

Independent

dailyindkhi@gmail.com

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

Karachi

Ph: 0300-3898091 Vol: 06. No. 19 Rajab 22, 1445 AH Saturday February 03, 2024 Pages 04 Price Rs. 12.00

Pakistan to continue supporting global efforts for a peaceful, stable Afghanistan: PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday reiterated that it was upto the Afghan people and their leadership to decide their future and Pakistan as a brotherly and neighbourly country would continue supporting all global efforts for a politically and economically stable Afghanistan.

He said that he did not regard Afghanistan or the Afghan people as any threat to Pakistan. Afghans had their own culture and land, tied with different countries due to various affinities and Pakistan expected that no threat or harm should emanate from their soil.

Pakistan, he said, had very explicitly conveyed its concerns to the Taliban interim government regarding

terrorist elements' presence and their involvement in terrorist acts and they had realization of it.

He was responding to different questions in a private TV (Khyber News) talk show programme 'Maraka' - Pashtu acronym for dialogue. The caretaker prime minister said that Afghans had undergone hard times in four or five decades, they had witnessed different Afghan factions fighting with each other and the invasion of foreign forces.

He said Afghanistan enjoyed a significant position in the region and as a neighbour, Pakistan wished to enhance that importance by supporting all global efforts for political and economic stability there.

To a question, he said after Swat and Zarb-e-Azb operations, the banned

TTP terrorist elements went to Afghanistan.

Prime Minister Kakar said that it was an unsuitable move by the previous set-up to hold negotiations with the TTP, adding that the Constitution of Pakistan was very clear in that regard and anyone who preferred armed insurgency, would be regarded as 'Takfiri' as Ulema had pronounced. He reiterated that the state would not negotiate with such groups.

About Maulana Fazlur-Rehman's visit to Afghanistan, the prime minister said it was his private visit and he would not comment over it. He further said that as a friend and brother, they could give Afghans suggestions and shared opinions, but it was up to them to take their own decisions.



SHIKARPUR: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public meeting in connection with elections

Provincial govt prepared for conducting polls on Feb 8: Sindh Info Minister

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Caretaker Minister of Information, Minority Affairs and Social Security, Muhammad Ahmad Shah, Friday, said that general elections were going to be held on February 8 and all the provincial governments were fully prepared for the polls.

He addressing a press conference at Sindh Assembly building regarding the election arrangements and law and order situation, said that all the necessary arrangements were being made according to the instructions of the Election Commission of Pakistan and Sindh government had released funds for all requirements of the elections.

The entire government and all the institutions were extending the fullest cooperation to the Election

Commission of Pakistan for conducting general elections 2024 in a free, fair and transparent manner, he added.

Ahmad Shah stated that preparations for the polls had been going on for many months including the measures to improve law and order and a security plan was in place and a backup plan was also envisaged.

He informed that the total number of polling stations in the province is 19006, among them 5989 are declared normal, 6531 are sensitive and 6496 as highly sensitive polling stations.

As many as 1,22,030 police personnel will be deployed for ensuring security and maintaining law and order during the elections while 7000 personnel of Police Quick Response Force.



KARACHI: Sindh Caretaker Minister for Information, Minority Affairs, and Social Welfare and Arts Council President, Muhammad Ahmed Shah addresses to media persons during press conference, at Sindh Assembly Building in Karachi.

Over 20m first time voters get ready to cast votes in general election

ISLAMABAD (INP): As Pakistan braces itself for the upcoming general elections, an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm is sweeping over more than 20 million young individuals who are set to cast their votes for the very first time. Recognizing the potential influence of this substantial voting bloc, it becomes crucial to educate these new voters on the correct procedures for participating in the democratic process.

When heading to the polling booth, the initial step involves the verification of the original national identity card by the polling

officer. Details entered in the electoral roll will be scrutinized, and names and serial numbers will be called aloud for confirmation. A thumb impression and an indelible ink mark on the thumb will follow, marking the completion of this first phase.

Moving on to the second stage, Assistant Presiding Officers will distribute green-colored ballot papers for the National Assembly and white-colored ballot papers for the Provincial Assembly. These papers, signed and sealed at the back, are then handed over to voters.

Pakistan, EU agree to deepen ties under Strategic Engagement Plan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and the European Union on Friday agreed to further deepen their relations in line with the Strategic Engagement Plan (2019).

The agreement was reached in a meeting between Caretaker Foreign Minister Jalil Abbas Jalani and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell Fontelles.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 3rd Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Brussels.

Diplomats briefed on IIOJK situation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ahead of the Kashmir Solidarity Day, Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia & Pacific) Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui Friday briefed the Islamabad-based diplomats on the developments in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He underscored the legal, security and human rights dimensions of the situation in IIOJK.

24 terrorists killed in Mach operation, four soldiers martyred

RAWALPINDI (Online): On night 29/30 January 2024, terrorists attacked Mach and Kolpur Complexes in Balochistan. Law Enforcement Agencies depicted on security offered stiff resistance and forced the attackers to repulse. These terrorists were then hunted down in the ensuing sanitisation and clearance operations which have now been concluded after clearing and securing the area.

During the fire fights and sanitisation/clearance operations, in last three days, twenty four terrorists have been sent to hell. Terrorist Shehzad Baloch, Attaullah, Salah Uddin, Abdul Wadood and Zeeshan are key terrorists among the dead.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs the 9th meeting of the Apex Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council.

Apex body lauds 'Whole of Govt. Approach' to realise SIFC's envisioned dividends

PM Kakar urges incoming govt to ensure continuity of economic policies by capitalising on the positive momentum, established by SIFC, in the larger interest of the country

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Apex Committee of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on Friday showed profound satisfaction over the overall progress of the SIFC and appreciated 'Whole of Government Approach' in realising the envisioned dividends.

The 9th meeting of the SIFC Apex Committee met under the chair of Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar which reviewed various initiatives being steered through the forum.

The meeting was attended by the Chief of Army Staff, federal cabinet, provincial chief ministers and high-level government officials. The ministries presented progress on the projects and policy initiatives, and gave plans for

subsequent endeavours to attract the investment.

The Apex Committee reviewed progress on various measures and appreciated the contribution made for improving macro and micro-economic conditions of the country.

The body commended the steps taken to build a sustainable ecosystem for nurturing latent potential and attracting investments, with special emphasis on the cross sectoral policy interventions, human resource development, infrastructural uplift and strengthening of domestic dispute resolution mechanism.

The Committee reviewed and appreciated the progress on the level of economic engagements with friendly countries and un-

derscored the need to efficiently realise investment commitments into economic dividends.

The Apex body also accorded in-principle approval for Strategic Canals Vision 2030 and FBR Reforms. The Chief of the Army Staff assured firm resolve of the Pakistan Army to support the government's initiatives for the economic stability of the country and the socio-economic well-being of its people. In the end, the prime minister appreciated the role of SIFC, ministries, departments and affiliated stakeholders in accomplishing the major economic milestones as part of the interim government and setting the pace for future endeavours.



FAISALABAD: Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif addressing during Public gathering (Jalsa) at Dhobi Ghat ground in the city.

Youth are with PML-N despite propaganda: Nawaz

FAISALABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif said on Friday the youth were with his party despite vicious propaganda, and they would play a key role in reemergence of the party as the leading political force of Pakistan.

He was addressing a public gathering at historic Iqbal Park (Dhobi Ghat ground), where he asked the participants to raise their hands who were born on or after 1980. As a large number of the participants raised their hands, he said that clearly negated the propaganda that the youth were with some other political parties, he added.

He said he was impressed by the enthusiasm of the participants in the public meeting. He said, "I have reliable friends and

colleagues in Faisalabad since 1980." He particularly named Chaudhry Sher Ali, Abid Sher Ali, Talal Chaudhry, Mian Farooq and Rana Sanaulah and said they were still steadfast and refused to succumb to any pressure to change their allegiance.

He said that his tenure was marked with maximum facilitation to masses. All commodities were cheap and available to everyone during his tenure as the prime minister. He said gold was available at Rs. 50,000 per tola and parents did not face any problem in the marriage of their daughters. "At that time when we were fighting against the twin menace of terrorism and load-shedding, others were observing sit-in to achieve their ulterior motives," he recalled.



KARACHI: Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM-P) Rabta Committee Senior Deputy Convener, Mustafa Kamal addresses during public gathering meeting as a part of Election Campaign in connection of General Election 2024 coming ahead, at Martin road in Karachi.

Sindh govt declares Feb 8 as public holiday

KARACHI (INP): The Sindh government has declared February 8 (Thursday) as public holiday throughout the province on the occasion of general elections.

According to notification issued here by the Chief Secretary Sindh, all offices, autonomous bodies, semi autonomous bodies, corporations, Local Councils and private organizations/ institutions in the province except essential services and the departments and officers/officials engaged in election duties, will be closed on the General Elections Day.

Commissioner Karachi cancels polling staff leaves, seeks action against absentees

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Division Muhammad Saleem Rajput has cancelled the leaves of all the polling staff and directed them to report back immediately, in case of failure to comply with these directives the absentees could be placed under suspension, besides initiating disciplinary proceedings against them.

Commissioner Karachi has directed the District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) of all Karachi divisions regarding the can-

Bilawal vows to block conspiracy to put Nawaz back in PM Office

From Our Correspondent SHIKARPUR: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto averred on Friday that the public was aware that only his party could address the prevailing challenges in the country.

Addressing a party election rally in Khanpur tehsil, Bilawal emphasised that the PPP would not let Mian Nawaz Sharif to become prime minister for the fourth time, referring to it as a "conspiracy".

The PPP chief promised to generate employment opportunities for the youth and affirmed that the PPP would collaborate with the people to find solutions to their problems.

Acknowledging the country's critical economic crisis, Bilawal highlighted that the people of Pakistan

wanted a government capable of addressing the pressing issues, such as unemployment and inflation. According to him, the PPP could tackle this public concern by implementing its comprehensive economic charter.

Bilawal affirmed that the PPP had been combating poverty for three generations, and pledged to fulfil the mission of Quaid-e-Awam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto upon assuming power in the Feb 8 elections.

Bilawal slammed his political opponents, saying they wanted to divide the nation on the basis of ethnicity, caste and creed. He advised the people to put the stamp on the "arrow", PPP's electoral symbol, as a response to politicians pursuing divisive and hate-filled politics.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori presenting a cheque to a woman who request for financial aid through 'Bell of Hope'.

Asifa Bhutto says: PPP pursuing pro-people agenda

HYDERABAD (APP): Pakistan Peoples Party leader Asifa Bhutto Zardari has said that it was only the PPP which was pursuing the pro-people agenda while other parties were in the field for power.

Addressing a public gathering in Kandyari city, Sanghar district on Thursday night, Asifa Bhutto said that improving the health sector was the PPP's top priority.

Everyone, whether rich or poor, needed better medical treatment facilities

and that was why the PPP government had established hospitals providing free of charge treatment, she added.

"We have built the best hospital for treating liver disease in Gambhat where free treatment was being provided to the patients not only from Sindh but also from all over the country and abroad," she said.

The PPP had planned to establish a hospital Karachi's National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) in Sanghar, Asifa said.

JUI-F to continue struggle for protection of Islamic values in society: Fazal

PESHAWAR (INP): Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has stated that his party will continue to work to make Pakistan an Islamic state after winning the Feb 8 general elections.

Addressing a party election rally in Tank on Friday, Fazl expressed his determination to continue struggle for the protection of Islamic values in society. "If voted to power, we will make Pakistan a welfare state where rights of every citizen will be protected."



Commissioner Karachi cancels polling staff leaves, seeks action against absentees

KARACHI (APP): Commissioner Karachi Division Muhammad Saleem Rajput has cancelled the leaves of all the polling staff and directed them to report back immediately, in case of failure to comply with these directives the absentees could be placed under suspension, besides initiating disciplinary proceedings against them.

Commissioner Karachi has directed the District Returning Officers (DROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) of all Karachi divisions regarding the can-

cellation of undue exemptions/ leaves allowed to polling staff for the upcoming general elections in 2024.

Commissioner Karachi observed that it has come to his knowledge that certain polling staff have been granted exemptions/ leaves without cause. This has caused considerable apprehension that this unwarranted action may cause a shortage of polling staff on Election Day, he added.

It is very important to note that onerous efforts at

the highest level have gone into fulfilling the 67,420 polling staff requirement for Election duties in Karachi Division, the Commissioner observed.

He directed that services of all of the staff as provided by the Election Commission of Pakistan through the respective District Election Commissioners (DECs) shall be utilized for the February 08 elections.

He said that no exemptions shall be provided except those allowed under the relevant rules.

Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Date confirmed

The sense of uncertainty that had taken hold between the nights of Wednesday and Thursday stands broken. We have a green signal: elections will go ahead as scheduled on Feb 8.

The prospects of polls being held all over the country on the same day had been thrown in doubt once again after reports that the ECP had requisitioned a high-level moot yesterday over the worsening law and order situation in KP and Balochistan. The announcement had led some to speculate that an election delay in the two provinces might be on the cards.

A senior ECP official had told this publication that the Commission was deeply perturbed over the recent surge in terrorism-related violence and discussed the option of delaying polls in high-risk areas. Another said, "Anything was possible." Meanwhile, a statement issued on behalf of the army had been more reassuring, promising that the armed forces were ready to protect the "quintessential democratic exercise".

All is certainly not well in the country, not with candidates being gunned down or targeted in gun and bomb attacks on their offices, convoys and rallies.

There is a clear and present danger from the myriad terrorist and militant outfits operating in the country, who have made plain their intentions to use this sensitive transitional period as an opportunity to sow more chaos in the country.

There is considerable social unrest, not just due to the extreme political polarisation seen in this election cycle but also because of more entrenched issues, such as the discontent of the people of GB and the enforced disappearance crisis plaguing Balochistan.

It is within this challenging environment that law enforcement and security forces have to operate as they strive to protect a nationwide activity that has the participation of millions of citizens. Commendably, they are rising to the occasion and have reaffirmed their preparedness for the task at hand.

It has been stated before, but bears repeating that our security forces and law-enforcement agencies must now dedicate their energies solely to their core job of protecting the people. Taking a confrontational position against those they are responsible for protecting is not just a violation of their oath of service, it also creates unnecessary risks that may imperil the law-and-order situation. All they should focus on is the safety and security of the public. Law enforcers must remember that they are there to fix problems, not become a part of them. As they make their security plans, policymakers should account for the fact that inimical forces seeking to destabilise the country will try to take advantage of its internal divisions. To counter their designs, LEAs and security forces must affirm that they are there for everyone, regardless of their political affiliations or beliefs.

Why suffering?

Syed Fahim

A stillbirth. A toddler diagnosed with Down syndrome. A teenage case of leukaemia. A rare blood disorder in the 30s. Cancer with a single-digit survival rate in the 40s. Death at wholesale rate in a territory — as if collective suffering somehow makes it easier to bear the burden than individual loss. We are surrounded and baffled by suffering. And what follows then is the biggest question of them all: why me? And why this hardship?

But the question that has confounded theologians and philosophers since the inception of humanity is even more fundamental: why does suffering even exist in a world designed by a kind and benevolent God?

Christianity sees suffering as a consequence of the 'disobedience' of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Islam and Judaism proclaim suffering to be a test of faith from God. Buddhism declares dukkha, a result of material attachment, while Hinduism's karma implies one's current suffering as an aftermath of their actions in previous lives.

Some philosophers argue that suffering is a necessary part of human existence, fostering empathy, personal growth, or moral development. Others opine that suffering is a necessary consequence of free will or that it plays a role in the greater good.

In Man's Search for Meaning, psychiatrist Viktor Frankl provides a thoughtful analogy. He asks whether an ape being punctured repeatedly to develop a vaccine would ever be able to grasp the meaning of its suffering. The obvious answer is it would not; with its limited intelligence, it could not enter the world of man — which is the only world in which the meaning of its suffering would be understandable. He then follows up with a rhetorical question about humans. Can we really understand the reason and the meaning of our suffering while being part of this material world? "Is it not conceivable that there is still another dimension; a world in which the question of an ultimate meaning of human suffering would find an answer?" he asks.

Interesting, one thinks, but a grand argument does not ease the pain or dilute my misery. And then comes the backup argument — you are not alone! The list of beings afflicted by grief is led by our prophets. And then there are all and sundry, everyone with a story of their own. The variety and the ubiquity still do not relieve one's agony, but maybe they make it more digestible on the accord of it being somewhat democratic. Here is how I try to wrap my head around it.

Everyone must get through it (Quran 2:155, 2:214, 29:2). This is just by design, the way this universe is programmed. If we think someone is spared and they have it all good in every sense, it is more our ignorance than the absence of suffering.

Nobody will have it more than one could bear (Quran 2:286). While everyone is unique and our sufferings appear unbearable, in the grand factory of this world, we are not much different than pieces of metal coming out of a foundry stamped with their unique tensile and yield strengths.

The Designer knows our limits, and those limits are respected when we are put under these harsh tests. Every situation is a test. This world around us is a test. Sometimes, the test is of gratitude, and other times the test is of fortitude (Quran 27:40). We feel the burn of the hard situations, but we do not feel the blush of the good times.

If we think we do not deserve such a burdensome test, that is, perhaps, quite true. The Quran says that "if Allah were to impose blame on the people for what they have earned, He would not leave upon earth any creature" (35:45). We are most likely getting much less than we truly deserve.

Our grace in how we deal with it will get us the accolades we need for the later parts of your story (Quran 2:156-157, 2:177). The sufferings of our prophets all had a good ending. But that exactly is the caveat. They graced their sufferings with perseverance, resilience, and patience, which in turn was rewarded by the Lord. Now, does this answer all the questions for me? Maybe not. But perhaps these are not the questions we ought to answer. The question for us is to identify what our test is as we breathe the current breath. Is it the security of our four walls and the roof we shelter under, or the guaranteed next meal?

Or is our test the choking of our airways, the one that we did not foresee, and that we feel we did not deserve? The short answer is: all of the above. And our attitude in dealing with them will determine if we are truly worthy of these tests. -- Courtesy Dawn

Grim Islamabad

Aasim Sajjad Akhtar

Sixty years after it was created, Islamabad is still said to be 10 kilometres from Pakistan proper, an oasis of greenery, prosperity and technocracy insulated from the grime, poverty and chaos of the rest of the country. The city's administrative and propertied elite alike indulgently call it Islamabad the beautiful.

It certainly is — or perhaps it is more accurate to now say, was — a pretty city. For the past few weeks, the Margalla Hills within which the metropole nests have been barely visible, a low-hanging and thick cloud of smog generating debate amongst the chattering classes whether the capital is now beating Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar in the AQI stakes.

Once known for its trees and quiet, Islamabad is increasingly the site of incessant road and real estate-related construction. The city has expanded at exponential rates, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) making billions from land auctions whilst dispossessing historical villages. Gated housing schemes are all you see for miles in suburban geographies, and purchasing a motor vehicle is the only way to get from one end of the metropolis to the other.

Since the turn of the millennium, Islamabad's population has tripled from approximately 800,000 to 2.5 million. The majority of those who have migrated into the capital are young and working class. There are low-caste workers from villages in central Punjab and the Seraiki Wasaib, Pakhtuns who have fled their homes due to the 'war on terror', and any number of Baloch, Sindhi, Gilgit-Baltistani and other young people who have

come to study or find jobs.

There is no public transport for them, while health and education are hostage to the dictates of profit. Potable water is drying up. Those who aspire to white-collar lives survive in rented accommodation, while the wretched of the earth can only find shelter in katchi abadis. This working-class majority is not responsible for destroying the ecosystem — that credit goes to property developers, big contractors and the civil-military oligarchy — but it bears the primary costs of environmental despoliation.

Long before this winter's smog made clear that Islamabad is headed on a similar trajectory to the rest of metropolitan Pakistan, Islamabad's working people routinely dealt with violent dispossession from homes and livelihoods. The irony is that katchi abadi dwellers, young students and youth as well as daily wage workers and street vendors face the big stick of the CDA and Islamabad administration in the name of 'legality'.

Forget the land grabbing and other violations of the law by real estate moguls, propertied classes and khaki-led bureaucratic overlords running the city. There is no democratic institution that exists in the capital, with the sole local government poll in 2016 making almost no dent on the city's bureaucratic temples. There are three National Assembly seats in the capital and most bourgeois parties put up high-profile candidates with little connection to the city's working masses — and that is if one doesn't even account for the farcical nature of the coming (s)election.

Islamabad has certainly grown a reputation for hosting protestors

from across Pakistan, but the recent treatment of Baloch women who led a long march into the city clarifies how genuinely democratic voices are treated in what is supposed to be the symbol of the federation.

For all of its narcissism and lack of concern for working people, Islamabad's — and Rawalpindi's — parasitic ruling class and those who live on its coattails won't be able to fully insulate itself from the downward spiral over which it is presiding. The disaffection felt by Baloch, Gilgit-Baltistani, Pakhtun, Sindhi, and so many young politically conscious people both in their home regions and as migrants in the capital is intensifying. The dastardly killing of a political youth leader in Bajaur shows how little changes in the peripheries. In the capital itself, katchi abadi dwellers and rehri-wallahs are still being ghettoised.

Islamabad's environs are wasting away at the altar of profit and power with no care for the needs of future generations. The tyranny of a socioeconomic order in rural peripheries that forces working people to migrate and massive demographic pressures mean that young people looking for livelihood and dignity will continue to stream into the capital. An ossified administrative centre proudly founded by Gens Yahya Khan and Ayub Khan will continue to benefit from the labour of this mass while grimly refusing to shed its dictatorial essence. Progressive political mobilisation will be the countervailing force and our only hope that Islamabad — and the rest of metropolitan Pakistan — does not become a total graveyard for the working people that make it tick. -- Courtesy Dawn

Commerce News

Alvi urges equal opportunities for businesswomen to improve economy

ISLAMABAD (INP): Dr. Arif Alvi, President of Pakistan urged that businesswomen should be provided equal opportunities to grow in the business field that would pave the way for better development of the economy and bring prosperity to the country.

He said that enhanced participation of women in business and other fields is so important to reduce poverty and ensure sustainable development of the country. He stressed that the government should create better opportunities for the economic empowerment of women and focus on providing them with a safe and conducive workplace environment. He said this while addressing the award ceremony for businesswomen and young entrepreneurs organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad.

President Dr. Arif Alvi lauded the efforts of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce for organizing an award ceremony to recognize the role of businesswomen and young entrepreneurs and said that other chambers of commerce should also work for the economic empowerment of

women and youngsters.

He urged the Chambers of Commerce to support businesswomen in getting cheap loans from banks. He said that 20 to 40 percent of employees in SBP and private commercial banks are women, so chambers of commerce should also encourage their member companies to provide jobs to more women and special persons in their business institutions.

He said that over 20 million children are out of school in Pakistan, and more than 50,000 schools are needed for their enrollment. However, as an alter-

native, mosques can be used to educate out-of-school children. Similarly, mosques can also be used as primary health centers.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Baktawari, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industries said that to ensure the development and prosperity of the country, it is important to empower women in every sphere of life.

JCCI is working hard to empower women and youth. He said that women are 50% of our population, but their participation in business is meager.



ISLAMABAD: The Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatisation, Fawad Hasan Fawad administers the signing of Financial Services Agreement for Roosevelt Hotel transaction.

Pak envoy says: Kazakhstan invited to benefit from SIFC framework

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's ambassador to Kazakhstan Nauman Bashir Bhatti on Friday said Kazakhstan had been invited to benefit from the favorable investment opportunities being offered by Pakistan under the framework of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC).

"I must highlight that Pakistan has established a SIFC and has opened priority sectors for investments. We have invited Kazakhstan to benefit from the favorable investment opportunities offered under the SIFC framework," he said in response to a question in an interview with 'Kazinform', an international news agency.

Highlighting Pakistan's strategic location, the envoy mentioned that his country also provided the shortest route for Kazakhstan's access to the Arabian Sea. "Pakistan remains keen to strengthen its connectivity with Kazakhstan in multiple ways and through multiple channels. The two sides are already working towards this end."

Cargo goods between Pak & Afghan PAJCCI for issuing special passes to truck drivers

PESHAWAR (APP): Coordinator Pak-Afghan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PAJCCI), Zia-ul-Haq Sarhadi has suggested issuing special passes to truck drivers transporting cargo goods between Pakistan and Afghanistan. In a press statement issued here on Friday, Zia Sarhadi said the suggestion is based on streamlining and smoothing of Pak-Afghan trade which was recently halted for ten days over condition of visas for truck drivers. Around 1000 truck drivers will be issued special passes instead of visas for carrying their goods with ease between Pakistan and Afghanistan, he added.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Four ships namely, Navios Constellation, Eva Tokyo, Ullswater and Bi Jia Shan, carrying Containers, Chemicals, LPG and Coal, berthed at Container Terminal, Engro Terminal, Sui Southern Terminal and Bulk Terminal respectively on Thursday.

A total of nine ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Golden Curl and Eva Tokyo are left the port on today morning and another containers ship, Navios Constellation is expected to sail on same day.

A cargo volume of 115,911 tonnes, comprising 70,354 tonnes imports cargo and 45,557 tonnes export cargo carried in 3,427 Containers (1,399 TEUs are Import.

New tech, ranking system should be introduced in cold storage sector: Zaki

LAHORE: Regional Chairman and Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Zaki Aijaz said new technology and ranking system should be introduced in the cold storage sector. Racks and pallet systems should be used instead of manual procedures for loading and unloading. He expressed these views while addressing the annual general meeting of the All Pakistan Cold Storage Association (APCSA) at FPCCI Regional Office Lahore.

Zaki Aijaz further said that approved gases should be used instead of using hazardous health gases. cold storage should be divided into small rooms where different products can be preserved at different temperatures. Solar systems should be used. These measures can also make the cold storage sector energy efficient.

He further said that the FPCCI will play its full role in solving the cold storage association's problems.

Chairman of All Pakistan Cold Storage Association, Mian Rehman Aziz Chan, said that tariffs on electricity and inflation have significantly increased. The interest is also high, and there has been no reduction.

Due to electricity, inflation, and interest rates, cold storage costs have increased by more than 30%.



LAHORE: Regional Chairman and Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Zaki Aijaz in a group photo with participants during general meeting of All Pakistan Cold Storage Association (APCSA) at FPCCI Regional Office Lahore.

PSX stays bullish, gains 609 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with a bullish trend on Friday, gaining 609.18 points, a positive change of 0.98 per cent, closing at 63,002.92 points against 62,393.74 points the previous trading day.

A total of 263,547,879 shares valuing Rs 10,730 billion were traded during the day as compared to 270,537,523 shares valuing Rs. 11,625 billion the last day. Some 336 companies transacted their shares in the stock market; 217 of them recorded gains and 92 sustained losses, whereas the share prices of 27 remained unchanged.

The three top-trading companies were K-Electric Limited with 26,580,417 shares at Rs.4.68 per share.



RAWALPINDI: A woman purchases handmade baskets from a roadside vendor at Rahmanabad.

Financial advisory services agreement signed Roosevelt Hotel's development

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Privatization Commission on Friday signed a financial advisory services agreement with a consortium led by Jones Lang La Salle Americas Inc (JLL) for joint venture development of Roosevelt Hotel, New York, United States, a property owned by the Pakistan International Airlines Investment Limited (PIAIL).

Caretaker Federal Minister for Privatization Fawad Hasan Fawad witnessed the signing of the agreement, a news release said. Speaking on the occasion, the minister expressed the Pakistan Government's commitment for developing the historic and landmark site in the heart of financial capital of the world as an iconic structure with the most modern development features and standards.

He expressed his full confidence in the ability and expertise of the Financial Advisory Consortium to find the best possible partners and realize its maximum potential value.

In a subsequent meeting, a detailed road map and time bound milestones were also agreed leading to identification and selection of the potential joint venture partners for the project.

KP Governor direct varsities to share compliance over 2% admission quota for minorities

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Haji Ghulam Ali on Friday issued directives to all the public sector varsities for sharing compliance over two per cent quota for minorities in the province. He issued these directives during a meeting held at the Governor House with a delegation of Civil Society Organization (CSO) representatives led by Qamar Naseem, Programme Manager of Blue Veins organization. Muhammad Rizwan, Provincial Coordinator of the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) was also present on the occasion along with CSO representatives including Zartasha, Faizan, Aliza Mehfooz and Uruba.

The CSO representatives called on Governor to express their gratitude for the support extended by Haji Ghulam Ali in the enforcement of Section 144 for the imposition of a ban on the sale of e-cigarettes on youngsters below the age of 21 and within the vicinity of educational institutions. During the meeting, Qamar Naseem diverted the attention of Governor KP over the non-implementation of 2 per cent admission quota by public sector universities for the minority community. He informed the Governor that during a survey conducted by Blue Veins in the province, it was found that the majority of universities are not utilizing a two per cent quota for minorities as decided by the government.



LAHORE: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab Mohsin Naqvi offering Dua after inaugurating Multan University of Science and Technology.

Naqvi inaugurates Multan university of Science & Tech

Independent Report MULTAN: Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Mohsin Naqvi, formally inaugurated the Multan University of Science and Technology and inspected various sections of the university. He said, "I am very happy to see the teaching of modern sciences and research facilities at Multan University of Science and Technology". He appreciated the role of the university in promoting technology-based higher education. The university needs to increase the number of

nurse admissions as nurses are in high demand in Pakistan, Mohsin Naqvi said, adding that the government was ready to cooperate with the university in this regard. On this occasion, Provincial Education Minister Mansoor Qadir, the Inspector General of Police, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Construction and Communications, the Additional Chief Secretary of South Punjab and concerned officials were also present. Meanwhile, a delegation of College of Physicians and Surgeons Paki-

stan (CPSP) met with Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in Lahore on Friday. CPSP President Prof Khalid Masood Gondal, Prof Mahmood Ayaz, Prof Amir Zaman Khan, Prof Abrar Ashraf, Prof Muhammad Tayyab and Prof Mustafa Arain were included in the delegation. The delegation of CPSP paid tribute to the services of Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi for the extraordinary reforms in the health sector of Punjab in a very short time. No elected government can compete with the

Punjab Governor says: Overseas Pakistanis playing important role in country's economy

Independent Report LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman was the chief guest at the book launching ceremony of "Zaban Yaar Man Turkey" by overseas Pakistani Dr. Tasawar Aslam Bhutta at Governor House Lahore. Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that overseas Pakistanis are the pride and ambassadors of Pakistan. He said that overseas Pakistanis are playing an important role in the country's economy by sending remittances. Governor Punjab said that the book "Zaban-e-Yaar Man Turkey" written by a distinguished Australian Pakistani consultant, Dr. Aslam Bhutta has narrated historical camaraderie between Pakistan and Turkey. He said that through this travelogue, the author has described the moments of stepping on the land. of Turkey where every corner, every town, and every city tells the stories of long-standing friendship between Turkiye and Pakistan. He said that the book "Zaban e Yar Man Turkiye" reflects the deep brotherly relations, immense love, respect, and mutual cooperation between two nations.



PESHAWAR: Minister Information and Tourism Barrister Feroze Jamal Kaka Khel visiting picture exhibition in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day at Nishtar Hall.



LAHORE: Caretaker Provincial Education Minister, Mansoor Qadir giving a shield to a participant after the D.M.S scores organized by Management Professional Development Department, at a local hotel, in the Provincial Capital.

Minister takes notice of outdated custom of 'Ghag'

Independent Report PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Newly Merged District Affairs, Industries, Commerce Technical Education Dr. Aamir Abdullah Friday took notice of the complaints about the outdated custom of 'Ghag' in some tribal areas and directed the concerned authorities to take concrete steps for eradicating the heinous crime. In a dispatch issued by the office of the caretaker minister to the respective Divisional Commissioners, Regional Police Officers (RPOs), Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and District Police Officers of the merged districts and former Frontier Regions (FRs) here, it has been stated that under 'Ghag Act' it has been declared a non-bailable and cognizable offense which under Section 4 of the Act.

Election 2024: Great enthusiasm witnesses among voters in merged tribal districts

KHYBER (APP): With only six days left in general election 2024, electioneering reached to its peak in all seven merged tribal districts (erstwhile Fata) where candidates started approaching large tribes seeking their support besides busy in election rallies and door to door meetings to attract voters. From South Waziristan to Bajaur and Khyber to North Waziristan tribal districts, the candidates of different political parties and their supporters were gearing up to elect their representatives for national and KP assemblies for next five years on February 8, 2024. Tribal people started gearing up for another historic moment to poll their

votes for the first time in their history for both National Assembly and KP legislature seats taking place simultaneously at South Waziristan, North Waziristan, Kurram, Khyber, Orakzai, Mohmand and Bajaur tribal districts on February 8, 2024. "I am eagerly awaiting for the February 8 election to cast my first vote," said Asghar Afridi, a voter of tehsil Bara Khyber tribal district. Besides his area's people, he said they would go in groups to polling stations along with families and friends to fulfil the national obligations. Like Asghar, great enthusiasm is being witnessed among vot-

ers in these tribal districts. The earlier election milestone had been achieved in 2019, when 16 seats of the tribal districts in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly were contested for the first time following their merger with the province. The inaugural elections for the provincial assembly seats from the merged districts took place on July 18, 2019 - a year after the general polls of July 25, 2018. Bajaur had two NA seats in the 2018 general elections that had now been reduced to one following the delimitation of constituencies last year. Independent candidates dominated the provincial polls by securing six

seats, followed by the PTI with five in 2019 elections. The candidates of the JUI-F bagged three seats while the ANP and Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) both won one each respectively. Three independent candidates joined the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and formed a new parliamentary party in the province. Of the four reserved seats for women from the merged districts, the PTI secured two while the JUI-F and BAP both acquired one each while the lone reserved seat for minorities was also bagged by the PTI. Dr. A.H. Hilali, ex chairman political science department, university of Peshawar said that Febru-

ary 8, 2024 would be historic movement for tribal people of merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would exercise their right of franchise for the second time to elect their representatives for next five years. He said merged tribal districts have a different political culture than settled districts where large tribes play a key role in deciding the fate of candidates. Dr Hilali said that literacy rate in merged tribal districts were significantly improved and expected high turnout in this election compared to last election. In the 2019 polls, Anwar Zeb Khan of PTI had won PK-100 Bajaur-I and Ajmal Khan of the

same party was elected from PK-101 Bajaur-II. Similarly, JI's Sirajuddin Khan from PK-102 Bajaur-III, ANP's Nisar Ahmed from PK-103 Mohmand-I, independent candidate Abbas Rehman from PK-104 Mohmand-II, and independent candidate Shafiq Afridi from PK-105 Khyber-I were also elected. Others who emerged victorious included independent candidate Bilawal Afridi from PK-106 Khyber-II, independent candidate Mohammad Shafiq from PK-107 Khyber-III, JUI-F's Muhammad Riaz from PK-108 Kurram-I, and PTI's Syed Iqbal Mian from PK-109 Kurram-I.

International News

Trudeau condemns attack on Canada mosque, says Islamophobia 'has no place' in country

Monitoring Desk QUEBEC: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on Thursday condemned an attack on a mosque in the city of Mississauga in Ontario province, which is being probed as a hate crime and which rights advocates described as being part of a rise in Islamophobia. Police said someone threw two rocks through the window of a Mississauga mosque on Sunday, on the eve of the anniversary of a mosque attack in Quebec City that killed six people in 2017. CBC News said no one was injured in the incident. "Islamophobia has no place in any of our communities," Trudeau said on X, formerly called Twitter. "The attack against a Mississauga mosque earlier this week on the National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia is cowardly, disturbing, and unacceptable. I condemn it in the strongest terms possible," he said. The National Council of Canadian Muslims said the attack was "part of an alarming rise in Islamophobic hate across the country." In November, authorities in Toronto said the number of antisemitic and anti-Muslim hate

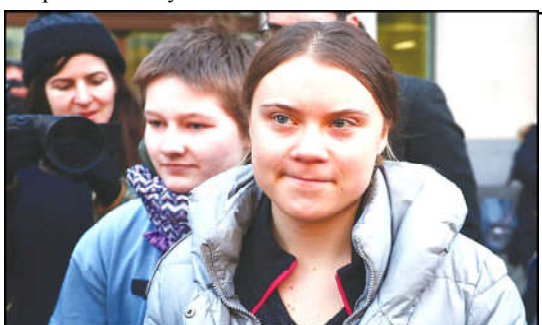
crimes in Canada's largest city had spiked significantly since the start of Israel's military offensive in Gaza. Rights advocates have noted a rise in anti-Semitism and Islamophobia in many parts of the world since October 7 when Palestinian group Hamas attacked Israel and killed 1,200, according to Israeli tallies. Since then, Israel has militarily assaulted the Gaza Strip, killing 27,000, according to Gaza's health ministry, and flattening most of the densely populated enclave where nearly all of the 2.3 million population is displaced.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi visits the military equipment of IRGC Navy in Bandar Abbas, Iran.

North Korea fires multiple cruise missiles into West Sea

Monitoring Desk SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple cruise missiles into the West Sea on Friday, Seoul's military said, continuing a fresh streak of weapons testing as Kim Jong Un's regime ramps up "war preparations". Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the military had "detected at around 11am (0200 GMT) the firing of multiple unidentified cruise missiles" into the sea off the country's west coast. The South Korean military has "stepped up surveillance in close coordination with the United States", the JCS said in the statement. The military is "closely monitoring for signs of additional activity" by the North Korean army, it said, adding they were "closely analysing" the launch. The Friday launch comes three days after the nuclear-armed North conducted what it said was a test-fire of a strategic cruise missile. On Sunday, Kim also oversaw the launch of two Pulhwasal-3-31s, a new type of strategic cruise missile, purportedly from a North Korean submarine. Pyongyang has also claimed this month to have tested an "underwater nuclear weapon system" and a solid-fuelled hypersonic ballistic missile. Unlike their ballistic counterparts, the testing of cruise missiles is not banned under current UN sanctions on Pyongyang. Cruise missiles tend to be jet-propelled and fly at a lower altitude than more sophisticated ballistic missiles, making them harder to detect and intercept.



Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg leaves Westminster Magistrates Court in London after the hearing.

Thunberg goes on trial in London for oil protest

Monitoring Desk LONDON: Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg went on trial on Thursday for a public order offence related to a protest outside an oil and gas conference held in London last year. Thunberg, who became a prominent campaigner worldwide after staging week-long protests in front of the Swedish parliament in 2018, was arrested on Oct 17. She and others had been protesting outside a hotel where the Energy Intelligence Forum was hosting oil and gas industry leaders. The 21-year-old appeared at Westminster Magistrates' Court on Thursday alongside four other defendants, aged between 19 and 59, who have pleaded not guilty to a single offence under the Public Order Act. The five are accused of failing to comply with a condition imposed by senior police officers to move their protest to designated area near the conference.

China tells Ukraine to remove its firms from 'sponsors of war' list

Monitoring Desk KYIV: China demanded on Thursday that Ukraine immediately remove more than a dozen Chinese companies from a list of firms designated as "international sponsors of war", saying it wanted Kyiv to "eliminate negative impacts". The remarks came after Reuters reported that China's ambassador in Kyiv had told senior Ukrainian government officials last month that the inclusion of the companies on the list could hurt bilateral ties. "China firmly opposes the inclusion of Chinese enterprises in the relevant list and demands that Ukraine immediately correct its mistakes and eliminate negative impacts," a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson told Reuters after the report was published. It did not specify what those impacts may be.

More than 100 Myanmar migrants flee Malaysian detention centre, one dead

Monitoring Desk KUALA LUMPUR: An undocumented migrant from Myanmar has died in a road accident while fleeing an immigration detention centre with over a hundred others in Malaysia late Thursday, officials said. The incident was the second reported breakout from a Malaysian detention centre in as many years. In April 2022, 582 ethnic Rohingya refugees from Myanmar escaped.

Indian Muslim leaders urge government to end mosque-temple disputes

Monitoring Desk NEW DELHI: Top Muslim leaders in India called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government on Friday to end disputes over mosques and Hindu temples, saying the minority Muslim population was feeling under threat and their places of worship should be protected. "Many people in the country are claiming that some of the historic mosques were constructed after the destruction of temples, but these are false accusations," said Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, president of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board. "We urge the government to put an end to such disputes and save the secular fabric of the nation," he told reporters, flanked by other leaders and clerics.

UN's Palestinian agency nominated for Nobel Prize

Monitoring Desk OSLO: A Norwegian politician said on Thursday that he has nominated the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA, embroiled in a controversy over the alleged involvement of employees in the Oct 7 raid on Israel, for the Nobel Peace Prize. Labour MP Asmund Aukrust told the Dagbladet newspaper he had nominated the UN Relief and Works Agency "for its long-term work to provide vital support to Palestine and the region in general".

EU approves \$54 billion package for Ukraine after appeasing Hungary

Monitoring Desk BRUSSELS: European Union (EU) leaders unanimously agreed on Thursday to extend 50 billion euros (\$54bn) in aid to Ukraine, overcoming weeks of resistance by Hungary. Leaders from Western countries have reacted over the aid announcement for the Ukraine. European Council President Charles Michel said, "We have a deal. All 27 leaders agreed on an additional 50bn support package for Ukraine within the EU budget. This looks in steadfast, long-term, predictable funding for Ukraine. The EU is taking leadership and responsibility in support for Ukraine; we know what it is at stake." Reacting on the EU aid announcement, the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, "Grateful to Charles Michel and EU leaders for establishing the 50bn Ukraine Facility for 2024-2027. It is very important that the decision was made by all 27 leaders, which once again proves strong EU unity." "Continued EU financial support for Ukraine will strengthen long-term economic and financial stability, which is no less important than military assistance and sanctions pressure on Russia." Meanwhile, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said that "We negotiated an offer, and negotiated a control mechanism that guarantees the reasonable use of funds and we also received guarantees that Hungary's money (that the commission has not yet released) cannot go to Ukraine. After a lengthy negotiation we accepted this offer." In addition, EU Commission Chief Ursula von der Leyen said, "Agreement! The European Council delivered on our priorities."

Hamdan also said the group seeks the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners being held for acts related to the conflict with Israel, including those serving life sentences. He mentioned two by name, including Marwan Barghouti, a popular Palestinian uprising leader seen as a unifying figure. Hamdan's comments on the prisoners were the most detailed demands yet to be raised by the group in public.

Boosting US investments in Pakistan remains govt 's top priority: Masood Khan

WASHINGTON (Online): Pakistan's Ambassador to the US, Masood Khan, told Pakistani-American businessmen Thursday that the present government was facilitating and offering attractive incentives to financiers to invest in all areas of the country's economy.

"Promoting Pak-US bilateral trade and enhancing US investment in Pakistan is the foremost priority," he said in the course of a virtual meeting with the leadership of California-based Pakistan American Chamber of Commerce (PACC), which is headed by its Chairman Waqar Ali Khan.

Other members of the Chamber—Dr Sana Khan, Fawad Ismail, Zubair Rao,

Maqsood Chaudhry, Dr Salahuddin and Mr Farrukh—also took part in the meeting.

In addition, Pakistan's Consul General in Los Angeles, Asim Ali Khan, and Trade and Investment Counselor Quratulain Fatima were present.

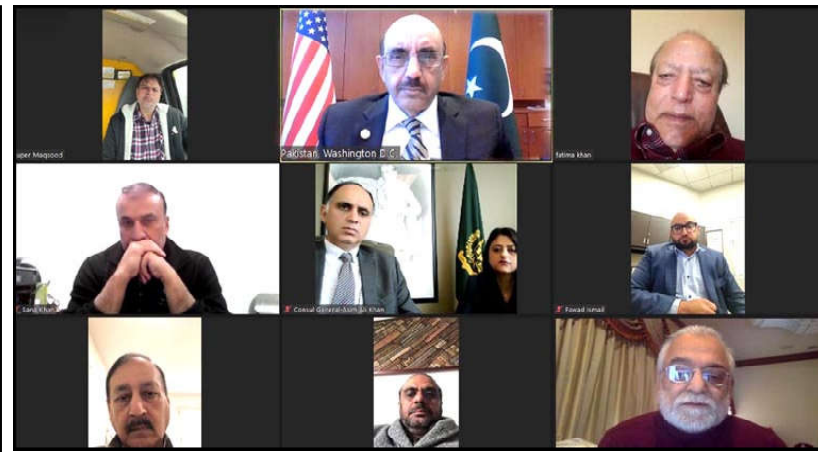
In his remarks, Masood Khan said, "The newly established Special Investment Facilitation Council is taking practical steps to remove hurdles in the way of foreign investors undertaking profitable business ventures in Pakistan." Masood Khan said.

Appreciating the role of PACC in promoting trade activities and connecting business communities of the two countries, the Am-

bassador underscored the need for greater collaboration between various chambers and trade organizations working across the United States to boost Pak-US trade and investment ties.

"By investing their resources back home, Pak-American investors would not only be reaping huge dividends but would also be contributing towards the socio-economic progress of their motherland," the Ambassador said.

PACC Chairman Waqar Ali Khan briefed the Ambassador about various activities of the chamber, especially the successes achieved in promoting trade activities in the health, food and textile sectors.



WASHINGTON DC: Ambassador Masood Khan in a virtual meeting with the leadership of Pakistan American Chamber of Commerce (PACC) led by its Chairman Waqar Ali Khan. Other members of the Chamber included Dr. Sana Khan, Fawad Ismail, Zubair Rao, Maqsood Chaudhry, Dr. Salahuddin and Farrukh, Consul General of Pakistan in Los Angeles Asim Ali Khan and Trade and Investment Counselor Quratulain Fatima, attended the meeting.

KIIR calls on UN to halt illegal campaign launched by Indian troops in occupied Kashmir

MIRPUR (AJK) (APP): Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), Altaf Hussain Wani, called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to halt the illegal profiling campaign disguised as a census by Indian troops in the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

In a joint letter addressed to the UN Secretary General and other UN Special Rapporteurs, Altaf Hussain Wani underscored the move is illegal, unconstitutional, and human rights violations.

He expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in the campaign initiated without formal announcements from

competent authorities, further unsettling the already anxious residents.

Wani emphasized the fear and insecurity prevailing in Occupied Kashmir since the Modi's government revoked the region's special status, saying it is a blatant violation of UNSC resolutions.

The Chairman Wani revealed that the census conducted by Indian troops was extracting sensitive information, including family details, ages, and contact information of residents and their family members living outside the region.

The distributed "census forms" sought exclusive data such as Aadhar numbers, vehicle registration numbers, and information

about CCTV cameras, along with inquiries about family members involved in the freedom struggle.

Residents were even asked for photographs and geo-tagging coordinates of their residences.

The letter highlighted the invasive nature of the campaign, causing serious concerns among Kashmiri people already living under excessive surveillance.

Wani pointed to the Indian security forces' growing interference in residents' private lives, citing databases created since 2019 targeting journalists, academicians, civil society, and human rights activists documenting violations committed by the Indian army.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar receives an award conferred upon Late Mir Sultan Khan, a Chess player, posthumously from the President of International Chess Federation Mr. Arkady Dvorkovich and President Asian Chess Federation Mr. Sultan bin Khalifa Al Nahyan.

Export of rice, frozen food from Pakistan to Malaysia improving: CG

KARACHI (APP): Consul General of Malaysia Herman Hardynata Bin Ahmad, said that Pakistan's share in bilateral trade was also improving as Malaysia has increased its purchases of rice and frozen food from Pakistan.

Though trade volume between the two countries was largely in Malaysia's favour, its exports to Pakistan mainly represent palm oil, he added while speaking at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), said a statement issued here on Friday.

"Malaysia is a small

country and in terms of palm oil production, we are limited and unable to completely fulfil Pakistan's growing demand for palm oil even though we have been producing palm oil at our peak capacity," the CG said.

The Malaysian envoy appreciated KCCI for regularly holding meetings and maintaining excellent liaison with the Malaysian Consulate and also expressed keenness to get engaged with the business community of Karachi that was arranging meetings focusing on strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties.

Police busted robber gang, recovered Rs 10 million

HYDERABAD (APP): The Hyderabad police have claimed of busted a gang of robbers involved in several robberies in houses and shops over the years.

ASP Rana Muhammad Dilwar told a press conference here on Friday that the gang's central figure Nadir Ali had been arrested in a raid after which the robbed items and cash worth over Rs10 million were recovered.

According to him, the police recovered Rs7.5 million cash, gold jewellery and wristwatches from Ali.

The ASP said that the hunt was underway to nab other members of the gang.

Committee finds 'tampering' in results of Karachi intermediate exams

KARACHI (INP): A three-member investigative committee, tasked with scrutinizing anomalies in the results of examinations administered by the Board of Intermediate Education Karachi (BIEK), has unearthed extensive irregularities.

The committee was formed by Sindh's caretaker minister Justice (retired) Maqbool Baqar to investigate the issue after the majority of students failed in the inter exams and protests were held.

The committee in its

report revealed that the results of English, Biology, Chemistry and Physics were "tampered". Eight officers of the intermediate board of Karachi have been held responsible for the matter.

Former chairman, Dr Saeeduddin and Naseem Memon and others have been held responsible for the tampering in the results of Karachi inter exams, while the Sindh government has penned a letter to the anti-corruption department for registration of cases against the responsible.

AC issues Toshakhana case's written order

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Accountability Court (AC) of Islamabad on Friday issued its written order regarding the 14 years imprisonment sentence to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) founder and his wife Bushra Bibi in the Toshakhana case.

AC Judge Muhammad Bashir, in his 44-page detailed judgment, said that the court had testified a total of 16 witnesses during the trial.

The order said that the PTI's founder and his wife received a total of 108 gifts from abroad.

It further said that the PTI founder's wife received a gift of a watch worth 100,000 rupees from the Saudi Crown Prince, which was reported but not deposited into the Toshakhana.

The judgment said that the two accused used influence on the private expert who determined the value of the gift.

Five injured in violent incidents

KARACHI (INP): Five people were injured in separate incidents of violence in different localities of the metropolis, police said on Friday.

According to details, a clash between two groups took place near Shah Latif Manzil Pump after elders jumped into children's clash. Both sides exchange fire and attacked each other with baton resulting in critical injuries to four people.

A Home Department young employee identified as Farhan was injured in firing near Block 17 of Federal 'B' Area.

The injured of both incidents were shifted to different hospitals and police after registering separate cases at respective police stations started investigations.

Mind games important for fostering physical, mental growth in youth: PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Friday emphasized the importance of sports, particularly mind games, in fostering both physical and mental development of youth, said that the chess game helps to instill discipline in individuals' thought processes.

Addressing the launch of the Prime Minister's National Mind Sports Initiative, the prime minister highlighted the positive impact of such mind games on mental well-being and said the youth engaged in such healthy activities would become successful professionals in the future.

He said these games promote cognitive activity and critical thinking among the players.

The prime minister said he was happy that he made a commitment to this special cause, and he will also continue to support and promote this cause in the future. He said every school in the country should have access to this

game.

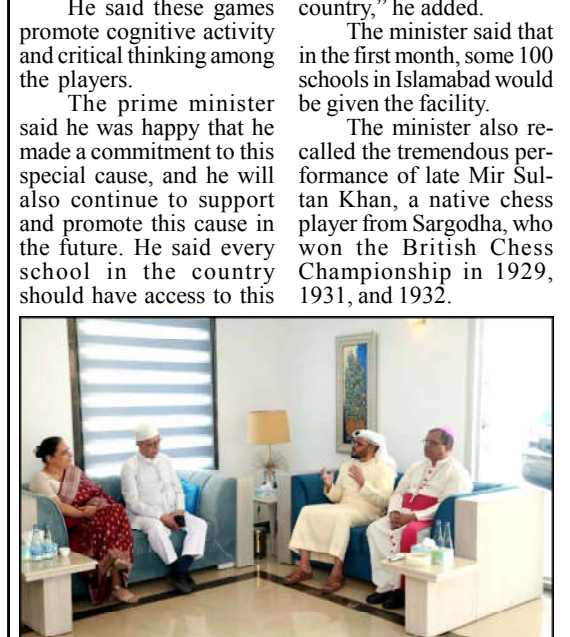
Acknowledging the contribution of the federal minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination Fawad Hassan Fawad PM Kakar said that due to his personal efforts, the launch of this initiative became possible.

Fawad Hassan Fawad, on the occasion, informed that, under the initiative, the facility of mind games would be provided at 10,000 public schools across the country.

"We are going to take it across all the public schools in Pakistan, and we are also engaging the corporate sector and inviting the private schools to have this in every single school in the country," he added.

The minister said that in the first month, some 100 schools in Islamabad would be given the facility.

The minister also recalled the tremendous performance of late Mir Sultan Khan, a native chess player from Sargodha, who won the British Chess Championship in 1929, 1931, and 1932.



KARACHI: Consul General of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Karachi, Dr. Bakheet Ateeq Al Rumaithi hosted a reception in honor of various religious communities including Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, Buddhists, Aga Khanis and Christians on the occasion of the International Humanitarian Day, in Karachi.

ECP issues notices of violations in election campaign

KARACHI (APP): The Election Commission of Pakistan is strictly monitoring compliance with the code of conduct during the ongoing campaign for general elections 2024 and notices were issued to different candidates and officials for violating the code of conduct in different areas of Sindh.

The ECP Sindh, in a statement issued here on Friday, said that the monitoring teams of the Election Commission carried out operations against the use of unauthorized promotional materials in East, Central, West and Keamari districts of Karachi and Kashmir districts and removed signboards, Pena flex, posters, banners, flags and all other promotional materials from public parks, thoroughfares, government buildings and traffic signals.

ECP monitoring officer issued a notice to Chairman District Council Thatta for participating in the election campaign, the

statement said adding that the District Monitoring Officer (DMO) has also issued a notice to a government employee for participating in the election campaign in Matiari and sought explanation in the regard.

In Sukkur, District Monitoring Officer has issued a notice to the People's Party candidate for National Assembly NA-201 Sukkur, Syed Khursheed Ahmad Shah, for violating section no.17 of the code of conduct and sought an explanation.

Section 17 of ECP's code of conduct prohibits all types of firing including aerial firing, use of crackers and other explosives at public meetings and at or near the polling stations by any person and provides for treating the violation as an illegal practice.

DMOs has issued notices to the workers of Jamaat-e-Islami, MQM-Pakistan, Muslim League-N and MQM Haqqi on illegal actions in PS 91 Korangi Karachi.

Commissioner directs to ensure uninterrupted electricity, security for general elections

HYDERABAD (APP): Commissioner, Syed Khalid Hyder Shah Friday directed to ensure electricity at the polling stations without interruption during the election day and arrange solar systems, batteries and generators for the polling stations which did not have HESCO infrastructure.

He said this while presiding over the meeting in his office regarding the reparations for the election to be held on February 8.

Talking to the Divisional Officers, the commissioner said that before the

polling, the responsibility of guarding the CCTV and furniture was of the watchman and headmaster of the concerned polling station and after the election, adding the presiding officer would remove the sensitive content of the CCTV DVR, etc and submit it to the DRO along with the other sensitive polling materials.

Khalid Hyder Shah said that in view of the security situation in the country, health emergency had been declared in the division, for this, the health staff should remain alert.

DIG Sukkur visits Khairpur, reviews arrangements of general elections

SUKKUR (APP): Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Sukkur, Abdul Hameed Khoso on Friday said that foolproof security arrangements would be made to maintain law and order situation during the upcoming general elections 2024.

During his visit to review arrangements at district Khairpur, the DIG said that the election code of conduct would be implemented strictly and violators would be treated as per law.



KARACHI: Rangers Security personals stands alert outside a shopping mall after fire broke at M.A Jinnah road, in the Provincial Capital.

DEMP, QMMB organize event on 'Kashmir Day' with educational artwork

KARACHI (APP): The Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications (DEMP) and the Quaid-e-Azam Mazar Management Board (QMMB), jointly arranged a program on 'Kashmir Day' here with a series of educational activities aimed at fostering solidarity with the Kashmiri people of IIOJK, in their quest for freedom.

The ceremony was held at Quaid-e-Azam Mazar, and witnessed by Director General of the Press Information Department, Erum Tanveer, who attended the event as a chief guest.

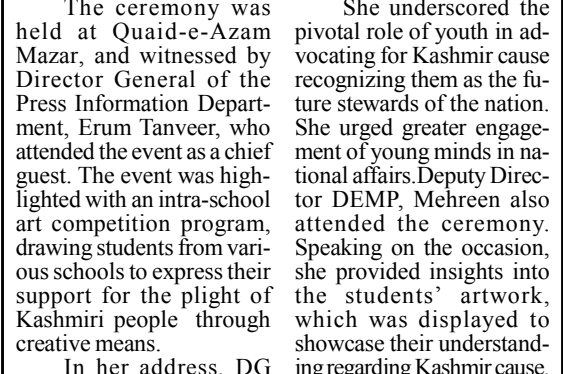
The event was highlighted with an intra-school art competition program, drawing students from various schools to express their support for the plight of Kashmiri people through creative means.

In her address, DG

Erum Tanveer commended the significance of such commemorations, acknowledging the concerted efforts of DEMP and QMMB, in organizing such fruitful events. She emphasized the importance of educating young minds about the Kashmir issue. She stressed the need for resolving Kashmir issue as per UN resolutions.

She underscored the pivotal role of youth in advocating for Kashmir cause recognizing them as the future stewards of the nation.

She urged greater engagement of young minds in national affairs. Deputy Director DEMP, Mehreen also attended the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, she provided insights into the students' artwork, which was displayed to showcase their understanding regarding Kashmir cause.



KARACHI: Director General Press Information Department (PID) Karachi Ms. Erum Tanveer in a group photo along with student of position holders of Intra-School Arts Competition in connection of Kashmir Day at Quaid-e-Azam Mazar organized by Government of Pakistan Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Directorate of Electronic Media and Publications, National Heritage and Culture Division.



SUKKUR: A large numbers of supporters of Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) are holding Election Campaign rally led by Mubin Jatoi in connection of the General Election 2024 coming ahead, in Sukkur.

SU faculty expresses solidarity with Kashmiris people

HYDERABAD (APP): The University of Sindh observed Kashmir solidarity day on Friday to express solidarity with the people of India-held Kashmir against the occupation of their region by the Indian forces in 1947.

The Bureau of STAGS University of Sindh held a rally from Arts Faculty Building, which was led by Vice Chancellor Professor (Meritorious) Dr. Muhammad Siddique Kalhoro.

The rally was taken out from the entrance of the Arts Faculty Building, which passed through

different roads and turned into a gathering in front of the Central Library. The teachers, officials and students participating in the rally raised various slogans like "Kashmir Bani Ga Pakistan" and strongly condemned Indian brutality.

Addressing the gathering at the Central Library, Vice-Chancellor Prof. (Meritorious) Dr. Muhammad Siddique Kalhoro said that Occupied Kashmir is a global humanitarian problem, which requires the immediate attention of the international community.

Youth killed in hit-and-run accident

KARACHI (INP): A youth was killed in hit-and-run accident in near Degree College Malir Saudabad Karachi on Friday.

According to details, an unknown vehicle knocked down a motorcycle carrying a youth.

As a result of accident, the motorcyclist youth identified as Jibran was killed on the spot and the driver sped the scene.

The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case unidentified driver started an investigation.