at Imran

NAROWAL (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Vice President and chief organiser Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday took jibe at the embattled PTI founder who, she said, spread evil in the country.

Speaking to constituents in Narowal, she applauded the large crowd that gathered over there. She said she was eagerly waiting for her visit to Narowal.

She said many conspiracies were hatched against



Nawaz Sharif, asking what injustice did not happen to him.

She claimed, "One by one all the enemies of Nawaz Sharif are getting exposed as today people see all cases against the PML-N supreme as just conspiracies to keep him out of power." Speaking about Bushra Bibi, she said she was not elated about the arrest of the former premier's wife.

She, however, recalled the time when she had spent time in prison emphasising she too was someone's wife.

"The PML-N has not seen as much relief as they (PTI) are getting from courts today," she claimed.

ECP summons meeting to discuss deteriorating security situation in KP, Balochistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned a meeting on Thursday to discuss the worsening law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

According to ECP

spokesman, the meeting will be attended by the Interior Minister, Secretaries of Interior, Chief Secretaries, Inspector Generals of Police from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, along with representatives from intelligence agencies.



RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir chairing the 262nd Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at the General Headquarters.

Toshakhana reference: Imran, Bushra sentenced to 14 years

Both barred from holding public office for 10 years, fined Rs787m each; Bushra Bibi 'put under house arrest' as Bani Gala declared sub-jail

RAWALPINDI (Online): Judge Muhammad Bashir of Accountability Court (AC) Islamabad has awarded 14 years Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) each to Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi and fined Rs787 million each in Toshakhana reference.

The accused have been declared disqualified for holding any public office for 10 years. Under NAB ordinance the two accused will not be able to make any financial dealing with any bank or financial institution.

On reaching jail Bushra Bibi was arrested under court's decision.

NAB deputy prosecutor General Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi was present in the court along

with his team. The court ordered at the inception of hearing the two accused be called in the court. Jail authorities presented both the accused in court.

The court while addressing Imran Khan inquired Khan Sahb have you prepared statement under 342. Imran Khan replied yes he has prepared. But first let my lawyers and Bushra Begum come. I will file my statement. The court said you should file your statement in the court as we have to move ahead IN the proceedings.

Upon it former Prime Minister said why the court is in haste. Islamabad High Court has already rejected our plea for stay order. I have been called by assistant su-

perintendent jail for marking my attendance.

The PTI founder left for his barrack after saying this.

The court sent message for calling Imran Khan again. Assistant Superintendent Jail told the court Imran Khan is not ready to come to court. The court after some time, decided to announce the verdict.

Meanwhile Bushra Bibi wife of PTI founder Imran Khan has presented herself for arrest in Toshakhana case. Following the announcement of awarding sentence to Bushra Bibi and Imran Khan in Tosha Khana case, wife of PTI founder decided to present herself for arrest in Adiala Jail.

She reached Adiala jail

and presented herself for arrest. Women police arrested her. Earlier in the day, Accountability Judge Mohammad Bashir sentenced the former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to 14 years in jail in the Toshakhana case.

The PTI founder has also been disqualified for 10 years while a fine of Rs1.573 billion has also been imposed on the couple.

During the hearing of the case the court recorded statement of Bushra Bibi under 342 in regard to questionnaire containing 25 questions.

The lawyers for Imran Khan had filed petition to court to restore the right to cross question.

We don't want to give such order which causes delay in election: SC

ISLAMABAD (Online): Supreme Court (SC) during the hearing of the case related to acceptance of nomination papers has remarked we don't want to give such order which causes delay in the election.

Appeal of candidate from PP-224 regarding acceptance of his nomination papers came up for hearing before single bench of SC led by Justice Jamal Mandokhel here Wednesday.

Special secretary Election Commission (EC) appeared in the court.

The court remarked during the hearing of the case petitioner filed appeal late by 12 days. Permission for election could have been given had the appeal been filed in time. We don't want to give such decision which causes delay in the election.

Justice Jamal gu-

tioned from special secretary why the EC has kept schedule for small period. EC should have known that appeals have to be filed.

Special secretary EC told the court if nomination papers are accepted at this stage then the election can delay in the constituency. The process of printing of ballot papers has been completed. In several districts the process of sending ballot papers is underway.

Special secretary told the SC 260 million ballot papers have been printed for 850 constituencies, 850 tons paper was sought for the previous election and 2170 tons paper has been sought for this election. 2400 tons paper was needed being the candidates in large number. The size of ballot papers has been reduced to meet the need of paper.



ISLAMABAD: Advisor to PM on Aviation Air Marshal (R) Farhat Hussain Khan called on caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Nothing educates & illuminates better than cinema: Solangi

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Muratza Solangi on Wednesday underlined the need for promoting cinemas in the country to foster cultural values of tolerance and harmony in the society.

Addressing the screening ceremony of a Kazakh movie at the Pakistan National Council of Arts, he said, "Nothing impresses, educates and illuminates better than cinema. Probably hundreds of high-pitch, hyperbolic and hyper ventilating speeches cannot educate you like this movie, I am sure, can educate and sensitize you better."

He expressed gratitude to the ambassador of Kazakhstan in Pakistan

and Caretaker Minister for Culture and Heritage Jamal Shah for inviting him to speak on the screening of "Kazakh Khanate".

"Nobody probably in this auditorium can truly represent cinema better than Jamal Shah. He lives and breathes cinema," he said while expressing the resolve to work with his cabinet colleague to promote the culture through cinema.

"We will try both with and without the government to do our job to address the challenges people faced today," he said while highlighting the urgency for the next elected government to address the poly crises such as culture of intolerance, extreme polarization amid the heavily divided global landscape.



Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is addressing the election rally of Pakistan People's Party in Malakand district.

Bilawal vows to bury old politics of revenge, divisiveness

MALAKAND (INP): Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday resolved to start a process of reconciliation in the country by burying 'old politics of revenge, divisiveness and hatred' if his party is voted to power in Feb 8 elections.

Addressing an election rally in Malakand, the former foreign minister hit out at Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif for their politics of revenge and divisiveness.

He said Mr Sharif had vowed to fight for the sanctity of vote but the situation was other way around in this election.

Bilawal said the former PTI chairman used to call the political opponents thieves, adding that if the people attached to the PTI founder were "angels".

He said that former pre-

mier was now behind the bars and lamented that his wife had also been jailed. While asserting the democratic values, the PPP chief said he was not celebrating the PTI founder's conviction.

While urging people to vote for the PPP in upcoming elections, he said his party believed that it was the right of public to elect their prime minister.

He said it was the PPP that could stop Nawaz Sharif from becoming the prime minister for fourth time as he had no plans for uplifting of the country.

Appreciating the people of Malakand for bravely fighting the terrorism, he said, "You all will get a chance on Feb 8 and we will together drive the country out of crises".

He complained that the PPP was never given level-playing field in any elections.

Chinese envoy lauds PAF's steadfast determination for balance of power in region



ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zaidong, called on Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Zaeher Ahmed Baber Sidhu here on Wednesday.

The Chinese ambassador lauded the steadfast determination of PAF leadership to ensure balance of power in the region.

During the meeting, matters pertaining to evolving geo-strategic environment and regional developments were discussed, a Pakistan Air Force (PAF) news release said.

The dignitaries underscored the necessity of revitalizing the framework for operational training across all domains, emphasizing the paramount importance of preparedness and seamless coordination in the face of evolving security challenges. The Air Chief shared

broader contours of the PAF's modernization drive in order to transform Pakistan Air Force into a Next Generation Air Force through induction of niche technologies with a special focus on indigenization and revamping of training.

Highlighting the significance of the longstanding strategic partnership between the two countries, he emphasized that the PAF leadership wished to further deepen the existing aviation cooperation and exchanges with China in the fields of human resource and technology so as to jointly address shared security challenges.

He further said, "Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic, defence relationship and time-tested friendship with China which are based on convergence on all important issues relating to regional peace."

Pak pavilion at New York's tourism show captivated visitors: Masood



WASHINGTON (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the U.S., Masood Khan, Tuesday congratulated the visiting Gilgit-Baltistan's Planning Minister, Raja Nasir Ali Khan, over the success of Pakistan pavilion at the weekend's "Travel & Adventure Show" in New York, saying it would take the country's rich tourism potential to the next level.

During a meeting with the minister at Pakistan Embassy, Ambassador Masood Khan said the pavilion, which he inaugurated on Saturday, captivated the global community and evinced keen interest in Pakistan's rich cultural and tourism potential, according to an embassy press release.

Govt increases petrol price by Rs13.55 per litre

Monitoring Desk
ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday increased petrol and diesel prices in a fortnightly review.

A notification issued by Finance Division states that the petrol price has been jacked up by Rs13.55 to Rs272.89 per litre while high speed diesel price has been increased by Rs2.75 to Rs276.21 per litre.

The revised prices will come into effect from February 1, 2024. The latest increase comes as tension continues to flare up in Middle East amid Israeli military strikes in Gaza.

The notification added that the increase in petroleum prices had been recommended by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra).

Mach attack martyrs funeral prayers held, says ISPR

RAWALPINDI (APP): The funeral prayers of the Mach attack martyrs were held at Headquarters FC Balochistan (North), Quetta who embraced martyrdom while fighting the terrorists in Mach, Bolan on the night of January 29 and 30.

The funeral prayers of martyred soldiers identified as Lance Naik Rehmat Ullah, age 30 years, resident of district Dera Ghazi Khan and Sepoy Muhammad Zaman, age 28 years, resident of district Tank were offered in Headquarters FC Balochistan (North), an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said on Wednesday.

Fake document attributed to Pak Head of Afghan Mission: FO Spox

ISLAMABAD (APP): Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zehra Baloch on Wednesday said that a document attributed to Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan Ubaid Ur Rehman Nizamani on the social media was fake.

"Such fake letters are being circulated with malicious intent. We advise caution to all," she posted on X.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Cipher case result

The writing had been on the wall. Given how hastily the special court, appointed under the Official Secrets Act, had been proceeding in the cipher case trial, seemingly without regard for due process, a rushed verdict had been expected.

It was delivered yesterday, a week before the country heads to polls, with sentences of 10 years' imprisonment for both former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Special Court Judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain, who oversaw the proceedings inside Adiala Jail, read out the verdict even as the accused — now convicts — were protesting the denial of their trial rights.

It bears noting that the Islamabad High Court had ordered retrials of this same case on two previous occasions, noting each time glaring procedural irregularities in how it was being conducted. The third attempt doesn't seem to have gone differently, and many observers predict the higher courts may not be charitable towards the special court whenever the verdict goes into appeal. Given the IHC's earlier rebukes, it is worth asking what the special court was seeking to accomplish by concluding the matter so hastily. Considering that the death penalty had been sought against both politicians, the situation called for far more restraint.

Instead, there were some bizarre developments over the weekend: the judge appointed state counsel for the defendants without their consent, and later reportedly denied the defendants their right to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses. Meanwhile, the legal teams appointed by the two accused complained that they were repeatedly denied access to the proceedings.

To top it off, on Monday, the case was wrapped up at breakneck speed in a marathon session that ran till well into the night. Everything made it seem as if some kind of deadline had been set for the trial to be concluded and a verdict issued.

From Mr Khan waving a paper from the podium as he addressed a large political gathering, claiming that he had unearthed a conspiracy against his government, to his conviction for divulging state secrets, the cipher saga will be remembered as a sorry episode in our diplomatic, legal and political history.

A diplomatic faux pas was needlessly dragged into a political dispute. The immediate fallout saw already soured relations with the US deteriorate further, and for no meaningful purpose.

Politically, the conspiracy narrative proved less useful in bolstering public sympathy for the PTI than its political opponents' failure to manage the precarious economic situation they inherited from its ouster. Lastly, whatever case there may have been against Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi, it was weakened irreparably by conducting the trial in haste. What good did any of it achieve? One can only marvel at the short-sightedness displayed by all actors in this sordid drama.

Changing India

Javid Husain

Two critical developments are radically transforming India, with far-reaching implications for its minorities, the region, and the world at large.

The first and foremost is the transformation of a secular India, as envisioned by its founding fathers, into a Hindu rashtra driven by Hindutva. The second development is the rapid economic growth of India over the past three decades, which has catapulted its economy to the fifth position at the global level.

The growing sway of Hindutva in India under the leadership of the Modi-led BJP, which is closely allied with RSS, gives shrinking political and social space to non-Hindu religious minorities, which are facing increasing difficulties in leading their lives according to their own social and religious customs, besides discrimination generally.

This is not surprising if one looks at the philosophy of RSS as defined by its founder, V.D. Savarkar, and his successors. For instance, M.S. Golwalkar, the second RSS supreme leader, stressed that non-Hindu minorities "must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment — not even citizens' rights".

The statements and policy decisions of the Modi-led BJP government and its leaders clearly reflect this policy of Hindutva in action.

There have been frequent reports of mob attacks on Muslims and their persecution; in some cases, there has been a tragic loss of lives with the connivance of local officials. As chief minister of Gujarat, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi was implicated in the deadly anti-Muslim attacks.

The official consecration of the Ram temple on the site of Babri Masjid in Ayodhya under Modi's leadership is the latest example of the continued implementation of the Hindutva agenda. BJP activists are agitating to replace mosques with temples at many other sites.

The growing sway of Hindutva in India is not only bad news for the Muslims and other minorities in the country, it is also the harbinger of a belligerent approach by New Delhi towards its neighbours in pursuit of its hegemonic designs in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

Under Modi, one can expect India to pursue a hard-line policy in handling its relations with Pakistan.

The annexation of occupied Kashmir by India in August 2019, in violation of UN Security Council resolutions, was a clear example of this belligerent approach, as was the earlier Indian air attack on Balakot.

Indian support to terrorist groups in Balochistan and its nefarious designs against Pakistan's security were established by the arrest of Indian agent Kulbhushan Jadhav in March 2016. India has also been following a long-term policy of weakening Pakistan's friendly relations with Iran by attempting to exploit Pakistan-Iran policy differences on Afghanistan, cross-border terrorism, and sectarian issues.

It is unfortunate that both Iran and Pakistan in the past failed to come to grips with the machinations of India and some non-regional powers in exacerbating their bilateral tensions on account of the issue of cross-border

terrorism as reflected by the recent exchange of air strikes between them.

Hopefully, the recent visit of the Iranian foreign minister to Islamabad would lead to the strengthening of Pakistan-Iran cooperation in combating cross-border terrorism as announced by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

India's rapid economic growth provides it with the resources for the build-up of its military might and the realisation of its hegemonic designs in South Asia and the Indian Ocean region.

According to IMF estimates, India's GDP was estimated to be \$3.73 trillion in 2023 against \$341 billion only for Pakistan. This enabled India to increase its defence budget to \$81.4bn as against \$10.3bn for Pakistan in 2022, according to the research institute Sipri. The huge and growing difference between the power potential of the two countries could have serious consequences for Pakistan's security.

Pakistan, therefore, cannot afford to lower its guard in the management of its relations with India. We should avoid the mistakes of the two extremes of appeasement, which will merely embolden India, and a high-risk and adventurist policy which will prove to be counterproductive as our Kargil experience shows.

Instead, Pakistan should adopt a long-term approach for the realisation of its own strategic goals based on the synthesis of the political, economic, diplomatic, and military dimensions of policy in facing the enduring threat to its security emanating from India. - Courtesy Dawn

Israel über alles

Mahir Ali

Once the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague endorsed the substance of South Africa's case against Israel (albeit not in its entirety) last week, the Zionist project's international collaborators were as desperate for a distraction as Israel. The latter promptly provided it with the allegation that a dozen UNRWA employees participated in the Oct 7 atrocities in southern Israel.

Led by the US, Germany and UK, a number of Western nations and their allies suspended their crucial funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which was set up in 1949, in the wake of the Nakba, to provide means of subsistence to Palestinian refugees. These include basic education, primary healthcare and other vital services. Its operations stretch from Gaza and East Jerusalem to the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

A secondary distraction was provided by a drone attack that killed three US personnel and injured dozens in Jordan. US media reports suggest the drone wasn't intercepted based on the suspicion that it might be 'friendly' (Israeli), and that the US authorities had no idea where it came from, although they showed no hesitation in blaming 'Iranian-allied' militias and vowing vengeance. That's the latter-day equivalent of the much-mocked command to 'round up the usual suspects', but perhaps the bigger question is why there should be a US military base where Jordan's borders meet those of Syria and Iraq — or anywhere else in the country.

'Guilty until proved innocent' also applies to UNRWA, which has previously been accused by Israel of preaching hatred in its schools — which,

mind you, help to place the Palestinians among the best-educated Arab populations. The accusation cannot be taken seriously in a milieu where reciting the true history of Israel as a colonial-settler society is deemed antisemitic, and there is no equivalent focus on the pernicious nonsense drummed into the innocent minds of Israeli schoolchildren.

UNRWA has suspended nine of its accused employees pending an internal probe, and two others are among the dozens of staff killed in Israel's latest invasion of Gaza. It is distressing that the accusations involving 0.01pc of its 13,000 employees, whether or not true, have been deemed sufficient by so many Western states to cut off funding to one of the only organisations that may be able to avert a famine. All too many of them, meanwhile, continue to arm and diplomatically abet the perpetrators of what the ICJ deems a potential genocide.

That impression was consolidated on Sunday when 11 members of the Netanyahu cabinet attended a congregation in Jerusalem tagged the 'Victory of Israel Conference: Settlement Brings Security', which called for the 'voluntary migration' of Palestinians away from the Gaza Strip. That not only defies the ICJ's interim injunction against incitement to genocide, but also reflects the Nazi attitude towards European Jews before the Germans opted for gas chambers.

Notwithstanding the 'never again' slogan of 80 years ago, the Zionists brought with them to the 'promised land' the Nazi concepts of lebensraum and untermenschen — territorial expansion and lesser beings, the first applying to European Jews and the second to Pales-

tinians. The devotion to their would-be exterminators stretched to hiring one of Hitler's leading henchmen, Otto Skorzeny, as a Mossad hitman — after he had, equally deplorably, served as military adviser to Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser.

It was the Nazi regime's expansionism, rather than the related Judeocide, that propelled the British and eventually Anglo-American response — although the latter was also instigated by the Soviet advance into Eastern Europe after the Red Army had turned the tide against the Wehr-macht. It remains to be seen how far the Israel Defence Forces will go before any nation other than the dispersed Palestinians steps up to challenge the Israelis.

The resistance so far has been restricted to so-called non-state actors. Saudi Arabia remains keen on establishing formal ties with Israel. Arab and other Muslim states have vaguely backed South Africa's case at the ICJ, but none of them has officially signed up as a party to the dispute, as Germany has disgustingly done on behalf of Israel, even as it staves off its own neo-Nazis.

Whatever the ICJ's verdict, it is likely to come too late to halt the genocide. It may depend on how far Israel goes henceforth, but its establishment is accustomed to defying UN injunctions — as long as the pecuniary and moral assistance from the US and the rest of the West remains intact. It does not have much to worry about on that score. Its self-conception of uber alles remains intact among its acolytes, whose every action is directed towards enabling Israel to achieve its clearly genocidal and arguably Nazi-like aims. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Gohar urges private sector to help achieve \$100 billion exports target in 5 years

Also says government to increase FDI for boosting country's economy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Minister for Commerce and Interior Dr Gohar Ejaz on Wednesday said that the government intended to take the exports to US\$ 100 billion in next 5 years and the business community should play an active role in achieving the target. Pakistan needed to boost exports to improve its economy, and for that the private sector should focus on diversification, he added.

The minister was talking to an delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) that called on him led by its Ahsan Zafar

Bakhtawari, an ICCI news release said.

He said that the business community should partner with the government in accelerating the economic development. The business community should also take an active part in corporate social responsibility activities to address issues of the poor segments of the society and promote welfare activities in the country, he added.

Gohar Ejaz assured that he would cooperate in resolving the key issues of the businessmen to facilitate them in business promotion. Speaking on the



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interior, Commerce, Industries, Overseas Pakistanis and Investment, Dr. Gohar Ejaz addressing to foreign and local investors at Overseas Chamber of Commerce and Industry Karachi.

Ambassador Blome says: US, Pakistan working together for climate-smart agricultural practices

ISLAMABAD (Online): U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome said on Wednesday that the United States and Pakistan are collaboratively striving to provide farmers, ranchers, and foresters with innovative revenue streams.

"Joint efforts aim to assist farmers in adopting climate-smart agricultural practices while expanding market options and ensuring fairer prices for their produce," he said while

addressing an event organized to celebrate the Pakistan Agricultural Development project, a 20.9 million dollar US Department of Agriculture-funded initiative with a wide array of impressive accomplishments.

"Together, we provided 63,000 farmers with training on using Good Agriculture Practices. We introduce new production techniques and improved post-harvest storage and processing," he added.

He said, "We established model plots with select farmers and private sector service providers to demonstrate the benefits of these practices. Jobs have been created for 600 women in Khairpur and Sindh through the establishment of three date-pitting centers," he added.

Pakistan Agricultural Development grants enabled farmers to build high-efficiency drip irrigation systems.

ADB committed record climate finance of almost \$10 billion in 2023

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed a record amount of climate finance in 2023 to help its developing member countries (DMCs) in Asia and the Pacific cut greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of a warming planet. The ADB committed \$9.8 billion in climate finance from its own resources last year — \$5.5 billion for mitigation and \$4.3 billion for adaptation — a more than 46% increase on its 2022 climate financing commitments.

"The bank's climate adaptation finance commitments in 2023 mean that the ADB has provided more than \$10.4 billion in



ISLAMABAD: A woman is buying flowers at flower market in sector F-6 during rainy weather in the Federal Capital.

Atif Ikram says: Saudi Arabia is most potential market for Pakistan's exports

ISLAMABAD: The Commercial Session of Pakistan consulate General Jeddah organized an



interactive session with Pakistani businessmen based in Saudi Arabia and Saudi Importers on the occasion of visit of Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) to Saudi Arabia. Mr. Khalid Majid, Consul General of Pakistan alongwith other senior Officials of the Consulate and Commercial Section were also attended

Rupee gains 04 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Wednesday gained 4 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.50 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.54. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.8 and Rs 281.5 respectively.

The price of the Euro decreased by 35 paise to close at Rs 302.33 against the last day's closing of Rs 302.68, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The Japanese Yen remained unchanged and closed at Rs 1.89, whereas a decrease of 59 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs 354.26 compared to the last closing of Rs 354.85. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 02 paise each to close at Rs 76.09 and Rs 74.52.

Macroeconomic stabilization leads to improvement: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): The country's economy experienced a notable stabilization during the first half of the current fiscal year (2023-24), owing to implementation of effective measures and prudent policies by the interim government that played a pivotal role in achieving this milestone.

"The first half of FY2024 has ended with economic stabilization. The government's effective measures and prudent policies helped stabilize the macroeconomic situation, leading to a gradual improvement in economic activities," says Monthly Economic Update and

Outlook for January 2024 released by finance ministry here Wednesday.

According to the report, this persistent uptick in economic indicators has resulted in improved GDP growth of 2.13% in the first quarter of FY2024, with expectations for continued growth in the second quarter.

It is apparent from better growth prospects in the real sector visible in month-on-month (MoM) increase in Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) growth, an improvement in high-frequency indicators and better crop prospects. Despite the challenges, external stability has been

observed as evident from a surplus in the current account in December, it says adding on the fiscal side, the revenue performance is encouraging, however, there is significant pressure on expenditures attributed to higher markup payments.

"Despite this, the government is taking measures to manage non-markup spending, which is evidenced by continuous improvement in primary surplus," it adds.

According to the report, Pakistan has recently received a tranche equivalent to US\$ 705.6 million, following the successful completion of

the first review by the Executive Board of International Monetary Fund (IMF) under Stand by Arrangements (SBA), which is providing market confidence and exchange rate stability.

The report predicted that economic activities would further strengthen during second half of FY2024 — contingent on the continuation of sound and prudent economic policies which will gear toward achieving the set growth target for the current fiscal year.

The report highlights the performance of agriculture sector saying, wheat crop for Rabi 2023-24 has been cultivated on an

estimated area of 9.160 million hectares, surpassing the sowing target of 8.998 million hectares by 1.8 percent to achieve the production target of 32.12 million tonnes.

During Jul-Dec FY2024, the agriculture credit disbursement reached to Rs 1105.8 billion as compared to Rs 842.4 billion last year, an increase of 31.3 percent. According to the report, Large Scale Manufacturing (LSM) during November 2023, increased by 1.6 percent on YoY basis against the decline of 4.9 percent in the same month last year. While on a MoM basis.

CM Naqvi inaugurates first govt cancer care hospital

Independent Report
LAHORE: The first cancer hospital at the government level has been made operational on the special direction of Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi.

The CM inaugurated the Mayo Cancer Care Hospital at Manawan, here on Wednesday.

Mohsin Naqvi while announcing to provide free treatment facility to the patients in the cancer hospital revealed that every patient will be provided free treatment and no patient suffering from any stage will be denied treatment in the first government cancer hospital. For the time being, the cancer hospital comprises 100-beds and will be increased up to 1000-beds in the coming few years. The CM visited the cancer hospital and reviewed facilities being

provided to the patients. He obtained a token from the machine and ordered to simplify the automated system, adding that besides English writing, Urdu writing should also be displayed on the token machine for the facilitation of the patients. The CM reviewed the treatment mechanism of the cancer patients and monitored the whole chemotherapy mechanism. He visited the room for collecting blood samples and also planted a sapling in the lawn of the hospital.

Mohsin Naqvi issued directions to write in the Urdu language on the sign boards for the facilitation of patients. He revealed that chemotherapy and surgery will be carried out in the cancer hospital. All the administrative and financial affairs of the cancer hospital have been handed over entirely to the

King Edward Medical College University. A state of the art hospital has been built for the treatment of cancer patients at the government level, he added.

The CM apprised that the cancer treatment is highly expensive which a common man cannot afford, adding that free treatment will be provided to the patients in this hospital. It is a dire need of the people of Punjab to have a high-quality cancer hospital at the government level. It is the foremost responsibility of the government to provide a state of the art hospital for cancer patients at the government level, he added.

CM Naqvi while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Mayo Cancer Care Hospital apprised that the first complete cancer care hospital of Punjab has been established.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi cutting the ribbon to inaugurate Mayo Cancer Care Hospital Manawan.

CM KP directs to compliance with Urban Mobility Plan

Independent Report
ABBOTTABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Justice @ Syed Arshad Hussain Shah chaired a meeting in Islamabad to deliberate on the Urban Mobility Plan concerning divisional headquarter Abbottabad.

In the meeting, senior officials from the National Highways Authority (NHA), Planning Commission, as well as pertinent federal and provincial officials were also present.

The meeting focused on the approved strategies for constructing an interchange along the Hazara Motorway to facilitate Abbottabad City. NHA has outlined plans to establish an interchange linking Abbottabad and Sherwan Road, while the PC-1 for the proposed project has also been approved by the C&W Department.

In addition to the interchange, the project encompasses the construction of a flyover and tunnel.

Two outlaws arrested by Shikarpur Police

Our Correspondent
SHIKARPUR: Shikarpur Police succeeded in arresting two snatchers/outlaws in injured condition after an police encounter took place near Shar Laaro in the jurisdiction of Lakhli Ghulam Shah Police Station on Wednesday.

According to initial reports, The Lakhli Police with the help of villagers caught the two robbers after an encounter took place between the police and the police and arrested the two robbers identified as Abdul Qadeer Shar and Syed Mubsharaf Ali Shah in injured condition and also recovered two pistols from their possession.

Punjab Governor says: Prophet Muhammad (SAWW) life and teachings are source of guidance for all mankind

Independent Report
LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman today attended the "Serat-ul-Nabi (SAW)" prize distribution ceremony at Al Hamra Hall Mall Road Lahore as a special guest.

Speaking on this occasion, Punjab Governor Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that love and reverence for Prophet Muhammad (Peace be Upon Him) is a part of every Muslim's faith. Governor Punjab said that Prophet Muhammad's life and teachings are the source of guidance for all

mankind. He emphasized that we should take guidance from Seerat Tayyaba (Peace be Upon Him) in order to build a society based on love, tolerance, and brotherhood. Governor Punjab appreciated the author of the book, Rai Manzoor Nasir, and said that he did a commendable work by writing a very simple and easy to understand book on the Prophet's (PBUH) life and teachings. Governor Punjab also appreciated the efforts of Rai Manzoor Nasir for organizing the first unique competition.



LAHORE: Governor of Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman, giving check to winner Muhammad Ismail during International Competition Serat-ul-Nabi (Peace Be Upon Him) at Al-Hamra Hall, in Provincial Capital.

Bangash inaugurates Reconstruction and upgradation of LMH

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Finance, Ahmad Rasool Bangash on Wednesday formally inaugurated the reconstruction and upgradation of Liaquat Memorial Hospital Kohat to be completed with an estimated cost of Rs. 2 billion.

Medical Superintendent LMH, Dr. Hashim Jamsheed Syed, Principal Kohat Medical University Professor Dr. Musarat Jabeen and Dr.

Fauzia Gul also addressed the inauguration ceremony and thanked the finance minister for taking a keen interest in the affairs of the hospital.

The minister also inaugurated the Town Municipal Administration (TMA) Shabistan Plaza with a cost of Rs. 432 million. On the occasion, Tehsil Mayor Kohat, Qari Sher Zaman and Town Municipal Officer, Muhammad Shoaib briefed the provincial minister regarding municipal services.

Punjab Police will never forget eternal sacrifice of constable Arshad: IGP

Independent Report
LAHORE: IGP Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar visited Qila Gujjar Singh Police Lines, attended the funeral prayers of Shaheed Constable Muhammad Arshad of Lahore Police.

Regional Directorate Commander Anti-Narcotics Force Brigadier Sikandar Hayat, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana and other senior officers also offered the prayer.

Liaqat Ali Malik, DIG Admin Lahore Muntazir Mehdi, DIG Investigation Imran Kishwar, SSP Discipline Lahore Sohaib Ashraf, Lahore Police SSPs, SPs and ANF officers were also present in the funeral prayer. Muhammad Arshad, a constable posted at Achhra Police Station, was martyred by the firing of a drug dealer. IGP Punjab saluted the body of Constable Muhammad Arshad, laid floral wreath. Prayers were prayed for the high ranks of constable Muhammad Arshad's soul, Active squad of police also saluted the martyr.

Inspector General Police Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar attended the funeral prayer of martyred Constable Muhammad Arshad of Lahore Police at Police Lines Qila Gujjar Singh. Regional Directorate Commander Anti-Narcotics Force Brigadier Sikandar Hayat, CCPO Lahore Bilal Siddique Kamyana, DIG Organized Crime Unit Captain Retired

IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar while paying tribute to Constable Muhammad Arshad's eternal sacrifice said that Constable Muhammad Arshad made the department proud by sacrificing his life in the line of duty.

Commissioner reviews law, order situation

FAISALABAD (APP): Commissioner Silwat Saeed has said that law and order should be the first priority of the administration.

She was presiding over a video-link meeting in connection with general election, here on Wednesday.

The meeting was attended by Regional Police Officer (RPO) Dr Muhammad Abid, Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Abdullah Nayyar Sheikh, and Capital Police Officer (CPO) Capt (ret'd) Muhammad Ali Zia.

The deputy commissioners of Jhang, Chinot and Toba Tek Singh participated in the meeting through video-link.

The election commissioner and officers of law-enforcement agencies were also present.

KP CIP official pays surprise visit to inspect ongoing dev. projects

PESHAWAR (APP): Project Director of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement Project (KP CIP), Syed Zafar Ali Shah, on Wednesday paid a surprise visit to a sewerage treatment plant executed in Mardan and inspected ongoing developmental progress there.

He chaired a meeting attended by Director Technical, Mian Muhammad Shakeel, Chief Engineer of Cities Implementation Unit

(CIU) Mardan, Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, PMSC Resident Engineer, Arshid Qayum Babar, General Manager of Matracon, Imran Haider, and Deputy Manager of the Project, Qasim Muntaz Awan.

During the meeting, the General Manager of WSSCM and Chief Engineer of CIU Mardan, Engineer Muhammad Khalil Akbar, briefed the Project Director about the ongoing development works.

Suspect killed in police encounter

PESHAWAR (APP): The suspect, identified as Mujahid, son of Sabz Ali, who had escaped after shooting and killing Constable Amir Ghulam by taking out a gun from the clerk's room under the pretext of using the washroom, was killed in a police encounter at Safan check post, Badaber.

SSP Syed Ashfaq Anwar and Superintendent of Police Operations.

International News

Biden says he's decided response to Jordan strike

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he had decided on a response to a drone strike that killed three American troops in Jordan but said he did not want a wider war in the Middle East.

Facing growing pressure in an election year, Biden said he held Iran responsible for supplying the weapons to the people who carried out the deadly attack on a military base.

The White House warned that "multiple actions" were likely in retaliation for the first fatal attack on US forces in the region since the Gaza crisis broke out in October, but gave no further details. Biden, 81, who was hitting the campaign trail in Florida, has previously

blamed Iran-backed militias for the attack which has further raised fears of a regional conflict.

"Yes," Biden told reporters at the White House when asked if he had decided on his response, but he did not give details on what actions he would take.

"I don't think we need a wider war in the Middle East. That's not what I'm looking for," he added when asked about fears that taking on Iran could inflame a broader conflagration.



President of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) Judge Joan Donoghue speaks during a hearing in a case whereby Ukraine accused Russia of violating an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian forces, including militias who shot down the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, and discrimination, in The Hague, Netherlands

Republicans have urged the Democrat to punish Iran for the drone strike on a US military facility near the Jordanian-Syrian border, with some urging direct strikes on Iran itself.

But Biden's administration believes hitting Iranian territory could cause the region to erupt, with strikes on Iranian-backed militias and possibly on Iranian Revolutionary Guard facilities in other countries more likely, US media reported.

"It's very possible that what you'll see is a tiered approach here, not just a single action but potentially multiple actions," National Security Council spokesman John Kirby told reporters aboard Air Force One.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the response "could be multi-leveled, come in stages, and be sustained over time."

Iran has denied any links to the drone strike, and said it was not seeking an expansion of conflict, either.

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Israel returns 100 bodies to Gaza authorities

Monitoring Desk
DOHA: Several unidentified Palestinians were laid to rest at a mass burial in Gaza on Tuesday after Israeli authorities handed over bodies they had been holding in Israel.

Many onlookers covered their noses with masks as about 100 bodies were placed in graves in the southern city of Rafah before bulldozers piled sand on them. Palestinian officials said the bodies included victims of the war and corpses that had been dug up as Israeli forces

pushed through Gaza. Israel did not comment on the assertion that some corpses had been dug up.

"They were buried anonymously following Islamic Sharia. We don't know where they were injured or even their names," said Abu Taha, a doctor, at the scene. The bodies were photographed before burial and the victims' injuries documented, he said. "God willing, after the war ends, DNA and other tests will happen but at the time being."

US says fentanyl talks with China 'meaningful'

Monitoring Desk
BEIJING: Talks between the US and Chinese officials on stemming the flow of chemicals used for the production of deadly fentanyl have been "substantive" but "much more" needs to be done, the head of the White House delegation to Beijing said on Wednesday.

Washington hopes for deeper law enforcement cooperation, including on tackling illicit finance, and wants Beijing to put further controls on the chemicals that can be used to make fentanyl, said Deputy Assistant to the President.

150 people are killed in Gaza in 24 hours, Health Ministry says

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Gaza's Health Ministry says 150 people have been killed in the territory in the last 24 hours and another 313 were wounded as Israeli forces continue to battle militants, even in the northern part of the territory.

has rejected two key demands made by Hamas in indirect cease-fire talks, saying that Israel will not withdraw from the Gaza Strip or release thousands of jailed militants.

The north, where entire neighborhoods have been flattened, was the initial target of Israel's ground offensive in late October.

Israel's military said Wednesday that its forces killed more than 15 Hamas militants in northern Gaza over the past day and targeted militant infrastructure in a school.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

The latest deaths bring the Palestinian death toll from Israel's offensive to 26,900, according to the Hamas-controlled Health Ministry. It does not distinguish between civilian and combatant deaths but says most of those killed were women and children.

Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel that sparked the war killed 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and about 250 people were taken hostage, according to Israeli authorities.

US blocks \$3-b drone sale to India until 'meaningful investigation' of plot to kill Sikh leader

NEW DELHI (INP): The US government has held back delivery of 31 MQ-9A Sea Guardian and Sky Guardian drones to India until New Delhi carries out a "meaningful investigation" into the conspiracy to assassinate Sikh leader, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun.

supplement 12 P-81 Poseidon aircraft that the Indian Navy already operates.

Ironically, the Indian Ministry of Defence's internal approval for the now-stalled drone procurement came in June 2023, a week before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's state visit to Washington. This was also the time when the conspiracy to kill Pannun - set in motion by an Indian security official named CC1, according to a federal indictment made public last November - shifted to high gear.

The Wire reported that the proposed \$3 billion purchase includes 15 Sea Guardian drones for the Indian Navy, while the Indian Air Force and Army are supposed to get eight Sky Guardian drones each. The report said that Washington has also held back smaller Indian acquisitions, including a proposal to buy six Boeing P-81 long-range maritime patrol aircraft. These are to

Today, "the purchase is stuck in the US Congress because of anger over the brazen attempt to assassinate Pannun. US representatives have frozen the legislative movement needed for proceeding with the sale," the Wire quoted a highly-placed source in Washington as having said.

Japan earthquake survivors battle unsanitary conditions with no running water

Monitoring Desk
SUZU: A month on from a huge earthquake that struck Japan's west coast, survivors are battling freezing and unsanitary conditions while tens of thousands of homes remain without running water.

Some areas in the isolated Noto peninsula may not have water restored for another two months, the government of Ishikawa prefecture said, adding to risks for those living in cramped evacuation centres where authorities say respiratory infections and gastroenteritis have been detected.

"There's no water, so we can't wash our clothes or bathe," said Yoshio Binsaki, a 68-year-old resident of the battered coastal town of Suzu, as he prepared to haul a 20 litre (5.3 U.S. gallon) water tank to his car to take home. More than 230 people died in the magnitude 7.6 quake, Japan's deadliest in eight years, which also left 44,000 homes fully or partially destroyed while 40,000 have no running water.

World Court to rule on Russian violation of international treaties in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
THE HAGUE: The United Nations' top court will rule on Wednesday on whether Russia violated an anti-terrorism treaty by funding pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, including those who shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in 2014.

Kyiv says Russia also violated a human rights treaty by discriminating against ethnic Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea, the peninsula that Russia declared annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Ukraine had asked the

International Court of Justice to find Russia guilty of breaching obligations under the two UN treaties, which both countries have signed, and to order it to pay reparations.

In a hearing at the court in The Hague last June, Russia dismissed Ukraine's allegations as fiction and "blatant lies".

Lawyers for Moscow denied systematic human rights abuses in Ukrainian territory that it occupies and rejected the accusation that it violated the UN treaty against the financing of terrorism.

Neuralink has installed brain implant in first human patient: Elon Musk

Monitoring Desk
SAN FRANCISCO: Elon Musk said on Tuesday his Neuralink startup had installed a brain implant in its first human patient with "promising" initial results.

The neurotechnology company co-founded by Musk in 2016 aims to build direct communication channels between the brain and computers. The ambition is to supercharge human capabilities, treat neurological disorders like ALS or Parkinson's.

Taiwan holds military drills to defend against the threat of a Chinese invasion

Monitoring Desk
KAOHSIUNG: Almost every day, Chinese warships sail in waters around the Taiwan and warplanes fly toward the island before turning back. What if they suddenly attacked?

Taiwan's military conducted a two-day exercise at sea, on land and in the air this week to practice defending against such a surprise attack. As journalists looked on from fast escort boats, a mine layer released at least a half dozen dummy mines from a chute in its stern.

Maj. Gen. Sun Li-fang, the chief defense ministry spokesperson, told reporters at Zuoying Naval Base in southern Taiwan that China's recent actions threaten to spark a conflict that could have devastating effects on the entire region, where billions of dollars in trade pass the 160 kilometer- (100 mile)-wide waterway separating Taiwan from China.

"Any unilateral military action could very easily escalate tensions and sabotage stability in the Taiwan Strait region," Sun said. "So the Chinese Communists should immediately cease these sorts of undermining actions."

China claims the self-governing island of 23 million people as its own territory and says it must come under Beijing's control. The long-running dispute is a flashpoint in U.S.-China relations. As relations between the rivals have deteriorated in recent years, fears have grown that America could get pulled into a war if hostilities break out. Later in the day, journalists witnessed a simulated attack by China at a military base in the eastern county of Taitung.

Troops in red helmets representing the People's Liberation Army parachuted in, while Taiwanese army drones buzzed overhead.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi, Caretaker Federal Minister for Education Madad Ali Sindhi, Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood in a group photo during convocation of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), at Jinnah Convention Centre.

Madad Ali Sindhi stresses to revamp existing govt schools' education system

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Madad Ali Sindhi Wednesday stressed the need for structural reforms to ensure quality education on merit and for up-gradation of existing government school system for sustainable economic growth.

Talking to PTV news channel, he called for revamping the education system to prepare students to effectively face the challenges of new century, while upholding the Pakistani values and ethos at the same time.

To a query, he said the caretaker government in a short span of time, performed well and work hard for education reform agenda

change in the mindset of the society.

Caretaker government did all to improve the education system in government sector, adding, he personally hold various meetings with provincial ministers to enrolled out of school children.

He said we tried our best to ensure a uniform and quality educational system in the country besides improving the ability of public sector teachers to modernize the education system. He said the condition of government schools need to be improved, adding that the services of private schools cannot also be ignored.

The public-private schools would equally be standardized across the country, he mentioned.

Political parties should keep the education reforms agenda on the top of their election manifestos by ensuring quality education in government schools and affordability to the masses at their doorstep.

"Policymakers and the next five years' government must ensure that every child receives a holistic and quality education in government schools," he added.

Minister advised the government, academia and the industry bodies to join hands in implementing rigorous academic standards and in creating the necessary infrastructure.

Voicing his other serious concern over instances of social and gender discrimination, he called for a

executive as per NAB law. If executive order is not there then the respective court can issue order for hearing the case on some other venue. In the presence of executive order, the respective court has to hear the case at the given venue.

IHC remarked the appeal related to the pending hearing matter under official secret act was before two members bench in cipher case.

Due to lack of clear law in official secret act with reference to determination for venue of the court, section 352 of criminal procedure will be applicable to official secret act case.

The court said that high court rules and section 352 of criminal procedure will be applicable only when sessions court passes order in regard to venue.

IHC Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Jahangiri issued the detailed decision.

The court rejected the objections of petitioner on appointment of judge of Accountability Court (AC).

The court while rejecting PTI founder petitions against jail trial in two NAB references remarked prima facie jail trial is there keeping in view life threats to the petitioner. Apparently jail trial is not based on mala fide intent.

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Ali advises students to make career decisions based on future environmental, sectoral needs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Energy, Muhammad Ali, on Wednesday advised the students to make their career decisions based on future environmental and sectoral needs.

While inaugurating the first-ever national-level 'Fuelling Futures Career Expo 2024,' organized by the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) in collaboration with Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), he highlighted the critical nature of the energy and minerals sectors, encouraging students to explore career paths in these areas.

The event witnessed an overwhelming attendance of students, faculty, and company representatives.

Muhammad Ali said that the Expo is planned for students to explore career opportunities with energy and minerals being showcased by respective companies in the event.

The energy minister noted that there is massive transformation happening in the Energy sector globally and the commodity should be affordable, accessible, and sustainable for the consumers.

He said that Pakistan

is energy deficient and an oil importer, and there is an opportunity to convert the energy deficiency country into the surplus.

"There are many in-demand mineral resources in the country with opportunities for their extraction in the future," he added.

MD and CEO PPL Imran Abbas on the occasion welcomed the large number of students from across the country and thanked the participating companies and universities for making the two-day Career Expo a success.

He said that the plat-

form provides an opportunity for students to interact with the leaders of the energy and minerals industry and to learn from their experiences with the view to selecting, pursuing careers in the Oil, Gas, and Mineral sector.

Around 5000 students from across Pakistan along with faculty members and staff of around 30 universities and schools have participated in the event.

The managing directors, senior management, and staff of 14 oil, gas, and mineral companies also attended the Expo.

Senate body on law and justice meets

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Law and Justice convened Wednesday chaired by Senator Ali Zafar in Islamabad.

The committee commenced by extending warm congratulations to Senator Sania Nishar for her appointment as the CEO of GAVI. Additionally, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayyed was acknowledged and congratulated on his election as the Vice President of IPU's Human Rights Body.

During the meeting, extensive discussions were held regarding the Constitution Amendment Bill

2024 (Amendment of Article 51) introduced by Senators Kauda Babar, Manzoor Ahmed Kakar, Naseebullah Bazai, Sana Jamali, and Danesh Kumar in the Senate sitting on January 1st, 2024. Senator Danesh Kumar emphasized that the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan designates ten reserved seats for non-Muslims in the National Assembly, with the entire country as the constituency.

This unrestricted geographical allocation allows political parties to nominate candidates freely, resulting in disproportionate representation favoring populous provinces.

FGEHA, Hammer Properties signs MoU to provide residential plots

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) and MS Hammer Properties Pvt Ltd Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide residential plots to government employees at a low rate with the help of the private sector.

The signing ceremony was presided over by Di-

rector General FGEHA Capt. (Retd) Muhammad Zafar Iqbal participated by Chief Executive Officer, MS Hammer Properties Mohammad Sohail Khan and other senior officials of the authority, said a news release issued here. Director Joint Venture Projects briefed the details regarding the MoU and said that under the agreement around 530 acres of land located near M-9 Motorway.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin and others are looking a painting during movie screening titled "Kazakh Khanate Diamond Sword" at Pakistan National Council of the Arts in the Federal Capital.

ICP conducts grand operation against unlawful incursions, double parking in rural areas

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: According to details, following the special instructions of the Islamabad Capital City Police Officer (ICCP) Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan, under the supervision of CPO Safe City/Traffic, Islamabad Capital Police conducted a grand operation against unlawful incursions and double parking in the rural area, a public relations officer said.

He said that the locations where actions were taken include Lehtrar Road, Tramri Chowk, Ali Pur, Sultana Foundation, Khanna Pul, Bara Kahu, and surrounding areas.

Islamabad Capital Police has formed a special squad comprising officers and officials, which is conducting uninterrupted operations on major roads and mar-

kets at various times, issuing tickets, and imposing multiple vehicles in different police stations for legal action.

Moreover, during the operation, illegal encroachments were removed, vehicles parked on the road were shifted to designated parking areas using forklifts, and owners were warned to avoid parking vehicles on footpaths and roads; otherwise, strict legal action will be taken.

CPO Safe City/Traffic stated that further improvement will be made in this campaign to ensure the safety of citizens' lives and property and to prevent accidents, and the campaign will be expanded to other areas of Islamabad so that traffic flow can be maintained and unlawful incursions and parking violations can be eliminated.

ISLAMABAD: Children are playing with Hail outside their house at sector I-8 after the heavy Hail Storm in the Federal Capital.

ISSI to collaborate with Int'l centre for integrated mountain development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on Wednesday hosted a fruitful in-house session with Dr. Pema Gyamtsho, Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), Nepal.

The meeting brought together key representatives from both organizations including Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director CSP Dr. Neelum Nigar, and CSP research team, Shekhar Gimire, Director Operation, ICIMOD, and Dr. Faisal Mueen, Intervention Manager, ICIMOD, a news release said.

Executive Director, Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC), Aisha Khan also attended the meeting.

In her introductory remarks, Dr. Neelum Nigar

extended a warm welcome to the ICIMOD delegation.

On the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted ISSI's efforts in organizing various international and national conferences on climate change and its effects, multi stakeholder consultation in the pre and post COP28 phases. He also highlighted the ISSI's commitment to deepen its collaboration with civil society on cross-cutting issues.

He emphasized that ISSI and ICIMOD should collaborate to promote objectives relating to awareness about challenges posed by climate change on mountains, glaciers and mountain communities.

Dr. Gyamtsho, in his remarks, emphasized ICIMOD's interest in working closely with ISSI on issues of mutual interests particularly focusing on the need for regional cooperation on climate change.



ISLAMABAD: The 4th meeting of the steering committee for the 2024 South Asian Games was chaired by the Caretaker Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Fawad Hassan Fawad and Ministry of Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed.

Chairperson BISP emphasizes role of call agents as ambassadors of empathy, support

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib during his visit to the newly established BISP call centre underscored the crucial role of call agents as ambassadors of empathy and support for the poorest and most deprived citizens of Pakistan.

The BISP call centre has recently been established at the National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) to inform and address the grievances of the general public related to BISP. DG NTC, Faisal Bashir Ch briefed Dr. Amjad Saqib that this centre is operational with more than 25 call agents and is

set to expand its capacity in the future to further assist the vulnerable segments of society. Dr. Amjad Saqib stressed the need for a Performance Evaluation Mechanism for call agents to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in their services.

He emphasized the ethical treatment of the needy by call agents during his visit to the call centre, acknowledging their significance in facilitating the underprivileged. He expressed gratitude to the NTC for its collaboration in establishing this advanced call centre, which aims to enhance the overall perception of BISP.

"Helping the poor is equivalent to charity and worship," remarked Dr.

Amjad Saqib, highlighting the noble cause that the BISP call centre serves.

He believed that the call centre would play a pivotal role in improving the public's perception of the institution and providing authentic information, as well as expediting the resolution of complaints.

Dr. Amjad Saqib affirmed that all complaints lodged through the Complaint Management System would be directly forwarded to BISP field offices for prompt resolution.

This commitment to efficient complaint resolution aims to streamline the process and ensure that the needs of the citizens are met effectively.

CDA starts cleanliness drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority here on Wednesday started special drive for cleaning of markets in the federal capital.

The special cleanliness drive was started from Aabpara market and it will be extended rest of the commercial areas of the city.

Different teams were formed by the Sanitation Directorate for said special campaign, which will wash the roads, footpaths.

Director Sanitation, Mashuq Ali Sheikh personally supervised the process and announced that other markets across the city will also be specially cleaned on the pattern of Aabpara market.

4 killed as passenger van plunges into ravine in Dir Bala

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least four people were killed while other several passengers sustained injuries as a speedy van fell into a ravine near Dir Bala on early Wednesday morning.

According to details, Rescue sources said that the speedy van was en route when the driver lost control on a bend in the road, which was slippery with snow and rain, a private news channel reported.

Rescue teams, locals and police arrived at the spot after receiving information.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delegated first-class magistrate powers to the Presiding Officers to ensure the seamless execution of the general elections in 2024.

"All the Presiding Officers will have the powers of magistrate from February 7 to 9 in the upcoming general elections on February 8," the spokesman of the ECP told APP.

The spokesman said that the Presiding Officers will be able to conduct trials on the spot besides the powers to be able them to proceed under Sections 169, 171 and 174 of the Election Act.

He said the ECP had already granted the pow-

IHC reserves judgment on PTI founder, Bushra petition against Nikah in Iddat case

ISLAMABAD (Online): Islamabad High Court (IHC) has reserved judgment on PTI founder and Bushra Bibi petition against Nikah during iddat case.

The petitions seeking dismissal of Nikah during iddat case came up for hearing in IHC Wednesday.

Chief Justice (CJ) IHC Aamer Farooq took up the case for hearing.

Suleman Akram Raja and Usman Riaz Gill gave arguments on behalf of PTI founder and Bushra Bibi.

Suleman Akram Raja while giving references to

different court's decisions said Shariah Appellate Tribunal of Supreme Court (SC) decision is there, that if nikah takes place after 39 days it cannot be declared annulled. This can be described as regular nikah.

Rizwan Abbasi prosecution counsel said if January 1 Nikah was correct then why the necessity for solemnizing second nikah was felt. Who were witnesses and nikah khaan in second nikah are witnesses in this case. The court reserved the judgment after hearing the arguments.

ECP grants first-class magistrate powers to Presiding Officers

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has delegated first-class magistrate powers to the Presiding Officers to ensure the seamless execution of the general elections in 2024.

"All the Presiding Officers will have the powers of magistrate from February 7 to 9 in the upcoming general elections on February 8," the spokesman of the ECP told APP.

The spokesman said that the Presiding Officers will be able to conduct trials on the spot besides the powers to be able them to proceed under Sections 169, 171 and 174 of the Election Act.

He said the ECP had already granted the pow-

ers of a first-class magistrate to the District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) to ensure smooth electoral process.

"The magisterial powers were conferred upon District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) in accordance with Section 193 of the Election Act 2017," he added.

These powers can be utilized by ROs and DROs during the general elections for national and provincial assemblies in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan until the official announcement of final results for the candidates.



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