

Independent

Member APNS & CPNE

Chief Editor: Syed Farooq Shah

www.dailyindependent.com.pk

Quetta

Ph: 2841470/2841473 REG: No. BC-116 B/ID-445 Vt XXV No 164, Rajab 21, 1445 AH Friday February 02, 2024 Pages 08, Price Rs.15

Despite security challenges, ECP fully ready to stage polls on Feb 8

CEC says any efforts to hinder electoral process and affect security to be dealt with iron fists

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja stated on Thursday that despite existing security challenges, the upcoming elections will be held on February 8.

The Election Commission is fully prepared to conduct the elections with the support of law enforcement agencies and the Pakistan Army. He expressed these views while address-

ing an important meeting held by the Election Commission to discuss the deteriorating law and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and its impact on the general elections.

The Election Commissioner made it clear that despite terrorism, security challenges, and incidents affecting the electoral process, the elections will not be postponed and will take

place on schedule. He urged everyone not to harbor any misconceptions or doubts in this regard.

He warned that decisive measures would be implemented against any elements attempting to undermine peace and security during the electoral process. Apart from the members of the Election Commission, Caretaker Federal Minister of Interior, Federal Secretary of Interior, DG-IB,

Chief Secretary and IG of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and Balochistan Province, representatives of other agencies, the Secretary Election Commission, and other senior officers participated in the meeting.

Addressing the participants of the meeting, the CEC expressed his concern over the deteriorating law

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar chairs a meeting of the Caretaker Federal Cabinet.



QUETTA: Caretaker Interior Minister Dr. Gohar Ejaz addressing a Press conference regarding holding of peaceful elections

Caretaker govt fully prepared & committed to hold elections on Feb 8: Solangi

KARACHI (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday said that the caretaker government was fully prepared and committed to conduct general elections on February 8.

He was addressing a seminar on "Challenges and Roadmap for the New Government", organized by the Press Information Department.

The minister said that as the government's spokesperson, he had been reiterating the caretaker government's commitment for holding elections as per

the schedule given by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

"The election process should continue in any case and major issues facing the country, including economy, foreign policy, local governments, governance and civil service reforms, should also be discussed to find their solution," he remarked.

Solangi said that despite many flaws in the democratic system and electoral process, everyone was in agreement that the electoral process should not be stopped and elections should be held.

'If anyone can resolve missing person issue, it's me', says Bilawal

Independent Report

KHUZDAR: Former foreign minister and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, addressed a fervent crowd in Khuzdar on Thursday, asserting himself as the key to resolving the issue of missing persons in Balochistan. Bilawal claimed that no other federal politician empathises with the pain and suffering of the region's people like he does.



During the public meeting, Bilawal emphasised the PPP's commitment to fighting for the rights of the people of Balochistan, stressing that the party does not bow down to external pressures. "Yes, people know that PPP is the only party that does not bow before anyone... we are ready to fight all forces but we cannot compromise on people's rights," he declared.

Security and other necessary arrangements reviewed for general elections in Quetta

Independent Report

QUETTA: The security as well as other related matters about preparations of the general elections were reviewed in Quetta Division here on Thursday.

The Commissioner Quetta Muhammad Hamza Shafiq chaired the meeting that discussed and finalized the arrangements made for security and provision of other necessary facilities including transport at the polling stations.

Those who were in attendance were included the Additional Commissioner Quetta Division and District Monitoring Officer Soban Dashti, Assistant

Commissioner Revenue, Hanif Kibzai as well as deputy Commissioners Quetta, Kila Abdullah, Chaman and Pishin besides the Returning Officers and other concerned officials.

The meeting decided to set up control rooms in all districts of the Quetta Division and deputee the employees there for monitoring of elections.

It was also decided to finalize the contingency and security plan, besides other arrangements, and submit the report thereon.

All the concerned officials were directed to complete installation of the CCTV cameras at the sensitive polling stations.

PTI's intra-party elections to be held on Feb 5

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) intra-party elections will be held on Feb 5 (Monday).

The schedule of the internal elections has been issued. Party's federal election commissioner issued the schedule.

In a statement issued on the social media website, the party said all registered voters will be eligible to take part in voting throughout Pakistan on the designated places for polling to elect a panel or a candidate of their choice.

All the party members registered till Jan 31 would be eligible to take part in voting. Details of the panels taking part in elections will be available on the official website of the PTI.

EC decides to dispatch ballot papers by air

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission (EC) has decided to dispatch ballot papers by air to remote areas of KP and Balochistan in order to ensure immediate delivery.

According to EC spokesperson ballot papers will be sent to Gawadar, Panjgore, Kache, Kharan, Bajore and Kurram Agency by air.

Spokesperson said ballot papers of national and provincial assemblies will be sent in these areas by helicopter.

About printing of ballot papers he said the printing work of ballot papers for three seats of national assembly has been started which will be completed soon.

Iran hands over bodies of nine Pakistani labourers

ISLAMABAD (INP): Iran on Thursday handed over bodies of Pakistani labourers killed in Sistan Balochistan.

The bodies were handed over to Pakistani authorities at the Pak-Iran border by Iranian Border Security Guards.

The mortal remains of Pakistani nationals were received by Assistant Commissioner Taftan, Waqar Kakar.

The incident was condemned by the Iranian authorities and an inquiry was ordered.

Iranian envoy to Pakistan in his statement condemned the killings of Pakistani labourers in Iran and said Tehran and Islamabad will not tolerate affliction of damage to the countries' relations.

Govt approves increase in prices of 146 essential life-saving medicines

Decision taken due to rising prices of raw materials in global market; PM Kakar directs Drap to speed up actions against smuggling of drugs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar on Thursday directed to improve the performance of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and accelerate action against drug smugglers and hoarders.

Chairing a meeting of the Federal Cabinet, the prime minister instructed to compile the recommendations for necessary legislation regarding the deregulation of drug prices and its onward presentation before the Parliament by the next elected government.

Addressing the cabinet meeting, he said the government was taking all possible steps to provide medicines to the common man at reasonable prices.

He further said the government was framing such policies which would benefit the common man and also help develop the pharmaceutical industry.

The cabinet approved the increase in the prices of 146 essential life-saving medicines, keeping in view the rising prices of their raw material in the global market under the hardship category.

Continued on page 2

One killed, four injured as multiple blasts rock Balochistan

Police confirmed multiple blasts in Quetta, Turbat, and Dera Allah Yar; Wave of terror poses challenge to political activities ahead of elections

Independent Report

QUETTA: Four separate blasts occurred in Balochistan's provincial capital Quetta, Turbat, and Dera Allah Yar city of Jaffarabad district, injuring four people who have been shifted to hospitals for medical treatment.

One person was killed while four people sustained injuries in the wake of the blasts. The deceased was identified as 79-year-old Abdul Khaliq.

In Quetta, an explosive material blasted near a police checkpoint while one person was injured in the

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Police officials cordoned off the area and are ascertaining the nature of the blast after the explosion, at Spinny road in Quetta.

Nawaz vows to remove KP people's sense of deprivation

SWAT (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif on Thursday said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been deceived in the name of change during last 10 years rule of Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf and vowed to remove sense of the deprivation of its people.

Reiterating to bring positive socioeconomic changes, Nawaz Sharif said that the people of KP were in fact deprived of development under the guise of so-called change.

Addressing a public

gathering in Mingora, he said that all sectors in KP were badly affected by poor governance of the PTI government.

Neither the promise of construction of 350 dams was fulfilled nor five million houses were constructed or 10 million jobs created, he added.

Where there were 10 billion trees, he asked.

Nawaz Sharif said during his last government, there was no loadshedding while price hike was controlled and peace was restored in Swat.



QUETTA: Caretaker Information Minister Jan Achakzai meeting with Caretaker Health Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jogezi

CT Interior Minister chairs meeting on law & order, preparations: It's ensured to provide peaceful and conducive environment for general elections, says Dr. Gohar Ejaz

65,522 personnel of law enforcement agencies to be deployed for security during elections in Balochistan, CS briefs Federal Interior Minister

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Federal Minister Interior, Dr. Gohar Ejaz has stated that it is being ensured by the government with all stakeholders to provide peaceful and conducive environment for the upcoming general elections to be held on February 8 in the country.

He said that the caretaker government is determined to ensure, free, fair and peaceful elections in the country including Balochistan.

The caretaker Interior Minister was chairing a high level meeting on the law

and order here on Thursday.

The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan briefed the visiting Interior Minister about the law and order situation and preparations of the elections in Balochistan.

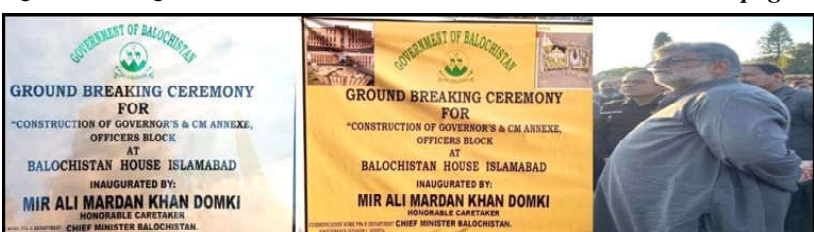
Also present in the meeting were caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Captain (Retd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali, Additional Chief Secretary Home, Zahid Saleem, Inspector General of Police, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other concerned high ups from civil bureaucracy and military.

It may be mentioned here caretaker Minister Interior arrived in the provincial metropolis to review the preparations for elections besides the law and order situation in the province on special directives of the caretaker Prime Minister Anwaarul Haq Kakar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Interior Minister said that he is visiting the provinces for review of the preparations of elections on special directives of the caretaker Prime Minister.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz directed to the concerned authorities to provide peaceful and conducive environment for the elections.

Continued on page 2



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki laying foundation of construction of Governor, CM Annexe and Officers Block at Balochistan House

Security forces gun down two notorious terrorists in DI Khan

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: The security forces on Thursday gunned down terrorists ring leader Ashraf Sheikh, the high value target, along with his accomplice Burhan Ullah after an intense exchange of fire during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Dera Ismail Khan District.

According to an Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities, including target killing of innocent civilians.

"Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other terrorist, if any, found in the area. Locals of the area appreciated the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate the menace of terrorism," the ISPR said.

Caretaker CM lays foundation of development projects in Balochistan House Islamabad

Independent Report

QUETTA: The caretaker Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki visited the construction projects located in Balochistan House Islamabad on Thursday.

The projects were included the Governor and Chief Minister Annexes and offices, which were already approved to be built in the Balochistan House.

During the briefing, the Chief Minister was briefed about the development projects. It was informed that the tendering process of projects has been completed. These projects would cost Rs. 1.6 billion, it was informed adding that work on the projects would be started next week.

Both the projects would be completed in next couple of years, it was further told. Speaking on the occasion, Mir Ali Mardan Domki directed to ensure timely completion of the development projects maintaining quality of work. Inspector General of Police Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and other high ups were also present on the occasion.



QUETTA: Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Dr. Shafiq Ahmed and Vice Chancellor Bolan University of Medical & Health Sciences Dr. Shabbir Lehri meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Governor calls for seeking help and guidance of universities' scholars to formulate national policies

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that the developed nations of the world have made progress after benefiting from their higher educational institutions and the leading role of universities can't be denied in development and reconstruction of the society even today.

The Governor underlined the need to seek help and guidance of the experts and researchers for formulating the national policies besides in modern education and research sectors.

He stated so while speaking to the Vice Chancellor of University of Balochistan, Professor Dr. Shafiqur Rehman and Vice Chancellor of Bolan University of Medical and Health Sciences, Dr. Shabbir Ahmed Lehri who called on him here at the Governor House on Thursday.

The Governor said that the government has been spending huge amount on the Ph.D scholars for last several decades. Therefore, it is necessary to fully benefit from the knowledge and experience of all talented experts and researchers

present in the public sector universities.

During the course of meeting, matters about the peaceful academic environment, generation of new sources of income, capacity building of human resource besides other important ones.

The Governor expressed sorrow over that we couldn't benefit from the services and expertise of experts and researchers of the public sector universities mainly because of lack of proper planning and high research centers in the past.

Kashmiri artists & poets playing significant role in highlighting Indian HR abuses: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment Mushaal Hussein Mullick on Thursday said the Kashmiri artists and musicians were playing a significant role in highlighting Indian human rights violations and expressing the resistance and struggle for freedom of the people of Jammu and Kashmir through their works.

She was addressing a seminar on "Reflections of Resilience: Showcasing Kashmiri Identity & Solidarity through Art", organized by The India Study Center (ISC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad.

The event brought together young Pakistani and Kashmiri artists, creating a platform for an artistic exploration of Kashmiri identity and resilience and expressing solidarity with the

people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

Mushaal lauded the creative initiative of engaging and empowering the youth of both Pakistan and Kashmir to express support for the Kashmiri freedom struggle through art.

She said the musicians from Kashmir had composed songs that reflected the sentiments of resistance in the people of IIOJK which resonated locally and globally.

She said that visual artists, filmmakers, and photographers from the region were recognized for their contributions in depicting the harsh realities of life in Kashmir through political cartoons, illustrations, documentaries, and powerful images.

She also acknowledged the literary contribution of Kashmiri poets and writers for providing a voice to the

Kashmiri people through verses, novels, short stories, and essays.

The SAPM underscored the vital role of the Kashmiri artists and activists in utilizing social media platforms to share their work and raise awareness about human rights violations by India and the ongoing struggle for freedom by the people of IIOJK.

Mushaal underlined the impactful role of cultural events, concerts, and art festivals in engaging diverse audiences, expressing solidarity with people of IIOJK and constructing a compelling narrative to deepen global understanding of the Kashmir struggle. She stressed the significance of Pakistan's educational institutions and universities organizing cultural festivals, with a specific focus on inviting Kashmiri talent to showcase their skills on international platforms.

Public holiday announced on Feb 08

ISLAMABAD (Online): Public holiday has been announced on February 8 in connection with general election.

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has approved public holiday on February 8. Notification in this regard has been issued.

All the public and private offices, educational institutions and business centers will remain closed.

The EC while announcing the holiday has said this decision has been taken to facilitate voters so that they could not face any difficulty in exercising their right to vote.

The announcement for holding general election on February 8 has been made.



QUETTA: A delegation of players led by Dr. Muhammad Ahmed meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

OIC ombudsmen pledge to address global injustices; condemn Israeli brutalities in Palestine

ISLAMABAD (APP): The ombudsmen of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries have reiterated their commitment to addressing global injustices, with a particular focus on the dire circumstances faced by the people of Palestine.

The ombudsmen of the Muslim world met in the board meeting of the OIC Ombudsman Association (OICOA) attended by members from Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Morocco, and Bahrain in person, while the one from Iran participated virtually, creating a diverse and unified front against these grave concerns, said a news release issued here on Thursday.

Secretary General of OICOA and Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan, Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah stated, "We must elevate our collective voice to echo the cries of the innocent who suffer daily. The brutalities of the Zionist regime cannot go unchallenged," calling for decisive and impactful advocacy beyond empathy.

Dr. Jah emphasized the need for unified strength and action within the Ombudsman community, saying, "Now, more than ever, our solidarity, effort, and cooperation are vital. We possess the power to drive change."

President of OICOA and Chief Ombudsman of Türkiye, Serif Malkoc, highlighted the escalating issue of Islamophobia in European countries and lamented the collapse of humanity witnessed in the ongoing Palestinian genocide.

He expressed disappointment in the silence of global leaders amidst the despair and devastation.

Malkoc applauded South Africa's initiative in bringing Israel's actions to the International Court of Justice and expressed hope that Palestinians would rise from the ashes.

The Board Members unanimously condemned the ongoing atrocities in Palestine and supported the leadership of OICOA's call for immediate and practical intervention.

Special court issues 77-page written judgment in cipher case

ISLAMABAD (APP): The special court on Thursday issued the detailed written judgment regarding the 10-year imprisonment sentence to former PTI chairman and Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the cipher case.

The judgment containing 77 pages was authored by Special Court Judge Abul Hasan Muhammad Zulqarnain.

The written verdict said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder and Shah Mehmood Qureshi requested for a fair trial through improper procedure.

"The behaviour of both the accused was taken into consideration during the trial both," he said adding that the accused created self-inflicted miseries and tried to pretend as helpless to sympathy.

The decision said that as per the findings, "the acts of omission and commission of the accused persons has had serious adverse affect on Pakistan's diplomatic and political standing among comity of nations. This, in turn, has benefited foreign powers hostile to Pakistan".

It said that, "Statement of Azam Khan is very much pivotal with regard to the charge showing that cypher telegram which was accountable document was retained by accused Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi and same was not returned to MOFA and no rebuttal came from defence side in this regard. Thus, charge stands proved."

"The cypher being an official secret document and classified as such was still in the possession of accused Imran Ahmad Khan Niazi and that the unauthorized retention and misuse of the cypher had compromised the entire cypher security system of the state and secret communication methods used by Pakistan's missions abroad."

The said an FIR was registered after an inquiry in the matter was concluded on 05.10.2022, later on both the accused were formally arrested and sent to judicial lock up in instant case.

It said that being the prime minister it was the responsibility of former PTI chairman to return the secret document as the Foreign Office could not de-

mand it from the prime minister. The cypher was yet to be returned by the founder PTI chairman.

The case was related to cipher which was received from Washington, it added.

The order further said that the court had testified 25 witnesses during the trial. "It is observed with pain that attitudes of defence lawyers were not serious throughout the proceedings. On 27.01.2024 defence counsel were not available but defence counsel at state expense were present."

"Both the accused misbehaved with state defence counsel and files were thrown, time was granted to the accused and meanwhile their defence counsel Muhammad Usman Riaz Gill Advocate and Syeed Mohammad Ali Bokhari Advocate reached and requested for an hour time to prepare cross-examination. Request was allowed and when court resumed both of them were multiple times asked to cross-examine the witness and after their denial state defence counsels were asked to cross-examine."



KARACHI: Caretaker Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Murtaza Solangi presenting shield to the guest speakers during the seminar on General Elections 2024 Challenges for the New Government and the Road Map organized by Press Information Department of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting at Auditorium National Museum of Pakistan.

Sec Sports, DC Mastung visits SNGBRMH, review facilities

QUETTA (APP): Secretary of Sports, Javed Anwar Shahwani, along with Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq Sasoli on Thursday paid a visit to the Shaheed Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Raisani Memorial Hospital (SNGBRMH) in Mastung.

According to a press release, Secretary of Sports and DC expressed their belief that doctors should prioritize service to humanity. They underscored the importance of the health sector and its role in providing essential services to the public.

SNGBRMH is one of the high quality hospitals of the province in which all

medical facilities are being provided 24 hours a day, they said.

They said that steps would be taken to further modernize and develop the hospital. Apart from this, due to the fact that this hospital is on the national highway, the patients of minor and major accidents that occur daily are directed to this hospital only, all emergency facilities are provided to them, they said.

On this occasion, Chief Executive Officer of Shaheed Nawab Ghous Bakhsh Memorial Hospital Dr. Saeed Ahmed Mirwani gave a detailed briefing about the hospital.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, H.E. Yerzhan Kistafin addressing during opening ceremony of National Students Olympic Games-2024 at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex.

Despite security challenges...

Continued from page 1
and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, especially the incidents of attacks on Election Commission offices and political meetings.

Sikandar Sultan Raja termed terrorism the biggest enemy of the electoral process; however, he expressed full confidence in the law enforcement agencies that they have taken all necessary administrative and security arrangements for the peaceful conduct of the general elections.

He called for providing a secure and conducive environment for political parties, candidates, and voters to participate in the electoral process without fear. The Secretary of the Ministry of Interior, Chief Secretaries of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and IGs of the respective provinces briefed the Election Commission on the security situation and the protective measures taken nationwide and particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

They assured the ECP that all administrative and security agencies are on high alert and fully prepared to combat terrorism. The Chief Secretaries and IGs of Balochistan and Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa outlined the ongoing operations against terrorists in their respective provinces.

They informed that all necessary steps have been taken to ensure security during the elections. They also affirmed that no political or non-political force would be allowed to obstruct the electoral process, and those attempting to do so would be dealt with firmly.

The Chief Secretary and IG of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa enlightened the participants about the security measures taken in the province and discussed the specific threats associated with the upcoming elections. They assured the Election Commission of their readiness to address any challenges posed by terrorists.

Federal Interior Minister Gohar Ijaz, who returned from a visit to Balochistan, said that both the federal and provincial governments are fully prepared for secure and peaceful elections.

He assured the Election Commission of complete cooperation and resources for the upcoming elections, ensuring that there would be no lapses or negligence at any level regarding this matter.

It's ensured to...

Continued from page 1
He directed to strengthen the coordination among all concerned institutions for ensuring law and order in the province.

In addition to this, the comprehensive and complete security should be provided for the general elections, the Minister Interior maintained.

He said that it is our top priority to protect life and property of the masses.

Earlier, during the briefing, Chief Secretary told that a total of 5028 polling stations have been established for general elections in the province.

He informed that 442 candidates are contesting polls on 16 seats of National Assembly and 1286 candidates are in the run for 51 general seats of the Balochistan Assembly.

A total of 65,522 personnel of law enforcement agencies would be deployed for security during the elections in Balochistan, it was further informed.

Govt approves...

Continued from page 1

The meeting was informed by the Ministry of National Health Services and DRAP that through the online portal of the Authority, citizens could file complaints regarding the non-availability of medicines in the market.

On the recommendation of the Ministry of Finance, the cabinet approved the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Competition Commission of Pakistan and the State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR) China. Under the MOU, exchange of information and technical capacity would increase between the two countries.

The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, allowed renowned Pakistani psychologist Muhammad Saleem Khan Tareen to receive the award of Member of the British Empire from King Charles (III), in honour of his services in the field of psychology.

It also allowed Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu to receive the Gold Medal for Aeronautical Merit awarded by Italy.

In recognition of his services for the increased cooperation between the air forces of the two countries.

The cabinet approved the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCOE) held on January 26, besides endorsing the decisions of the Cabinet Committee on Legislative Cases taken on January 26 and 31, 2024.

Pakistani student graduated from China contributes to Sino-Pak friendship

BEIJING (APP): Kamran Malik, a Pakistani student at Lanzhou University in Gansu province, returned home in 2022 after completing his postdoctoral research in China.

Afterward, Malik worked as a teacher at the Abbottabad University of Science and Technology and then worked for the Department of Science and Technology in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

Malik said the experience of studying in China enabled him to bring back new knowledge to Pakistan.

"I am very proud to be able to serve as a bridge and contribute to the friendship between China and Pakistan," he said.

In recent year, a growing number of Pakistani and other international students have been coming to China for technical courses and professional degrees in recent years. They aim to

master and take practical technologies back to their home countries, fostering closer people-to-people ties among nations, China Daily reported.

Similar stories have unfolded across the world, with students like Malik using the knowledge gained in China to facilitate development in their home countries.

Li Chunlin, dean of the School of International Cultural Exchange at Lanzhou University, said that in the past decade, there have been students from 97 countries coming to Lanzhou University to pursue their studies. Most of them came from countries involved in the Belt and Road Initiative.

International students play an important role in promoting communication and exchange between China and their home countries, while making contributions to local development, Li said.

One killed, four injured...

Continued from page 1

Turbat blast that occurred at Ghulam Nabi Chowk wherein the police team identified the nature of the blast.

Quetta SSP (Operations) Tariq Jawad told the media at the scene of the incident that one person had been killed in a roadside explosion on CPEC Road. He further said that eight to 10 kilograms of explosives were used in the blast and investigations were underway to determine the identity of the deceased.

During preliminary investigation, the deceased appeared to be a passer-by, the official claimed, claiming that there was no elec-

tion campaign in the area where the blast took place. Jawad said security was on high alert regarding the electoral activities.

In a third blast, a cracker blast occurred in the Bhatti field located on national highway Dera Allah Yar in district Jaffarabad.

In Hub, the deputy commissioner ordered political parties to restrict their political activities, rallies, and corner meetings amid the deteriorating security situation in the district.

In the latest incident, another hand grenade hurled near the Arab gate at Qambrani Road in which no loss of life has been reported.



QUETTA: Balochistan Health Secretary Abdullah Khan presiding over a meeting to review the performance of Sibi and Zhob divisions

Seraiki phonetics Aslam Rasool Puri passed away

MULTAN (APP): Aslam Rasool Puri, an intellectual, humanitarian, writer and critic, best known for his work on Seraiki language Phonetics and its Orthography, passed away in his ancestral town, Rasool Pur, tehsil Jampur of district Rajanpur on Thursday.

Born on Nov 25 in 1941 in Rasool Pur, Aslam Rasool Puri completed his matriculation from Jampur high school, passed JV examination from Muzaffargarh and later did his MA and completed law education.

He began his career as a teacher from Bakhar in 1962. Mr. Rasool Puri stepped into literary realm as Seraiki critic in 1970s. That was the time when his book titled "Seraiki Zuban, Oonda Rasm-ul-Khat Tey Awazaan" i.e (Orthography of Seraiki Language and its Sounds) was published that carried information that Seraiki language had 46 Phonetics or Speaking Sounds and 56 symbols to describe them.

Another feat that Aslam Rasool Puri would certainly be proud of was his dream of 100 per cent literacy in his village that came true in his lifetime.

Final called off owing to rain Lahore, Karachi declared joint champions of National Women's T20 Tournament

ISLAMABAD: Lahore and Karachi were declared joint champions of the National Women's T20 Tournament 2023-24 after the final was called off owing to rain.

Leading up to the final, 30 matches were played in a double-round robin format, with all six teams featuring in 10 matches each.

Lahore ended the league stage with 10 wins from 10 games, earning 20 points. Karachi and Rawalpindi, with six wins each, had 12 points and were next on the table - with Karachi's superior NRR edging them over Rawalpindi to second position.

Multan earned 10 points, after winning five games and were fourth on the table while fifth-placed Quetta, with three victories, had six points to their name. Peshawar could not register a win and ended the tournament bottom of the table. Top performers:

Rawalpindi captain Aliya Riaz and Multan captain Gull Feroza were jointly awarded players of the tournament. Aliya was the third-highest run-getter, amassing 370 runs in the competition. Her tally included an undefeated century that came off 53 balls and three half-centuries, one of which she completed in 16 deliveries. Striking at 158.80 in the tournament, she struck 16 maximums - the most by any batter in the tournament - and 48 boundaries. Aliya also bagged 10 wickets at an average of 24.70 at an economy rate of 6.96.

Wicketkeeper-batter Gull Feroza, who was the second-highest run-scorer, got 479 runs in 10 games at an economy rate of 4.44.

She struck 60 boundaries and one six while striking at 114.05. She also had five dismissals behind five dismissals behind five dismissals. Lahore's opening batter Sidra Amin, recipient of the best batter of the tournament award, led the run-charts. In 10 games, she amassed 494 runs while striking at 143.60, including an unbeaten century and three half-centuries. She struck 70 boundaries - the most by any player in the tournament - and nine sixes.

The other two centuries in the tournament were Sadaf Shamas (106 not out against Peshawar) and Ayesha Zafar (113 against Multan). Opening batter Javeria Khan top-scored for Karachi, getting 352 in 10 games at a strike-rate of 110.34, with two half-centuries. Tuba Hassan finished as the most successful batter for Quetta, getting 267 in nine matches while striking at 143.55 with two fifties. Opener Momina Riasat, with 147 in 10 games, was Peshawar's most prolific batter. Lahore wicketkeeper Sidra Nawaz was brilliant behind the stumps with 15 dismissals, including nine stumpings and six catches and was declared tournament's best wicketkeeper. Sidra Amin, with eight catches, was the most successful fielder in the tournament. Karachi captain, Fatima Sana, with six catches was second on the list. Lahore's leg-spinner Gulam Fatima was named the best bowler of the tournament after she finished on top of the wickets column. She had 21 wickets in 10 games at an average of 8.24 and an economy rate of 4.44.

Alvi for improving legal framework to strengthen transparency

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday emphasized the need of improving the legal framework to further strengthen transparency in government spending and financial accountability. Speaking at a meeting during his visit to the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP) office, the president said transparency could be improved by documentation of the economy and digitizing the government's transactions. AGP Muhammad Ajmal Gondal briefed the president about the role and performance of the office.

President Alvi said that the use of modern technology would improve the performance of the AGP. He stressed the need to create public awareness about the AGP's role, its activities and the audit findings. He said the parliamentary oversight was important to ensure the judicious use of the public money and promote transparency in the government departments. President Alvi appreciated the AGP's role in

improving parliamentary oversight and transparency in the government sector. He said the Auditor General's role in identifying flaws and stabilizing the government's financial management system was very important. During the meeting, the Auditor General of Pakistan informed the president about the role of the institution in the process of financial accountability. "The office of the Auditor General of Pakistan is taking steps to make the

audit process more effective." It was informed that the Auditor General had completed 95% compliance audits in the fiscal year 2022-23. Improvements in audit and accounting processes would promote transparency, accountability and good governance, the meeting was told. Similarly it was informed that steps were underway to incorporate advanced technology platforms and artificial intelligence tools into the audit process.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi being briefed about the role and performance of the Auditor General of Pakistan (AGP), during his visit to AGP Office.



ISLAMABAD: The CDWP meeting presides over by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan. Secretary Planning Awais Manzoor Sumra, senior officials from Planning Commission and Federal Ministries/Divisions participated in the meeting, while Chairman/ACS (Dev) from Provincial Governments also participated in the meeting.

DG EPA says: EPA converts 1985kgs confiscated plastic bags into green benches

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) has successfully converted around 1985 kilograms of confiscated banned single-use polythene bags into green benches and planters in its effort to contain maximum damage to the environment and nature. Director General, Pak-EPA, Farzana Altaf Shah flanked by Director Labs and National Environmentally Quality Standards (NEQS), EPA, Dr Zaigham Abbas held a joint media briefing intended to apprise the environmental journalists on the

promising development of the environmental watchdog transforming plastic prohibition into a win-win opportunity for the consumers and industries. DG Farzana Altaf Shah said plastics had catastrophic effects on human health, environment and endanger marine life. "Plastic pollution has become more visible both on land and in waterways around the world. Annually 459.75 Million tons plastic is produced globally. Till 2019 cumulatively 9.5 Billion Tons plastic has been produced. Annually 350 Million Tons of waste is gener-

Provision of facilities to public basic responsibility of govt: Wafaqi Mohtasib

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Wafaqi Mohtasib, expressing satisfaction on FGEHA's report about implementation of its recommendations, on Wednesday said that the provision of necessary facilities to the general public was one of the basic responsibilities of all government agencies.

The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), in its report submitted report to the Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat, stated that it had implemented all the recommendations made by the Wafaqi Mohtasib's Inspection Team, following its visit to the organization in response to the public complaints.

The Wafaqi Mohtasib's Inspection Team had directed the FGEHA to place the seniority list of the allottees on its website, to be duly updated after every 30 days along with preparing the billboards and placing instructions for the visitors at the key places in English as well as in Urdu. It also instructed that the applicants may be apprised of the objections/deficiencies with regard to their requests for transfer of plots and houses within three days in addition to provision of two additional printers for facilitating the public/visitors.

NDMA, KUM inks LoA collaboration in disaster management

ISLAMABAD (APP): The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) think tank National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) and Kohsar University Murree (KUM) have formalized a transformative cooperation through the signing of a Letter of Agreement (LoA) on Thursday in the field of disaster management.

Chief Coordinator NIDM, Tanveer Piracha, and Vice Chancellor KUM, Prof Dr Habib Ali Bokhari officiated the signing ceremony of LoA at NDMA (HQs), a news release said. The agreement under-

scores a commitment to a collaborative partnership between the two entities for building institutional capacities and advancing knowledge, expertise, and innovation in the field of disaster management and related areas. The collaboration between NIDM and KUM is assured to contribute significantly to the development of innovative solutions in disaster risk reduction and knowledge exchange in disaster management, reinforcing their shared dedication to creating a safer and more resilient future.

Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed with Zeal & fervor on Feb 5: AJK PM

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, has announced that Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 will be observed with zeal and fervor, sending a clear message to India that millions of people in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir stand shoulder to shoulder with the oppressed people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for freedom of their motherland.

According to Kashmir Media sources, during a joint press conference with All Parties Hurriyat Conference AJK (APHC)-AJK leaders in Islamabad, Prime Minister Anwar-ul-Haq stated that the day would

be marked as a public holiday, and business activities would be halted. He emphasized the need for rallies, processions, and other programs to express unity with the oppressed people living under illegal Indian occupation in Jammu and Kashmir. PM Anwar-ul-Haq expressed strong condemnation of India's actions on August 5, 2019, and recent decisions by the Indian Supreme Court. He reiterated the commitment to the rightful struggle for self-determination and assured that Azad Jammu and Kashmir would not step back in its efforts to raise awareness about the dire situation in the occupied territory. Looking ahead, the Prime Minister anticipated

increased global attention towards Kashmir's cause, as efforts to highlight the plight of Kashmiris would intensify. He pledged to inform international forums, including the United Nations and OIC, about the sacrifices made by Kashmiris and urged for united support for their just cause. PM Anwar-ul-Haq stressed the importance of Kashmir Solidarity Day as an occasion to demonstrate unity and send a strong message to the international community. Several prominent figures, including Gulam Mohammad Safi, Mohammad Farooq Rahmani, Syed Yousuf Nasim, Mir Tahir Masood, Altaf Hussain Wani, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Imtiaz Wani, Faiz Naqashbandi,

'Cultural heritage sites' protection crucial for nation's economic growth: Minister

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah Thursday said that it was important to preserve the cultural heritage sites of the country and promote artistic growth among the youth. Talking to a Private news channel, minister said that caretaker government was actively working to promote calligraphy in madaris as the visual art was part of Muslim heritage, adding, Calligraphy needs to be promoted to advocate peace, love and harmony in present society. He mentioned that

caretaker government has worked to establish a heritage channel under the Culture Division to preserve and promote the collection of folk literature of Pakistani languages, especially children's folk literature. He said the scope of culture is unlimited, adding, every nation who is staying connected with their culture are the ones that develop the most. Replying to a question, he said caretaker government had taken revolutionary steps for promotion of art and culture with introducing various project including heritage channel.



ISLAMABAD: CDA workers busy in preparing center path of road for plantation in the Federal Capital.

Indian state terrorism in IIOJK increased during BJP rule: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indian state terrorism in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) has witnessed an alarming rise during the rule of Narendra Modi-led BJP government in India. An analytical report released by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, today, revealed that Indian troops martyred 2152 Kashmiris, 305 of them in custody and fake encounters, since January 2015 till date. Prominent Hurriyat leaders including Syed Ali Gilani, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai and Altaf Ahmed Shah died in Indian captivity during the period. The BJP took control of occupied Kashmir in the form of a coalition government with the Peoples Democratic Party and Peoples Conference in 2015 and later installed a Lieutenant Governor-led administration in the territory in 2019. The report said that these killings also included 47 women and 142

children. It pointed out that the killings by the troops rendered 181 women widowed and 445 children orphaned. The report maintained that 33,150 people were injured due to the use of brute force by Indian army, paramilitary and police personnel on peaceful protesters while 41,136 others including Hurriyat leaders, activists, students, youth, journalists, Ulama, and human right activists were arrested during the period. It said the Indian forces' personnel destroyed 4,479 residential houses and other structures and molested 1,134 women. The report said more than 600 Kashmiri Muslim government employees were terminated from the service by the BJP regime. It said over 800 properties including agricultural lands, houses and shops of Kashmiris were confiscated by the BJP regime in the territory to punish them for their affiliation.

Solangi grieved over demise of Saraiki novelist Aslam Rasulpuri

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi on Thursday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of Saraiki novelist, researcher, critic and intellectual Aslam Rasulpuri. In his condolence statement, the minister said that the literary services of late Aslam Rasulpuri would be remembered for a long time.

By editing the Sindhi poets Sachal Sarmast, Bedil Sindhi and Hamal Leghari's Saraiki poetry, Aslam Rasulpuri brought out the harmony of the sources of Sindhi and Saraiki traditions of Sufism.

Unified forces gear up for upcoming poll security

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a review meeting led by the District Election Officer (DRO), representatives from all constituencies, law enforcement, and key institutions have convened to strategize for the upcoming general elections-2024.

ICT spokesman Dr Abdullah Tabasum on Thursday said that notably, commanding officers from the Pakistan Army on election duty and SSP operations were present, emphasizing the gravity of the situation. The assembly delved into a comprehensive review of the anticipated challenges on election day and potential threats, as special attention was given to security measures at sensitive polling stations in the federal capital constituencies, he added.

He further said that the highlight of the meeting was the unanimous approval of a robust security plan for the impending elections. A collaborative effort is set to unfold, with the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Rangers, sensitive institutions, and the police working in unison to execute the approved security blueprint. This strategic alliance aimed to ensure a secure and smooth electoral process, marking a pivotal step towards a transparent and protected democratic exercise in 2024, he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Kohsar University Delegation at National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) of NDMA.

Google supports upcoming Election 2024 in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): As Pakistanis prepare to vote in the National election to elect representatives for the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies on February 8, Google has committed to collaborating with the government, industry, and civil society to provide voters with helpful and authoritative information while keeping its platforms safe from abuse.

In a news release issued on Thursday, Google said, "We know that in the run-up to elections, people need useful and relevant information to help them navigate the electoral process.

We make reliable information easily available with helpful product features, showing data from trusted, nonpartisan organizations on how and

where to vote across our products." Google's ranking systems are designed to elevate authoritative information and provide context to users on various election-related information. Additionally, the Google homepage will include links directing voters to authoritative information on "how to vote" and "how to register to vote."

For news and information related to the election, YouTube's recommendation system will prominently surface content and relevant context from authoritative sources, including local and national news sources on the homepage, in search results, and the "Up Next" panel, to connect people to high-quality election news and information.



ISLAMABAD: A view of garbage dump in a Nalla on a green belt alongside Islamabad Expressway near Kurri road, as needs to attention for concern authority.

Pak envoys explore avenues of coop with Australian, Mexcian varsities

ISLAMABAD (APP): The envoys of Pakistan in Australia and Mexico held separate interactions with the senior office holders of renowned universities of the two countries and explored possibilities of cooperation in education and food security.

Pakistan's High Commissioner in Australia Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri had a "productive" meeting with Professor Steve Rogers of PVC Darwin University and Project Manager of Northern Australia Food Technology Innovation Dr Warren Hunt.

In the meeting, they discussed possibilities for collaboration in food preservation technologies and food security between Pakistan and the Northern Territory.

Similarly, Ambassador of Pakistan in Mexico Shozab Abbas met with the Director General of Geology Institute of UNAM, Mexico Ricardo Barragan.

In the meeting, the envoy briefed about the potential of Pakistani universities and proposed to enhance educational cooperation between Pakistan and Mexico.

ICCI, Bahria University to collaborate to promote entrepreneurship

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Bahria University will collaborate to promote entrepreneurship and improve the competitiveness of the industrial sector for achieving sustainable economic development in the country.

Consensus to this effect was developed in a meeting between President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and Rector, Bahria University Vice Admiral @ Asif Khaliq, an ICCI news release said. On the occasion, Vice Admiral @ Asif Khaliq, Rector, Bahria University

briefed the ICCI head about the initiatives of his institution. He said that Bahria is working to groom today's youth into tomorrow's leaders. He said that Bahria is providing an environment for promising minds to come together, develop new ideas and make significant contributions to the country's economic development. He said that academia has cutting-edge research while industry faces many challenges, therefore, close cooperation between Bahria and ICCI would help resolve issues of industry and produce innovative products for exports.



ISLAMABAD: Workers welding pipes of gas line at Aabpara area in the federal capital.

Nosheen advocates women's empowerment in political arenas

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate for the constituency NA-73, Syeda Nosheen Iftikhar on Thursday highlighted the impactful role of women candidates in the upcoming elections.

Talking to a private news channel, she emphasized the positive changes in women's confidence and problem-solving abilities when represented in elections.

The PML-N candidate clarified that while she was not in favor of women's marches, she advocates for the fundamental respect of women. She stressed the need for a respectful environment for women in society. In response to a query,

Nosheen highlighted the influence of family dynamics on voting, noting that husbands and brothers often vote based on the requests of women in her constituencies. She acknowledged the evolution within the PML-N, traditionally a male-dominant party. She highlighted the party's shift, providing general seats for women, and praised Maryam Nawaz's leadership, anticipating more women participating in the upcoming election. Nosheen supported the active involvement of women in decision-making processes, emphasizing that their voices should be considered significant in shaping policies and strategies.

Daily Voice of Masses Independent

Friday February 02, 2024

Double down

Two verdicts in two days. A 14-year sentence for 'corruption' to accompany a 10-year sentence for 'divulging state secrets'. First, his top lieutenant, and now his spouse also convicted and jailed.

And still, former prime minister Imran Khan's troubles are far from over. What new depths will the state plumb as it makes clear its antipathy towards him?

The days leading up to the Feb 8 elections may hold more 'surprises'. For now, we may only sit and spectate as facts, procedures, laws and institutions bend to the will of those who think that no elected leader deserves a free pass — until they decide they do.

Mr Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, have been convicted for under-declaring the value of a jewellery set they received as a gift while the former was still in office. The verdict has been delivered via an accountability court judge who, just days before the last general election, had also convicted this year's front-runners in the Avenfield reference.

That judgement was overturned in November last year. Most commentators believe this one will not last too long, either. Incidentally — or perhaps by design — the same judge is also supposed to hear a similar case involving items retained from the state's gift repository. The matter involves several cars allegedly retained by Messrs Nawaz Sharif, Yousuf Raza Gilani and Asif Ali Zardari in violation of Toshakhana rules.

However, given how completely the judge's attention and energies have been devoted over the past month to delivering the 'accountability' brand of justice to Mr Khan and his spouse, he seems to have had very little time to spare for any other of the matters pending before him. He retires soon, in March, after 11 years in NAB's accountability courts. Most accountability judges are appointed for three. During that extended tenure, he has judged four former prime ministers, all brought before him when their free passes ran out.

A word, too, on NAB, an institution that seems to exist only to cycle through political targets based on the whims of the powers that be.

The bureau has gained notoriety over the years for swooping in, guns blazing, when a politician's free pass has been revoked. It digs up all manner of 'corruption' cases against the targeted politician, effectively drowning them under a wave of litigation.

Sometimes, a conviction or two is secured through legal proceedings based on weak evidence and conducted without regard for due process. Unsurprisingly, most cases and convictions collapse within a few years, and those once accused of serious malfeasance eventually return as political martyrs.

It is a rinse-and-repeat cycle that has gradually deprived the idea of accountability of any legitimacy whatsoever. As this latest conviction shows, nothing seems about to change.

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh

The lines of distinction between climate finance and traditional development financing have been blurred. Concurrently, national and provincial roles and responsibilities in Pakistan's access international climate finance have become muddled, if not messy. All international finance, including FDI and international trade, is fast becoming an instrument of global climate policies and geopolitics.

Pakistan is in the process of rethinking its strategies to access climate financing. Several federal ministries and provincial departments have concurrently begun to assume institutional responsibilities to access international climate finance (ICF). But it is not always clear where bilateral donors fit in their priorities or strategies, and how financial flows will be shaped by Pakistan's global geopolitics.

Economic growth, development, and macroeconomic stability sans environmental and climate concerns are a notion of yesterday. Ecological and economic

priorities in the past were decoupled to achieve economic development, but no longer.

The rationales have merged now. Emissions reduction has an economic rationale. Pollution-free societies are healthier. Likewise, trade relations with the EU, UK and US are increasingly becoming subservient to their carbon-reduction interests and growing trade and technology wars with China. Healthy ecosystems are essential for sustainable economic growth. As they have become inseparable, all finance has by definition become climate finance.

Fiscal space for development financing is at its lowest ebb. No respite is on the horizon of policymakers who are hard-pressed to deliver a socioeconomic turnaround. Recognising that many specialised ICF windows can be accessed, some federal ministries and provincial departments have begun to race to fill the void.

While the national climate finance strategy is in the making, the ministries of climate, finance, and planning are setting up specialised climate finance

units. They share the same challenges in finding trained personnel, commissioning technical studies, and looking for grant writers. The most stubborn challenge is clarity of purpose for each undertaking and how best to avoid overlaps.

Likewise, some provinces have begun to identify specific policy options ranging from carbon trading to carbon taxes and levies. Punjab, for example, has progressed in finalising its green financial strategy and an action plan for its implementation. In KP, a climate financing framework and implementation plans have been developed. Both provinces are probing the possibility of entering the carbon trading market.

While endeavours at the federal level are mostly undertaken with support from multilateral development banks (MDB), in the provinces, it is primarily bilateral financing that is helping them tread new terrains. So far, none of the federal agencies has leveraged itself to convene them for better coordination and synergy.

Overall, Pakistan's share of international

finance is minuscule. The economic loss and damage of \$30.1 billion inflicted by the 2022 floods was more than the total disbursement by all UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) funds since their inception: the Global Environment Facility (1991), Adaptation Fund (2001), and the Green Climate Fund (2014).

According to some estimates, they have collectively disbursed about \$22bn globally. Pakistan has accessed less than \$1bn from all these three funds in the last 30 years. Clearly, the gap between Pakistan's investment needs for resilience and low carbon development cannot be met by the present climate finance ecosystem.

As against this, the MDBs are the largest lenders of Pakistan. Their portfolio will grow steeply in the next three to four years as all eight MDBs have recently announced to 'align' their portfolios with the Paris Agreement. The IFC and IMF have also begun to champion private sectors' transition and macroeconomic stability with extreme weather events.

The IMF has developed its own Climate Policy Assessment Tool, known as CPAT, for the rapid quantification of impacts of climate-mitigation policies, including on energy demand, prices, emissions, revenues, welfare, GDP, households and industries, local air pollution, and many more. The flagship Public Investment Management Assessment, which has long been used to assess infrastructure governance practices for countries at all levels of economic development, has become a Climate PIMA (C-PIMA).

It involves an assessment of institutions of public investment management that are key to 'climate-aware' infrastructures. The release of the next IMF tranche to Pakistan in March 2024 will hinge on our compliance with the commitments made in C-PIMA, posted on IMF website.

Ironically, the IMF, like MDBs, has had limited success in increasing the ownership for reforms despite insistence. If the election manifestos of the PML-N, PPP and PTI are any indicator, they have

not even mentioned IMF, let alone acknowledged and endorsed national commitments made under the Stand-By Arrangement.

Finally, while MDB projects are large, bilateral donors have much smaller financial buckets. They often aspire to add to technical know-how, rather than large infrastructural projects. Working with them on a cascade of relatively smaller projects is pivotal to enhancing technical capacities in various sectors and in the provinces. It is in our interest to tap bilateral donors particularly because bilateral projects are often aimed at promoting a combination of economic growth, bilateral trade, and bilateral lending and investments.

More than anything else, the strategic objective of engaging bilaterally with parties is to augment trade relations and to build their stakes in regional stability and Pakistan's climate-smart development. After all, it is global polarisation that is leading the flow of international finance, rather than the UNFCCC. -- Courtesy Dawn

Leaning to the left

Kamila Hyat

It is commonly perceived that Pakistan's politics revolves around two or possibly three major parties. These of course are the PMLN, the PPP and the PTI though the latter has been somewhat stripped of its status with the removal of its symbol and the resultant need for all its candidates to contest as independents.

We can also say with a degree of certainty that all these parties are right-of-centre or at best centre. It is widely said that Pakistan's politics has never involved leftist ideologies or leftist thinking. But this is not entirely correct. In the 1970 elections — the first major democratic elections in the country's history — the three main contestants, the PPP, the National Awami Party and the Awami Party of then East Pakistan, were left-of-centre parties.

These parties had mass support among people and large-scale followings with questions of religion and nationality not posing huge challenges to their existence on the national landscape. This

changed after the era of General Ziaul Haq who did everything possible to move the country to where it stands today, with its social and political environments polluted by extremist ideas.

Lately, we have seen a degree of change. There are a number of extremely small, but still somewhat significant, left parties on the landscape, formed mainly over the last decade or so. They include the Awami Workers' Party, founded in 2012, after two major left parties merged, and organizations such as the Haqooq-e-Khalq Party of Ammar Ali Jan have joined the ranks of these parties.

There are also other groups which follow similar lines of thinking and align correctly with the political left across the world. This would include the civil rights movement called the PTM that arose in the past few years from the Pashtun regions in the country. The question of course is whether the minuscule followings these parties have will change as a new generation of young people takes over the bulk share of the population and moves into more central roles in the

handling of political matters and other structures around which the country revolves.

In real terms, the question is whether young people will move further to the left or to the right than their parents or stay along the same track. At present, the general pattern of voting is for entire households, entire 'biradris', or entire clans to vote for the same party or group.

The voting pattern for these parties and others similar to them in Sindh and Balochistan will be interesting to watch, and so will the vote for independent candidates such as Jibrin Nasir who is once again contesting an NA seat from Karachi. The manner in which these parties fare will be significant for the country's future. We stand today at a point in history where it is essential that the issue of how wealth is distributed in society and how taxes are imposed become the centre of the political debate.

We badly need to at least tighten the gap between the wealthy and the poor. This gap has grown wider over the years, largely as a result of the policies pursued by political leaders, notably those of the

1980s and 1990s. The direct taxation of land and wealth is one way to narrow the gap provided that the money brought into the exchequer is then used to uplift the poorer sections of society.

Indirect taxation such as GST, favoured by the IMF, does nothing to solve the problem or to alleviate the issues of those who stand at the bottom of the economic ladder. In recent years, the plight of these people has become worse as inflation hits new records and Pakistan's currency continues to depreciate. The entire system is in fact near collapse.

The issue then is what will replace this fractured system and how this transformation will take place. The left has shown its ability to improve the lives of people in countries such as Bolivia and Cuba as well as in other parts of the world, including some African and Asian countries. In Pakistan, left-wing politics faces extremely significant challenges since people wrongly believe that the left stands against religion and religious values, with an inability to distinguish

between a stance for secular leadership and a leadership that is poised against religion and all that it brings with it. This needs to be clarified by leftist parties.

The efforts of some of these groups have been commendable.

The Haqooq-e-Khalq party, for example, is doing a significant amount of work in Lahore's Qainchi constituency. The work includes setting up clinics, testing whether line water is potable, building sanitation systems and other related work which can best benefit the impoverished population who lives in this part of Lahore. Other groups such as the Awami Workers' Party have also done their bit in bringing about changes in the lives of the admittedly small number of people they can reach and for whom they hold some kind of meaning. It is difficult to say if this work will bring about rewards for these groups in the coming election.

A great deal depends on how the youth, popularly known as the youth bulge of South Asia, is going to cast its ballots if it comes out to vote at all. It

is widely held that young people tend to vote for the PTI even though it is difficult to say how its 70-year-old leader can be seen as a leader of the youth. But there are very few statistics to prove this to be entirely true.

Of course, more needs to be done. The left has traditionally suffered as a result of the dislike for its politics by those who hold a major proportion of power in the country. These include the rich and the powerful in various quarters of society. It will take a long time for any change to be made. It is unrealistic to expect any real change in the coming election or any major reversal in the pattern of their results.

It is also difficult to see many candidates from left-leaning parties taking their places in parliament. At present, we can count the number of seats such parties enjoy in parliament on the fingers of one hand. But in the future, change is possible and this is what these parties as well as other groups affiliated with them should be moving towards in Pakistan's murky political battlefield. -- Courtesy TheNews

Years of unwisdom

F.S. Aijazuddin

Memoirs of retired Indian and Pakistani diplomats contain accounts of their postings to Islamabad and New Delhi, spent in professional pugilism and recollections in tranquility.

Former Indian high commissioner Ajay Bisaria's book *Anger Management: The Troubled Diplomatic Relationship between India and Pakistan* belongs to that genre. Its adversarial counterpart is former Pakistan HC Abdul Basit's *Hostility: A Diplomat's Diary on Pakistan-India Relations*.

Bisaria served in Islamabad for 20 months before being summarily 'expelled' in 2019 — the first among his 24 predecessors to suffer this indignity.

His book is the most comprehensive survey to date of the first seven years in a conflict that could well score a century. It is structured to cover seven decades and some years, from 1947 into 2023. It could carry the subtitle 'Seven Pillars of Unwisdom'.

According to him, three ideas "of identity, territory, and security have populated scholarship on the subcontinent". They recur in his narrative. He tells us that "a lesson all Indian envoys to Pakistan learn at some point or the other: Pakistan policy in India is driven personally by India's prime minister".

Since independence, India has drawn its elected PMs from the same democratic pool, installed by popular vote. The PM's authority is unequivocal, except in the instance of the paloo-tied control exercised by Sonia Gandhi during PM Manmohan Singh's tenure. In contrast, leadership in Pakistan has passed from governors general, to nominated or self-appointed presidencies, to selected PMs.

Many of them have

articulated their views on foreign policy. None has done so as poetically as the late PM A.B. Vajpayee:

"The tools of diplomacy are words, eyes, and signs; Words, eyes, and signs; plus forks and knives; First you shake hands, / Then wring them in repentance."

Bisaria notes that personal chemistry between subcontinental leaders has often raised their people's hopes: "Duos of leaders had held great promise of breakthroughs [...] Zia and Rajiv, Benazir and Rajiv, Sharif and Gujral, Sharif and Vajpayee, even Sharif and Modi, seemed to signal new phases of constructive engagement."

He recalls: "In the 1960s, Rajeshwar Dayal managed to persuade Nehru to give Ayub Khan a chance, despite Nehru's instinctive suspicion of the dictator. Natwar Singh became an advocate for Zia in the 1980s despite Mrs Gandhi's aversion to him. Pakistan's envoy Jehangir Qazi, through his quiet diplomacy with Advani, managed to get the Agra Summit of 2001 in place giving Musharraf a chance to make his case."

He singles out Vajpayee for his "sincerity and balanced approach" towards Pakistan. Amongst Pakistani leaders, he thinks "Zia was perhaps the most consummate diplomat for Pakistan who tried to sweet-talk India while running a nuclear programme and a jihad" in India's Punjab.

Bisaria remembers PM Singh's remarks in 2006 that "borders cannot be redrawn, but we can work towards making them irrelevant [...] just lines on a map". Singh's sponsorship of the Satish Lambah/Tariq Aziz plan came as close to a working formula for Indo-Pak ties as the two nations will ever reach. On taking over, PM Modi shelved it. In former HC Shivshankar Menon's words, "the two countries

fell into a repetitive pattern or dance of engagement and disruption".

It is to Bisaria's credit that, despite being "more of a Europe and Russia hand", he accepted the Islamabad assignment with courage. He describes his life there as "never lo-nely". "Followed everywhere, watched closely, photographed on cell phones by swarms of men in shalwar kameez, Indian diplomats become either peaceniks or hawks [...] seldom left in the middle."

Bisaria offers his successor nine unequal pillars of wisdom: cross-border security, coincidence of leadership, safe diplomacy, the role of global forces and multilateral institutions, aspirations of the people, quarantining territorial disagreements, accepting Pakistan's volatile structure of governance, minority issues and economic aspects of the relationship.

Peering into August 2047, when India and Pakistan will celebrate a centenary of independence from each other, Bisaria sees three scenarios: "Business as usual, conditional optimism, and conditional pessimism."

Those who recall the struggles over Nor-t-hern Ireland may remember the response of the then British PM John Major when he was asked what his solution for the Irish question was: "We can do one of three things. We can go backwards, or stay where we are. Neither is a policy. Or we can go forward."

By the end of February, there should be a new government (conceivably led by Nawaz Sharif) in Islamabad. By June 2024, predictably, Narendra Modi will have returned to serve a third term. In which direction will they take us: backwards, mired in history, or forward? -- Courtesy Dawn

Rich man's polls?

Syed Sheheryar Raza Zaidi

The general elections to determine Pakistan's fortunes are just around the corner. On Feb 8, 2024, the people of Pakistan will come out to vote for a party or candidate who they believe is competent enough to rule for the next five years.

Much has been said about the level playing field being prepared for a particular party or the lack thereof for another. Yet, Elections 2024 are no different to general elections of yesteryear. Yes, the 'favourites' of the powers that be may have changed, but the underlying idea of the general elections being the rich man's playground continues to be true.

An election in the truest sense of the word is the people's choice of an individual who will represent them in a particular body. As is customary, elections involve canvassing, ie, reaching out to the masses to market oneself as one whose merits outweigh those of his or her opponents and result in such a person being 'elected'.

That said, in Pakistan elections have always been about a particular economic class from which emerge individuals of a particular gender to fight it out amongst themselves and to use their financial muscle that can help them get the votes.

A look at the majority of the members who have been elected over the past 50 years to parliament makes this idea clear. A big chunk of the people (read: men) voted into power are either large landowners, sugar barons and construction tycoons or business magnates, whose foray into national and provincial politics is backed by

enormous financial clout. This is where the title of the piece comes from.

Meanwhile, the gender difference is appalling. Of the total number of candidates (5,121) contesting for the general seats in the National Assembly, 4,807 are male and only 312 are females (two candidates from the transgender community). For all their claimed progressiveness, even the three leading political parties have allotted only a handful of seats to women nominees. While there are reserved seats for women in parliament, there is little to show that parties are taking a significant stride towards plugging the gap between men and women candidates. At the other end, female voters make up around 46 per cent of the total eligible voters — an improvement from the past but one can still see how women are being shortchanged in elections as they are in every other facet of life.

Having established that Pakistan's general elections have an unhealthy obsession with men at the helm of affairs, we can dissect the financial clout which has become the very foundation of Pakistan's electoral activity.

The Election Act, 2017, hailed as a complete code of polls in Pakistan, actually facilitates the triumph of rich men over those with fewer resources in the electoral arena.

Section 132 of the Act specifies the amount a candidate is allowed to spend. As per the said law, a candidate for the National Assembly on their own and through his supporters and political party cannot spend more than Rs10 million and for a candidate of a provincial assembly that cap is

Rs4m. Now contrast that with the average household income in Pakistan which stands at around Rs75,000.

This means that for an average person in Pakistan to be able to spend even close to the spending limit for election to the National Assembly, they will need to save all their income for over a decade. That's not even the irony. The irony is that the spending limit only applies where a candidate permits such expenditure. If expenses are incurred for a candidate which he or she does not permit, in light of Section 132 of the Election Act, those expenses are not considered part of the candidate's official expenses to which the limit applies.

To add fuel to the fire, no spending limit exists for political parties, just as long as their expenditures are duly accounted for, legally sourced and not directed towards a particular candidate. This is why when you open your browsers to surf the internet, watch videos or scour your television, you see various political parties advertising themselves having bought valuable ad space and airtime worth millions of rupees. It is only natural then for such political parties to gravitate towards candidates who can finance these splurges.

The purpose here is not to relegate a rich man to the comforts of their expensive homes but to lay bare how the 'level playing field' being sought by one and all should actually be realised for aspirational women and socially challenged individuals rather than for the same pensioners who continue to rule the roost in Pakistan. -- Courtesy Dawn

Punjab Governor says: Education, health sectors very important and for the development of any country

Independent Report
LAHORE: A delegation of an international non-governmental welfare organization, led by Alan Glasgow, Regional Director of Mercy Corps, met Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman at the Governor's House Lahore. The delegation briefed the Punjab Governor about the work on TB control, clean water supply, agriculture, climate change, humanitarian response and poverty alleviation in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman said that education and health sectors are very important and for the development of any country. He further stated that it is very

important to develop these sectors. He appreciated the services of the international non-governmental organization in the field of health, especially TB eradication Program and education. The Punjab Governor said that provision of clean drinking water is very important because many health problems are caused by consuming contaminated water.

He said that public private partnership is a successful model. Governor Punjab further said that youth are the most valuable asset of the country. He said that along with formal education, the aspect of moral education is also important. Governor Punjab said that as Chancellor, he has given

instructions to the Vice Chancellors to give special attention to the character building of the youth.

On this occasion, Alan Glasgow, Regional Director of Mercy Corps, informed the Punjab Governor about different initiatives of the global organization.

He said that the organization extended support to all provincial governments for emergency response that included 2005 earth quake, floods, and covid 19 pandemic. He expressed his commitment to work for the provision of clean drinking water, education, and elimination of malnutrition in collaboration with the government in Punjab.

Dr. Farah Naureen (Deputy Regional Director Asia Mercy Corps).



PESHAWAR: Caretaker Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah witnessing signing of MoU between KPIT Board and Alkhidmat Foundation.

Over 2.14m voters to elect 4 MNAs, 9 MPAs in Karachi's Central district

KARACHI (APP): Over 2.14 million registered voters in Karachi's Central district will elect four National Assembly members and nine legislators of provincial Assembly of Sindh on February 08 general elections. According to data released by the Election Commission of Pakistan, after current digital census, the Central district of Karachi division where one more NA and PA seats have been increased due to the rising population.

National Assembly constituencies NA 247, NA 248, NA 249 and NA 250 fall in the district Central Karachi having total number of voter 2144926. The hundreds of candidates belonging to (MQM-P), Jammat-e-Islami (JI), Pakistan People's party (PPP), Tahreek-e Labaik Pakistan (TLP) and the independent candidates were vying for NA and PA seats.

LHC orders for purchase of buses by private schools for children afresh

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued written order on the petitions seeking court's order for eradication of smog.

The court has ordered that the private schools should purchase buses for children and the private schools be registered afresh.

Justice Shahid Karim of LHC has issued written order on the petitions in connection with eradication of smog here Thursday.

The court has ordered school education department to conduct registration of private schools afresh besides

directing private schools to purchase buses for children. 50 percent children in private schools will travel by these buses from home to school. It has been said in the decision that two years back School Education department was directed to purchase buses for private schools but school education department has not got implemented this order. The court while halting plantation of date palm on Islamabad Lahore motorway issued directives to motorway, forest department, National High Way and Housing societies.

'Gender Desk' established at ECP Sindh

KARACHI (APP): A 'Gender Desk' has been established in the office of the provincial election commissioner of Sindh to resolve the grievances of deprived segment of the society in view of upcoming general elections 2024.

According to details, the Gender Desk will be functional from February 01-10, to address genuine complaints of deprived members of the society.

The desk will work round-the-clock, to redressal complaints of women, senior citizens, transgenders, persons with disabilities and minority communities. The desk will work under the supervision of Deputy Director Gender and Social section.

Syed Abdullah Shah. The above mentioned members of the society could contact on telephone numbers 021-99202624 and 021-99205338.

One dacoit killed by Shikarpur Police

By Adeel Ahmed
SHIKARPUR: While continuing the positive efforts as to curb the criminal elements, Shikarpur Police have killed one dacoit in the jurisdiction of Khanpur police station on Thursday.

According to Press Release issued from SSP Office Shikarpur that Shikarpur Police received information about outlaws trying to looting the vehicles on Khanpur - Shikarpur Indus Highway Road near Mukhtiar Kar Office.

Soon after the information, area police rushed there and dacoits opened fires upon the police while seeing coming towards them, police also fired in return. As a result of exchange of firing, one dacoit was gunned down on the spot.



MULTAN: Caretaker CM Punjab Mohsin Naqvi talking to media persons during his visit to Nishtar Hospital 02.

Naqvi lays foundation of Multan Cadet College project

Independent Report
MULTAN: Caretaker Punjab Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi broke the ground by operating a crane and laid the foundation of Multan Cadet College to kick off work on a mega project meeting a longstanding demand of the people of Multan here Thursday.

The cadet college will be completed in Dec 2025 under a Rs 1678 million project. The cadet college would be built on the 919 Kanal area in Multan and would have the capacity to accommodate 450 students.

Secretary of Housing and works gave a detailed

briefing to the chief minister on the project stating that the cadet college would have two hostels, a faculty hostel, officers mess, multi-purpose hall, and a Masjid besides residences for officers.

On the occasion the CM said that the Punjab government has already released Rs 124 million to begin construction work.

Meanwhile, Caretaker Chief Minister Punjab, Syed Mohsin Naqvi, inaugurated the new building of Model Police Station (PS) Seetal Mari.

During his visit to the city of Saints here on Thursday, the caretaker,

CM Punjab, visited different sections of the police station, including the community room, VSO room, front desk, and SHO room. He lauded Inspector General Dr Usman Anwar for his initiatives to provide relief to the masses.

He also held a virtual inauguration of 36 more model police stations in the province. He also lauded the performance of the regional police office and urged the police to continue serving people.

Provincial Caretaker Ministers Dr Javed Akram, Mansoor Qadir, Amir Mir, IG Police Punjab Dr Usman Anwar.

KP achieves industrial development milestone with CEZ inauguration

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Thursday achieved a milestone in the journey towards industrial development in province by completing development work on the Chitral Economic Zone and the inauguration of its state-of-the-art Industrial Facilitation Office.

KP Caretaker Minister for Industries, Commerce, Technical Education and Affairs of the Newly Merged Districts, Dr Aamer Abdullah inaugurated the zone at Gang Gherith near Dros in District Chitral.

The minister was

given a briefing by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KP-EZDMC) on the occasion. Addressing the inaugural ceremony, the minister said that the project would prove to be a game changer for the economic development of Chitral.

He said that after full operation of the zone the local skilled youth would not need to go elsewhere in search of employment. The major potential source of the area was its skilled human resource, he added.

JI to hold public meeting on Feb 3

FAISALABAD (APP): The Jamat-e-Islami (JI) would hold a public meeting at Dhobi Ghat ground [Iqbal Park], here on February 3. JI Ameer Siraj-ul-Haq will address the public gathering.

Party spokesperson to, d the media on Thursday that a meeting was held at party secretariat, Al-Markaz Islami, Chiniot Bazaar, with District Ameer Prof Mahboob-uz-Zaman Butt in the chair to discuss electioneering. The JI candidates for National and provincial seats including Rana Sikandar Azam Khan, Afzal Shaheen, Sardar Zafar Hussain Khan, Sheikh Muhammad Mushtaq, Asim Munir Loona.



LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman in a group photo with delegation of an international non-governmental welfare organization, led by Alan Glasgow, Regional Director of Mercy Corps at Governor's House.

JUP Noorani group announces electoral alliance with PPP

PESHAWAR (APP): Owais Qadri advocate, Mohammad Iqbal, and Shah Zuqarnain were also present on the occasion.

Expressing their point of view on the alliance, Syed Mohammad Sibtain Gillani, alias Taj Agha said that JUP-Noorani Group and PPP have entered into electoral alliance for general elections. The alliance, he said was reached out between both parties during a meeting of the former president Asif Zardari and President JUP-Noorani Group, Sahibzada Abul Khair Dr Mohammad Zubair, at Lahore.

JUP and PPP leaders including Mohammad

Man killed during dacoity

FAISALABAD (APP): A man was shot dead over resistance during a dacoity in the area of Sadar police station.

A police spokesman said here on Thursday that armed bandits stormed into the house of one Umair Farooq in Yousuf Town and took the family hostage at gunpoint. The house owner, after receiving information, also reached the house and offered resistance. The dacoits opened fire at him and fled. The victim succumbed to his bullet injuries in the chest on the way to hospital.

City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (ret'd) Muhammad Ali Zia.

Political parties relying upon social media to shape public opinions

ABBOTTABAD (APP): Through social networking websites and increasing penetration of internet access, political parties and candidates from across the board are using social media platforms to get engaged with voters for shaping their opinions during the general election 2024 campaign.

Prior to this general election, political campaigns were primarily conducted through traditional media channels such as television, radio, and newspapers. The increasing use of social media platforms, which proved their efficiency during the local bodies' elections 2020, is now

providing a level playing field for all participants enabling even the smaller parties and independent candidates to reach a wide range of audience.

Social media serves as a platform for alternate narratives and diverse voices that may be marginalized in mainstream media outlets.

It enables citizens to access a wide range of perspectives and information sources, facilitating informed decision-making during the election process.

In Hazara Division, social media has become a game-changer during the local bodies' elections 2020 when the present

Tehsil Mayor of Haripur, Sami Ullah Khan, launched a comprehensive campaign on social media. This brought a dramatic transformation in the first phase of the Local Body elections campaign in district Haripur where the young independent candidate has won the race of Tehsil Mayor against the two seasoned PML-N and PTI ticket holders with a huge margin.

This trend continued in the second phase of LG elections in the remaining six districts of the region, where candidates utilized this tool very effectively and reached their target audience, achieving their goals. During the current

KP Finance Minister inaugurates Kohat Sewage Treatment Plant

Independent Report
PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Caretaker Minister for Finance, Excise and Taxation and Anti-Narcotics, Ahmed Rasool Bangash on Thursday formally inaugurated the Kohat Sewerage Treatment Plant costing Rs.6 billion and Mallam Women Businesses and Community Center costing Rs.589 million started under the auspices of WSSC Kohat.

While inspecting the under-construction parts of both the projects, he expressed satisfaction over the pace and quality of the work and directed the authorities concerned to complete these important projects of public interest in the stipulated time.

On this occasion, the Chief Executive WSSC Kohat Arif Rauf gave a detailed briefing about the importance and usefulness of the projects and the

quality of work. Meanwhile, the Minister also inaugurated the Kohat Industrial Estate Security Development Project.

On this occasion, MD Small Industries Development Board Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industries gave useful suggestions to the Minister of Finance besides identifying the obstacles in the development of small industries in Kohat. The Provincial Minister directed them to send in writing their suggestions and assured their immediate implementation.

Finance Minister said it has always been his desire to serve his region and its people in whatever capacity he may be, and it was the special grace of Allah Almighty that he has been quite successful in these endeavors.



HYDERABAD: Former Minister for Information Sindh Sharjeel Inaam Memon addressing press conference along with President JUP Sahibzada Abul Khair Muhammad Zubair at Rajput farm house.

DG Rangers leads strategic meeting to fortify general election security

KARACHI (APP): In a significant development aimed at fortifying security measures for the upcoming general elections in the city, a high-level meeting was convened at the headquarters of Pakistan Rangers Sindh under the chairmanship of DG Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas.

The meeting, attended by a constellation of key stakeholders including IG Police, Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh, Additional IGP Karachi, and senior officials from various sensitive institutions, delved into a comprehensive review of security arrangements for the impending electoral process across the province.

Central to the discussions was the approval of a meticulously crafted plan of action designed to bolster security protocols during the general elections. It was unanimously decided that the joint flag march and snap-checking operations conducted by Rangers and Police would be substantially intensified to ensure security at entry and exit routes. Additionally, Sindh Rangers troops were earmarked to serve as a swift response force, ready to address any emergent security concerns. The meeting also underscored the imperative of strict adherence to directives issued by the provincial government and the Election Commission.

Health contingency plan ready for election

PESHAWAR (APP): The health department has finalized health contingency plan to deal with any emergency situation during the upcoming elections.

Under the plan it has been decided to establish a control room comprising of doctors and paramedics in the control room.

A staff of 10 doctors would be on duty in the control room on February 8, while five doctors would perform duties in the

control room on February 9. Emergency would be declared in all the public sector hospitals in all districts during the days of general elections.

All the district health officers in the districts have been directed to coordinate with the concerned administration.

Under the plan the health department would also coordinate with Rescue 1122 to deal with any emergency situation.



ABBOTTABAD: An eye-catching view of a snow covered area during the heavy snowfall of winter season, which more decreases the temperature below in minus degree Celsius, at Galyat area.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Primary & Secondary Healthcare Dr. Jamal Nasir distributing motorcycles keys amongst the Monitoring Staff of department.

Trade deficit narrows to \$1.879 billion in Jan 2024

Dr. Gohar Ejaz announces positive trend in Pakistan's exports

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz on Thursday said that trade deficit narrowed to \$1.879 billion in January 2024 from \$2.689 billion in January 2023. This is a substantial improvement from last year, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce. Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior, Commerce and Industries, Dr. Gohar Ejaz, is announcing a positive trend in Pakistan's exports. He said: "Pakistan's

Exports in Jan 2024 have increased by 26.9% to \$2.786 billion from \$2.195 billion in Jan 2023." Dr Gohar said that imports during the same period decreased by 4.5% to \$4.665 billion from \$4.884 billion. The caretaker minister said that Pakistan's global trade figures for the period of July 2023 - January 2024, show that Pakistan is steadily expanding its international trade footprint. Exports totaled

\$17.766 billion, up 12% from \$15.831 billion during the same period in the previous Financial Year (FY), he said. He further said that imports contracted by 16% to \$30.010 billion as compared to \$35.836 billion in the same period in the last FY. The overall trade deficit has decreased by 39% to \$12.244 billion as compared to \$20.005 in the previous year, he added. In absolute terms, during Jul-Jan 2024, exports increased by almost \$2 billion, and Imports

decreased by \$6 billion, and the trade deficit contracted by \$7.8 billion. He said: "These positive trends reflect our government's unwavering commitment to promoting trade and economic growth. We will continue to implement policies that support our exporters, diversify our export base, and enhance trade facilitation. I am confident that Pakistan is on the right track to achieving its trade goals and becoming a leading player in the global economy."



ETHIOPIA: Finance Minister Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, exchanging views with Ethiopian State Minister of Finance Eyob Tekalign Tolina during the meeting. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Thursday explored different avenues for economic cooperation during a bilateral meeting took place here in Islamabad at the Ministry of Finance.



A meeting with District Administration regarding 7th Agriculture Census was held at Provincial Census Coordination Centre (P3C), PBS, Regional office Karachi under the chair of Chief Statistician, Dr. Naeem uz Zafar in Islamabad.

Ethiopia, Pakistan discuss Economic Cooperation

ISLAMABAD (Online): The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Pakistan on Thursday explored different avenues for economic cooperation during a bilateral meeting took place here in Islamabad at the Ministry of Finance. Dr. Eyob Tekalign Tolina, State Minister of Finance, led the Ethiopian delegation while the Pakistan side was led by H.E. Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Finance Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan H.E. Jameel Ahmad and senior officers of the Ministry of Finance of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were also present during the

highly level engagement between the two countries. Both sides had a productive discussion on the matters of mutual interest including the bilateral cooperation in financial sector of both countries. The two countries expressed the resolve to bolster economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries. Earlier, H.E. Dr. Eyob Tolina, State Minister of Finance, FDR Ethiopia alongwith his delegation was called on Dr. Inayat Hussain, Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan. During the meeting, cooperation between the two countries in the banking sector came under discussion.

FCCI demands remedial measures for export sector

FAISALABAD (APP): The Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Thursday demanded remedial measures for export sector in order to continue national exports and maintain foreign exchange reserves. Acting President FCCI Dr Sajjad Arshad expressed concerns over unprecedented increase in freight charges particularly for exports from Pakistan to Europe, and said that unsafe maritime routes and tension in the Red Sea had been reported as the root-cause of increase which had hit the vulnerable SME sector. He said that the freight charges of a container which were \$800 have now jumped to \$4,000 completely disturbing the financial viability of the export commitments. He said that the SME sector was already braving the consequences of the global meltdown coupled with political instability and inconsistency of economic policies within the country. He said that the government should take notice of this situation to ensure the continuity of exports in order to maintain the foreign exchange reserves.



SARGODHA: A vendor displaying traditional children clothes to attract the customers at City Road.

Senate body discusses implementation status on various commodities

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Commerce on Thursday discussed the implementation status of recommendations on various commodities made by the committee over the last three years. A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Commerce was held here in Parliament House, presided over by Senator Zeeshan Khanzada. The Chairman of the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) briefed the committee members on the progress of different commodities. He mentioned that TCP was in the reconciliation process, and while the Sindh government had already responded, the other provincial governments were still in the process of responding. Zeeshan Khanzada inquired about the progress of imports and suggested maintaining regulation of new items. The committee members expressed dissatisfaction at the absence of the commerce minister. They extensively discussed issues with chilled meat, including concerns regarding the Animal Quarantine Department's (AQD) certification and the negative portrayal of Pakistan in newspapers due to fungus-infected meat. Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Khan Afridi advised ministry officials to refrain from opening containers suspected of temperature errors to maintain smooth regulation and uphold Pakistan's reputation. Senator Danesh Kumar proposed legal action against shipping lines and auditing their processes to ensure accountability. Zeeshan Khanzada emphasized that the AQD initially certified Pakistan's meat, and temperature discrepancies indicated shipping line errors.

7 Pak firms to participate in US power sports trade show

ISLAMABAD (APP): Seven Pakistani companies are set to make a maiden appearance in AIM Expo-North America's biggest power sports trade show being held from February 6-8. To be held at the Las Vegas Convention Center, the Expo would also mark the presence of Pakistani firms at the Pakistan Pavilion to be established with the collaboration of Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the Consulate General of Pakistan in Los Angeles. AIMExpo is the single most important event for the North American power sports Industry that brings together industry, media and dealers in a single arena to provide them a comprehensive B2B platform. It connects businesses to accelerate opportunities among exhibiting brands, distributors, manufacturers and dealers.

CPI inflation recorded at 28.3% in January

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation increased to 28.3 percent during January 2024 as compared to the corresponding month of last year. The inflation had increased to 29.7 percent during last month (December) whereas it was recorded at 27.6 percent during January 2023, according to data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) on Thursday. On a month-on-month basis, the CPI increased to 1.8 percent in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.8 percent in the previous month and an increase of 2.9 percent in January

2023. The urban CPI inflation increased to 30.2 percent on a year-on-year (YoY) basis in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 30.9 percent in the previous month and 24.4 percent in January 2023. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, it increased to 1.8 percent in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.7 percent in the previous month and an increase of 2.4 percent in January 2023. On the other hand, the rural CPI increased to 25.7 percent on a year-on-year basis in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 27.9 percent in the previous month and 32.3 percent in January 2023. On a month-on-month

basis, it increased by 1.9 percent in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.0 percent in the previous month and an increase of 3.6 percent in January 2023. The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based inflation on YoY increased to 36.2 percent in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 35.3 percent a month earlier and 30.5 percent in January 2023. On the MoM basis, it increased by 2.0 percent in January 2024 as compared to an increase of 3.8 percent a month earlier and an increase of 1.3 percent in January 2023. The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation on a YoY basis increased to 27.0 percent in January 2024.

Dr Saif says: Startups can apply for funds from March 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Dr Umar Saif, has said that startups in Pakistan can apply for funds from March 2024. The government has allocated Rs 2 billion for the Pakistan Startup Fund to enhance venture capital investment in the country. The fund is designed to offer financial assistance to startups, with each receiving 30% support, while venture capitalists will contribute the

remaining 70% of the capital. Dr. Umar Saif highlighted on social media that Pakistan has over 85 startup incubators and more than 4,000 startups. He said that startups face challenges after the incubation stage, struggling to secure external venture capital (VC) for building scalable products and achieving product-market fit. The Pakistan Startup Fund, established by the government, aimed to assist startups in overcoming these challenges.

Gold rates up by Rs.800 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The per tola price of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 800 and was sold at Rs 216,300 on Thursday compared to its sale at Rs. 215,500 on the last trading day. The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs. 686 to Rs.185,442 from Rs 184,756 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs 169,989 from Rs. 169,360, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported. The price of per tola and ten gram Silver remained stagnant at Rs 2,600 and 2,229.08 respectively.



QUETTA: Provincial Finance Secretary Babar Khan presides over the meeting of Balochistan Investment Committee.

Pakistan's new currency banknotes to be introduced in next two years: Saleem

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Governor at State Bank of Pakistan Saleem Ullah Thursday disclosed that new banknotes with improved security features will be introduced in the next two years where SBP has announced an art competition to engage local artists, designers, and art students in shaping the visual identity of the upcoming currency. In an exclusive interview with a private news channel, he said that this visionary initiative comes as part of SBP's commitment to revamp the existing banknote series and address concerns related to counterfeit currency circulation within the country. He said that it was an "established practice" to introduce new banknotes every 15 to 20 years for security purposes, after 2005 Pakistan will soon introduce easy and

technology-based standard currency notes to facilitate the public. He said that local artists, designers, and art students will be eligible to participate in the art competition. The designs could be on the themes of social and cultural identities, diversity, climate change and environment protection, economic development, natural landscapes, architectural heritage and national symbols, he mentioned. The designs could be submitted by March 11, after which a jury of "reputed artists" will recommend six designs for each denomination, he further added. The rollout of new banknotes is expected to be completed "within the next two years," he highlighted. Replying to a question, he said that State Bank.

VCUVAScallson Chairman IPO

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Vice Chancellor of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (UVAS) Lahore, Professor Emeritus Dr Nasim Ahmad on Thursday called on Chairman IPO-Pakistan and discussed matters related to scientific research for promoting the agriculture and livestock sector of the country. Continuing the robust engagement between IPO-Pakistan and the leading research and product development universities in the country such as UVAS, the Vice Chancellor outlined that UVAS was accelerating its drive to secure patents for its vital scientific research that would help in the field of animal sciences and agriculture.

Rupee gains 03 paise against dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Thursday gained 03 paise against the US Dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.47 against the previous day's closing of Rs 279.50. However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 279.6 and Rs 281.8 respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by 95 paise to close.

Makkah Halal Forum 2024 Saudi Minister witnesses FPCCI-MANAFAEA agreement

Independent Report KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has represented Pakistan's private sector in Makkah Halal Forum 2024; and, has apprised that the global Halal foods market size has reached a

Partnership is a coalition of Makkah Chamber, Madina Chamber, Jeddah Chamber, Taif Chamber and Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. The agreement is aimed at enhancement of Pakistan's export to OIC countries in general and Saudi Arabia in particular, he added. Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh explained that Pakistan has got all what it takes to swiftly claim its share in the global Halal foods market as all food products produced in Pakistan are Halal; and, no extra labor or costs will incur if we target more of that produce to exports. Interestingly, Halal foods market is growing in most of the countries - irrespective of whether Muslim or not.



whopping \$2.5 trillion. It doesn't stop there as it will continue to grow at 13.5 percent per year for the next 10 years - resulting in an expected more than two-fold increase in the global market size to \$5.8 trillion by the year 2033. The highlight of FPCCI delegation's visit was signing of FPCCI-MANAFAEA Agreement; which was witnessed by H.E. Mr. Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi, Commerce Minister of Saudi Arabia. MANAFAEA

Faysal Bank & Total Parco join hands for digital payments, offer facilities to customers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Faysal Bank Limited and Total Parco signed an agreement on Thursday for the provision of cashless transactions across Total Parco's extensive retail network, offering facilities to customers and aligning with the demands of digitization. Through this alliance, Faysal Bank's state-of-the-art point-of-sale card acceptance solution would provide Total Parco's customers the ability to make payments via cards as well as NFC solutions, said a press release. Commenting on the partnership, President & CEO, Faysal Bank, Yousaf Hussain stated that "At

Faysal Bank, we are privileged to have a multi-faceted relationship with Total Parco. This arrangement with Total Parco, is a testament of our agenda to increase the acceptance and digital footprint across the country through Faysal Bank's shariah-compliant financial solutions." On the occasion, CEO Total Parco, Asif Iqbal said, "At Total Parco, we acknowledge the needs of our customers and the changing trends in their preferences, hence this partnership with Faysal Bank will further our resolve in addressing the needs of our diverse customer base."



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displaying fruits to attract the customers at his roadside.

Chicken, eggs prices reach at Rs 460 per kg, Rs 415 per dozen

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of poultry chicken reached Rs 460 per kg and the price of poultry eggs reached Rs 415 per dozen in the open market in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The meat of the poultry chicken has reached Rs 800 to 810 per kg in the open market, according to the survey conducted by APP here on Thursday. The price of poultry chickens and eggs has been going above Rs 415 to 420 per kg and dozen for the past few months, which is getting away from the purchasing power of consumers day by day. The prices of poultry

items have increased by 20 percent in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi during the last one month, which has created huge volatility in the market. According to the market survey, during the last three in the twin cities, a 25 percent increase was witnessed in the price of poultry chicken, while as same as 35 percent increase in the price of poultry eggs in the same period. Meanwhile, talking to APP, former Chairman of the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA), Dr Sajjad Arshad said that the increase in the current prices of poultry was due to demand and supply issues.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Zeeshan Khanzada, Chairman Senate Standing Committee On Commerce presiding over a meeting of the committee at Parliament House.

Putin vows to make military gains in Ukraine as he meets with his campaign staff

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin vowed Wednesday to push back Ukrainian forces to reduce the threat of attacks on Russian territory as he met with activists running his campaign ahead of the March presidential election that he's all but certain to win.

Asked about plans for the military campaign in Ukraine, Putin said the line of contact needs to be pushed back to "such a distance from our territory that will make it safe from Western-supplied long-range artillery that Ukrainian authorities use for shelling peaceful cities."

He added the Russian military has been doing just that, "pushing the enemy back from vital populated centers."

"This is the main motive for our guys who are fighting and risking their lives there—to protect the Motherland, to protect our people," he added.

Ukraine has struck inside Russia recently, including a Dec. 30 attack on the border city of Belgorod that killed 25 people, injured over 100.

Putin also said Russian investigators concluded that Ukraine used U.S.-supplied Patriot air defense systems to shoot down a Russian military transport plane in the Belgorod region on Jan. 24.

Russian authorities said the crash killed all 74 people onboard, including 65 Ukrainian POWs heading for a swap.

Ukrainian officials didn't deny the plane's downing but didn't take responsibility and called for an international investigation.

Putin said Russia wouldn't just welcome but would "insist" on an international inquiry on what he described as a "crime" by Ukraine.



Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban attends a European Union summit in Brussels, Belgium.

Israel and Lebanon are prepping for a war neither wants, but many fear it's becoming inevitable

Monitoring Desk
BEIRUT: The prospect of a full-scale war between Israel and Lebanon's Hezbollah militia terrifies people on both sides of the border, but some see it as an inevitable fallout from Israel's ongoing war against Hamas in Gaza.

Such a war could be the most destructive either side has ever experienced.

Israel and Hezbollah each have lessons from their last war, in 2006, a monthlong conflict that ended in a draw. They've also had four months to prepare for another war, even as the United States tries to prevent a widening of the conflict.

Here's a look at each side's preparedness, how war might unfold and what's being done to prevent it. The 2006 war, six years after Israeli forces withdrew from south Lebanon, erupted after Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers and killed several others in a cross-border raid.

Dissident Russian rockers held in Thailand fly to Israel

Monitoring Desk
BANGKOK: A dissident Russian-Belarusian rock band held in Thailand on immigration charges have left the kingdom to fly to Israel, according to a post Thursday on the group's official Facebook page.

Bi-2 have criticised Russian President Vladimir Putin and the war in Ukraine, and their arrest sparked fears they would be deported to Russia where they would face persecution.

Ukraine and Russia swap 400 POWs

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Russia and Ukraine traded hundreds of prisoners of war on Wednesday, just a week after Moscow said Kyiv had shot down a plane carrying captured Ukrainian soldiers to an exchange.

The crash of a Russian military cargo plane near the border with Ukraine — which Russia said killed 65 Ukrainian POWs — had thrown doubt on future prisoner swaps between the two sides.

But in a series of co-ordinated announcements, both sides hailed the latest agreement to free more than 400 people captured during the course of the two-year war. Russia's defence ministry said 195 of its soldiers were freed, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said 207 people — both soldiers and civilians — had returned to Ukraine.

"Our people are back. 207 of them. We return them home no matter what," Zelensky said in a social media post. Russia's defence ministry said "195 Russian servicemen... were returned home".

The exchange was brokered by the United Arab Emirates — which has played a role in several previous swaps.

US to press for humanitarian action on Myanmar

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: Members of the House of Representatives on Thursday will launch the first bipartisan caucus on Myanmar to pressure US administrations to act on the crisis in the Southeast Asian country since the military staged a coup three years ago, according to a statement.

Republican Bill Huizenga of Michigan and Democrat Betty McCollum of Minnesota will chair the Congressional Burma Caucus, which the statement from the two lawmakers said was intended to bolster congressional support.



A Palestinian man carries bags of flour distributed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and Hamas, in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip.

China quietly expanding influence in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan

Monitoring Desk
KABUL: While most of the world treats Afghanistan's Taliban government as a pariah, China is growing diplomatic and economic links — and Kabul is happy for the attention.

Top-level meetings between officials, new mineral deals, and the upgrading of transport routes between the two countries are regularly championed by Taliban government officials.

While Beijing has played down the formality of these growing links, it is steadily increasing investment and exposure — a relationship that could benefit both parties, analysts and diplomats say.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan is a challenging terrain, but the characteristic of the Chinese is to go where no one else goes, trying to gain advantages," said Valerie Niquet, an analyst with the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris.

"The Chinese are extending a hand to the Afghans, who need all possible assistance." In September China became the first country to appoint a new ambassador to Kabul, and on Tuesday the Taliban government's envoy to Beijing — along with dozens of other diplomats — presented his credentials to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

"I believe that when the concerns of all parties will be more vigorously addressed, diplomatic recognition of the Afghan government will follow naturally," said Wang Wenbin, China's foreign ministry spokesman. Last month China joined Russia in abstaining on a UN Security Council vote calling for the appointment of a special envoy to Afghanistan — something strongly opposed by the Taliban authorities.

Bulldozers knock down 600 years old mosque in New Delhi

Monitoring Desk
WEB DESK: Bulldozers have knocked down a centuries-old mosque in India's capital, a member of the building's managing committee said on Thursday, during a demolition drive to remove "illegal" structures from a forest reserve.

The demolition comes at a sensitive time in India with nationalist activists emboldened in their long campaign for the replacement of several prominent mosques with Hindu temples.

The Masjid Akhoni in New Delhi, which its caretakers say is around 600 years old, was home to 22 students enrolled in an Islamic boarding school.

It was torn down on Tuesday in a forest of Mehrauli, an affluent neighbourhood dotted with centuries-old ruins from settlements predating modern Delhi.

Mohammad Zaffar, a member of the mosque's managing committee, told AFP that it had not received any prior notice before a demolition carried out "in the dark of the night."

Striking airport security staff ground flights across Germany

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: Security staff at 11 German airports, including the global hub Frankfurt, walked off the job on Thursday to press for higher pay, grounding flights and inflicting more pain on Europe's largest economy.

The 24-hour strike, called by the labour union Verdi, is the latest in a series of industrial actions that have plagued the country's transportation sector in recent weeks.

The union said it was demanding a pay rise of 2.80 euros (\$3.04) per hour and more generous overtime on behalf of 25,000 workers.

Almost 200,000 travellers will be affected by more than 1,100 flight cancellations or delays, the German airports association ADV said on Wednesday. Some of Germany's biggest airports including Berlin and Hamburg said no passengers at all would be able to take a flight.

Disruption was set to continue in Hamburg where Verdi called on ground service staff to strike from 3 a.m. (0200 GMT) on Friday until midnight.

The union said it represented 9,000 employees at that airport and was demanding higher paychecks and a one-time payment of 3,000 euros to adjust for inflation.

Passenger Ernst Henzl said he had planned to fly to Barcelona but ended up stranded in Frankfurt airport's entrance hall. "The ones who can strike, do it and they all do it just for themselves. There should be another solution. It can't go on like this," he said.

In Frankfurt, 319 out of around 1,120 scheduled flights have been cancelled so far, a spokesperson for airport operator Fraport (FRAG.DE) said.

Russian court extends detention of US journalist Alsu Kurmasheva

Monitoring Desk
KAZAN: A Russian court on Thursday extended the pre-trial detention of Alsu Kurmasheva, a Russian-American journalist who is accused of violating a law on "foreign agents" and may face additional charges.

Kurmasheva's custody was extended by two months to April 5. Her employer, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), calls her imprisonment unjust and politically motivated and said it was "outraged" by the latest development.

"Russian authorities are conducting a deplorable criminal campaign against the wrongfully detained Alsu Kurmasheva," RFE/RL President Stephen Capus said.



A person throws eggs towards the police officers as Belgian farmers use their tractors to block the European Union headquarters, as they protest over price pressures, taxes and green regulation, grievances shared by farmers across Europe, on the day of the EU summit in Brussels, Belgium.

Ukraine claims its sea drones sank a Russian ship. Moscow says a Patriot missile downed its plane

Monitoring Desk
KYIV: Ukraine claimed Thursday it used sea drones to sink a Russian corvette in the Black Sea as Russian investigators alleged that a Russian military transport plane that crashed last month was brought down by two U.S.-made Patriot missiles fired by Kyiv's forces.

Ukraine's military intelligence agency, known by its Ukrainian acronym GUR, published a video it said showed naval drones assaulting the Russian missile-armed cutter Ivanovets on Wednesday night.

The footage released on GUR's social media purports to show multiple naval drones crashing into a vessel and exploding. According to GUR, the ship costing between \$60-\$70 million was on patrol on Lake Donuzlav in western Crimea, when a GUR special unit struck it. The lake has been more of a bay since 1961, when a channel connecting it to the Black Sea was dug out.

Hamas head due in Cairo for truce talks

Monitoring Desk
GAZA STRIP: The leader of Hamas was expected in Cairo on Thursday for talks on a proposed truce in Gaza, as Israel kept up its offensive in the besieged Palestinian territory.

Hamas was reviewing a proposal for a six-week truce in its war with Israel, a source told AFP, after mediators gathered in Paris, with international efforts towards a new pause in the devastating war gathering pace.

In Gaza, there was no let-up in fighting or aerial bombardment, with the current focus of combat in the main southern city of Khan Yunis, where Israel says leading Hamas militants are hiding.

Ultimate World Cruise passengers become social media stars

Monitoring Desk
VALPARAISO: Passengers on a nine-month cruise have become unlikely stars on TikTok and Instagram, with thousands following their epic voyage and updates on daily life on board the "Serenade of the Seas".

"We're micro famous, we're not famous," Nancy told Reuters onshore in Valparaiso, Chile. "For us it's the trip of a lifetime, but we did not know so many other people would be interested," Mike said.

For those wondering about the prescriptions, Nancy has a nine-month supply for one and a paper prescription for the other that the medical facility on board supplies.

63,000 followers on TikTok. Their content ranges from a rough journey through the Drake Passage between Cape Horn and Antarctica to answering questions such as "How do you get prescriptions?"

Hong Kong court convicts four for rioting after 2019 legislature storming

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: A Hong Kong court on Thursday found four people guilty of rioting after the legislature of the financial centre was stormed during pro-democracy protests in 2019.

The verdict comes after eight others had already pleaded guilty to charges over the incident when hundreds of protesters besieged Hong Kong's Legislative Council building on July 1, 2019.

Humanitarian 'collapse' facing Gaza, warns UN

Monitoring Desk
GAZA CITY: Artillery fire pounded southern Gaza early on Wednesday as Israel said it had begun "flooding Hamas tunnels" and mediators sought a halt to the nearly four-month hostilities.

The focus of the fighting in recent weeks has been Khan Yunis, the southern Gaza Strip's main city, where a constant barrage of air strikes and shelling rent the air all night.

The health ministry recorded 125 deaths across southern Gaza in the latest Israeli strikes.

United Nations agencies' chiefs said a bitter row over the main aid organisation for Palestinians could "have catastrophic consequences for the people of Gaza".

Major donors, including the United States and Germany, have suspended funding to the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, over accusations that several staff members were involved in the Oct 7 raids in Israel.

Withholding the funds was "perilous and would result in the collapse of the humanitarian system in Gaza", the heads of the UN agencies said in a joint statement.

Meanwhile, mediation efforts gathered pace following a Sunday meeting of top US, Israeli, Egyptian and Qatari officials that produced a proposed framework for a new truce and prisoner release.

The Israeli army said on Wednesday its troops had killed 15 "terrorists" in northern Gaza, and captured 10 "militants" during an attack on a school where they were allegedly hiding.

Pentagon calls out Chinese companies it says are helping Beijing's military

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday added more than a dozen Chinese companies to a list created by the Defense Department to highlight firms it says are allegedly working with Beijing's military, as part of a broader effort to keep American technology from aiding China.

New additions to the list, first reported by Reuters, were posted on the Department of Defense website and include memory chip maker YMTC, artificial intelligence company Megvii, lidar maker Hesai Technology and tech company NetPosa.

Amid strained ties between the world's two biggest economies, the updated list is one of numerous actions Washington has taken in recent years to highlight and restrict Chinese companies that it says may strengthen Beijing's military.

A spokesperson for the Chinese embassy in Washington said China opposed the move and called it an abuse of state power, adding that it ran counter to the US's "alleged commitment to market competition and international fair trade."

Hesai Group said it does not sell products to any military in any country and it does not have ties with any military. The company said it was disappointed to be added to the list.

YMTC, and Megvii did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

While being placed on the list doesn't involve immediate bans, it can be a blow to designated companies' reputations and represents a stark warning to US entities and companies about the risks of conducting business with them.

Explosion strikes near a vessel in the Red Sea off Yemen as Houthi rebel attacks continue

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Yemen's Houthi rebels fired two ballistic missiles Thursday at a Liberian-flagged container ship in the Red Sea, a U.S. defense official said, the latest attack by the rebels as America launches airstrikes targeting them.

The attack happened west of Hodeida, a port city in Yemen long held by the rebels, said the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations, a British military group overseeing Middle East waterways. It said the crew and the vessel were safe and the blast came far off the vessel's starboard side.

The U.S. defense official identified the targeted container ship as the Koi. Its management could not be immediately reached for comment. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters.

The Houthis did not immediately claim responsibility for the assault. The private security firm Ambrey reported Wednesday night that a ship was targeted with a missile southwest of Aden, Yemen, near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait between the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. The Houthis claimed that attack also targeted the Koi, though American officials had no immediate information on any attack Wednesday night.

Since November, the rebels have repeatedly targeted ships in the Red Sea over Israel's offensive in Gaza against Hamas.

But they have frequently targeted vessels with tenuous or no clear links to Israel, imperiling shipping in a key route for global trade between Asia, the Mideast and Europe.

The Houthis hit a commercial vessel with a missile on Jan. 26, sparking a fire that burned for hours.

Europe's angry farmers fuel backlash against EU ahead of elections

Monitoring Desk
MONTAUBAN: In the last 12 months, the cost of running Jean-Marie Dirat's lamb farm in southwest France has jumped by 35,000 euros (\$38,000), driven up by increasingly expensive fertilisers, fuel, electricity and pesticides.

Money is so tight that this year he won't pay himself. To his surprise, he even calculated he would be eligible for the minimum welfare benefit, given to society's poorest.

"My grandfather had 15 cows and 15 hectares. He raised his kids, his family, without any problem. Today, me and my wife, we have 70 hectares, 200 sheep, and we can't even pay ourselves a salary," Dirat told Reuters at a roadblock made of hay bales that barred access to a nuclear plant.

Other farmers in the French southwest, where a nationwide movement started, complain about red tape and restrictions on water usage, as well as competition from Ukrainian imports let into the European Union to help its economy during the war.

Farmers elsewhere in Europe are similarly disgruntled, with protests in Germany, Poland, Romania and Belgium coming after a new farmers' party scored highly in Dutch elections.

Their blockades and pickets are exposing a clash between the EU's drive to cut CO2 emissions and its aim of becoming more self-sufficient in production of food and other essentials following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Just five months before elections to the European Parliament, the revolt is fuelling a narrative that the EU is riding roughshod over farmers, who are struggling to adapt to stringent environmental regulations amid an inflation shock.

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen's lieutenant Jordan Bardella blames "Macron's Europe" for the farmers' troubles. Le Pen herself says the EU needs to quit all free trade deals and that her party would block any future agreements.



Climate activist Greta Thunberg walks on the day of her trial at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London, Britain.

President for expanding trade, cultural ties with Russia, Italy, Mongolia

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday urged the need to further expand trade, economic, cultural and people-to-people relations with Russia, Italy and Mongolia. He said that Pakistan offered immense investment opportunities for foreign investors, who should benefit from its business-friendly environment by investing in various economic sectors. The president expressed these views while talking to the ambassadors-designates of Russia, Italy and Mongolia, who separately called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr and presented their diplomatic credentials.

Speaking to the Ambassador-designate of the Russian Federation to Pakistan, Albert P. Khorev, President Alvi expressed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen bilateral relations with Russia in the fields of trade, economy, tourism and culture. He expressed the hope that the new ambassador would further promote bilateral ties between the two countries.

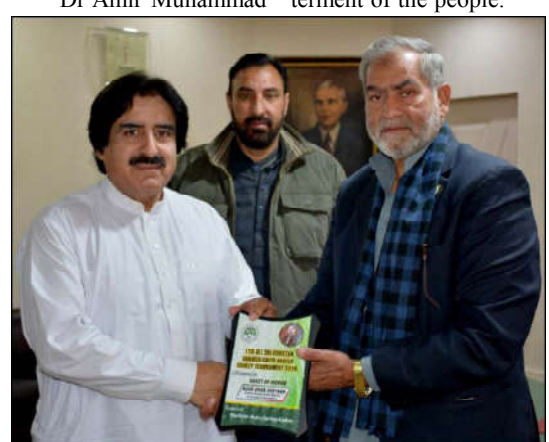


CHAGAI: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani meeting with tribal elites in connection with election campaign at Sanjrani House

Dr Jomezai says Health dept witnesses improvement in healthcare services

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Department under the leadership of Caretaker Minister Dr. Amir Muhammad Khan Jomezai launched a comprehensive health reform program in November 2023 to enhance health care services in the province.

The functionality of 'Labor Room' in hospitals, enhancement of health education and improvement in immunization services were concentrated in the reform agenda. Under the program, independent monitors have collected data to evaluate the available facilities in hospitals across the province. The department has conducted review meetings with DHOs and PPHIs while using this data and issued directives to immediately address these deficiencies and improve service delivery.



QUETTA: Deputy Director Sports Syed Naeem Akhtar presenting a shield to Director General Public Relations Balochistan Muhammad Noor Khetran in connection with 11th All Balochistan Shaheed Saeed Akhtar Hockey Tournament.

Secretary Health says Step afoot to control maternal, child disease for reducing mortality rate

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Health Secretary Abdullah Khan on Thursday said that Balochistan government was making every possible effort to control maternal and child diseases for reducing the mortality rate.

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting to review the performance of Sibi and Zhub divisions.

The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Health Mujib-ur Rahman Qambrani, DG Health Dr. Farooq Hoth, Additional Secretary Atiqullah Khan, DG, PPHI Zakir Nasir, Deputy Secretary Liaquat Kakar, Provincial Coordinator MNCH Gul Sabin Azam, Ghorizai, EO. C. Dr. Aftab, Divisional Directors Zhub Dr. Nasreen and Section Officer Tahoor Khan, all DHOs and MSs and



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassadors-Designates of Russia, Italy and Mongolia presenting their diplomatic credentials to President Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Pak calls for full implementation of ICJ judgment on Gaza; urges UNSC to play mandated role

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday called for the full implementation of the International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s provisional judgment on Gaza requiring an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, urging the UN Security Council to play its mandated role for the purpose.

"Pakistan also calls for the full implementation of ICJ's provisional judgment to uphold human rights, dignity, and identity of the Palestinian people as per the UN Charter, relevant resolutions, and international law. The implementation of these provisions requires an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to bring about an end to the suffering faced by the people of Gaza," Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said in her weekly press briefing.

Expressing deep concerns about the ongoing oppression of Palestinian people, she strongly condemned the Israeli attack inside the Ibn Sina Hospital in Jenin which she said fell in the category of war crimes being perpetrated against the Palestinian people. "These ongoing atrocities go against the spirit of the provisional measures decided by the International Court of Justice to protect the people of Gaza," she remarked.

Besides, she said the suspension of funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) also went against the spirit of the ICJ's provisional measures. We urge reconsideration of the decision to suspend funding of UNRWA which has a crucial role in protecting and supporting the Palestinian people, she remarked.

She told the newsmen that on February 5, the government and people of Pakistan would observe the Kashmir Solidarity Day to reaffirm their solidarity with the Kashmiri people in their just struggle for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination. "Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions," the spokesperson reiterated.

CDWP considered projects related to energy, physical planning housing and transport and communications sectors were considered in the meeting. The forum approved a project related to the physical planning and housing sector, specifically focusing on the "Construction of Litigants Facilitation Center for Litigants of District Courts in Sector G-10/1 Islamabad," with a cost of Rs. 1,989,990 million.

CDWP okays Rs2 bln project, recommends 3 projects worth Rs136.6 bln 3 to ECNEC

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) here on Thursday approved a development project worth Rs.2 billion and recommended three projects worth Rs. 136.660 billion to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) for further consideration.

The CDWP meeting was chaired by Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Mohammad Jehanzeb Khan while among others, it was attended by Secretary Planning, Awais Manzoor Sumra, senior officials from Planning Commission and Federal Ministries and Divisions and Chairman ACS (Dev) from provincial governments.

The primary objective of the project is to establish a facility catering to the needs of litigants and lawyers. It will include various amenities such as the Litigants Facilitation Center, Cafeteria, Multipurpose Hall, Banks, Dispensary, Shop, Bar Room (Male and Female), Prayer Hall, Library and Day Care, Office of IBA and IBC, along with Soft & Hard Landscaping and Internal Road.

A project related to Energy sector under the title "Expansion of 48MW Jagran Hydropower Station (Phase-II) in District Neelum, AJ&K (Revised), with a cost of Rs. 14,744 million.

KP political figures receive threats ahead of elections

PESHAWAR (INP): The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) on Thursday released a list of political figures who received threats ahead of the general election 2024.

According to the Counter Terrorism Department, 15 politicians from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) have received threats from terrorists.

According to CTD Political leaders who received threats are, MNA Mohsin Dawar, Ex-provincial minister Imtiaz Qureshi, Senator Hidayatullah, former PML-N MNA Amir Maqam, former PTI MNA Pir Mansoor Shah and Shah Muhammad, JUI-F's Malik Adnan Wazir and Ehsanullah, Senator Bakhti Afsar and Senator Maulana Abdur Rasheed.

Pakistan's envoy meets Italian police chief

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of Pakistan Ali Javed recently called on Italian Police Chief Vittorio Pisani, at the Police Headquarters in Rome and discussed matter of mutual concerns. Central Director for Immigration and Border Police assisted the Police Chief along with other delegates while the Ambassador was assisted by Deputy Head of Mission and Third Secretary, said a press release issued here on Thursday. During the hour-long interaction, both sides noted with satisfaction the trajectory of bilateral ties and acknowledged the well-established services and contributions of 300,000 Pakistanis residing in Italy.

Annual Tableeghi Ijtima to be held in Sibi from February 10-13

Independent Report QUETTA: The annual Tableeghi Ijtima (congregation) is scheduled to be held in Sibi from February 10-13. The collective prayer would be offered at morning of February 13. This was informed in a meeting held under presidency of Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Khudae-Rahim on Thursday. The meeting reviewed the arrangements for the annual Sibi Tableeghi including security.

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Thursday said that the ministry plans to release the comprehensive training and biometric schedule for Hajj pilgrims next week, aiming to provide enhanced facilitation for the pilgrimage.

Aneeq says Ministry to reveal hajj training, biometric schedule next week

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aneeq Ahmed Thursday said that the ministry plans to release the comprehensive training and biometric schedule for Hajj pilgrims next week, aiming to provide enhanced facilitation for the pilgrimage.

Talking to the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al Maliki, regarding the finalization of preparations for the impending Hajj pilgrimage, the minister said Pakistani pilgrims now have the convenience of completing their Saudi Visa biometrics from the comfort of their homes.

The minister said that the implementation of distinctive initiatives aimed at improving the facilitation of Pakistani Hajj pilgrims this year. Furthermore, the completion of Hajj arrangements is progressing well in advance of the established schedule.

Speaking on the occasion, Al Maliki extended congratulations to the Pakistan Hajj Mission for being recognized among the top three award-winning countries.

Caretaker Minister Home visits CMH, inquires about health of Mach injured personnel

Independent Report QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Home, Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali visited the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) on Thursday.

During the visit, the caretaker Minister inquired about the health of those injured in the terrorism incidents in Mach earlier this week.

Mir Zubair Jamali praised the spirit of injured personnel. Speaking to them, the

Minister said that the soil of Balochistan always needs the jawans like them. He said that the whole nation is proud of you people. The injured cops said that we didn't let the nefarious designs of terrorists succeed. They pledged to serve the country and nation with the same spirit. The caretaker Minister on the occasion prayed for early recovery of all injured.



QUETTA: Caretaker Home Minister Captain (ret'd) Mir Muhammad Zubair Jamali enquiring about health of policemen injured in Mach terror incident

Pakistan, Maldives agree to strengthen bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan and Maldives on Thursday agreed to strengthen bilateral relations and explore avenues for enhanced cooperation, particularly focusing on trade and environmental initiatives.

The bilateral relations were discussed during a telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar and President of Maldives Dr Mohamed Muizzu.

"The purpose of the telephone call was to follow up on the discussions during their meeting held on December 02, 2023, on the sidelines of the 28th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in Abu Dhabi," a Prime Minister Office news release said.

12 killed, 14 injured in multiples road mishaps in IIOJK

MIRPUR-AJK (APP): Twelve people were killed while 14 other sustained injuries in different road accidents that occurred in Indian illegally occupied Jammu And Kashmir (IIOJK) State on Wednesday late.

According to a report received from across the Line of Control (LoC), a series of road accidents in the forward Baramulla and Kishtwar districts of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have resulted in the loss of 12 lives and left 14 individuals injured.

One of the accidents occurred when a vehicle carrying passengers skidded off the road and plunged into a deep gorge on the Uri-Baramulla road, near the other side of the LoC.

Following Fawad's escape abroad, a fresh case was lodged against him by the Federal Investigation Agency's counter-terrorism wing. The file, now sealed, underscores the gravity of Fawad's alleged offenses

Undeterred by Interpol's rebuff, the government is mobilizing diplomatic channels with Thailand and Malaysia to facilitate Fawad's apprehension and extradition to Pakistan. This latest development underscores the complexities surrounding Fawad's case and the lengths to which authorities are willing to go in pursuit of justice. It's worth noting that journalist Fawad Ali Shah finds himself entangled in a web of legal proceedings initiated by the authorities within the confines of his nation.

His purported transgressions include daring to shine a light on the entrenched corruption permeating the bureaucracy, the burgeoning malaise within the country's governmental apparatus, and the poignant plight of human rights violations and unresolved cases of missing individuals.

Govt. pursues extradition of fugitive journalist

Independent Report ISLAMABAD: Interpol has declined the Federal Ministry of Interior's plea for the re-arrest of journalist Syed Fawad Ali Shah, who fled Pakistan after facing multiple charges.

The journalist, accused under conspiracy, secret, and cybercrime acts, managed to slip away despite bail from the Islamabad High Court, prompting international pursuit.

Speaking anonymously, a senior government official disclosed that Fawad Ali Shah's evasion led to a renewed effort by Pakistani authorities to bring him to justice. However, Interpol's refusal highlighted discrepancies in the case's eligibility for international intervention.

Following Fawad's escape abroad, a fresh case was lodged against him by the Federal Investigation Agency's counter-terrorism wing. The file, now sealed, underscores the gravity of Fawad's alleged offenses

Undeterred by Interpol's rebuff, the government is mobilizing diplomatic channels with Thailand and Malaysia to facilitate Fawad's apprehension and extradition to Pakistan. This latest development underscores the complexities surrounding Fawad's case and the lengths to which authorities are willing to go in pursuit of justice. It's worth noting that journalist Fawad Ali Shah finds himself entangled in a web of legal proceedings initiated by the authorities within the confines of his nation.

His purported transgressions include daring to shine a light on the entrenched corruption permeating the bureaucracy, the burgeoning malaise within the country's governmental apparatus, and the poignant plight of human rights violations and unresolved cases of missing individuals.

Following Fawad's escape abroad, a fresh case was lodged against him by the Federal Investigation Agency's counter-terrorism wing. The file, now sealed, underscores the gravity of Fawad's alleged offenses

Undeterred by Interpol's rebuff, the government is mobilizing diplomatic channels with Thailand and Malaysia to facilitate Fawad's apprehension and extradition to Pakistan. This latest development underscores the complexities surrounding Fawad's case and the lengths to which authorities are willing to go in pursuit of justice. It's worth noting that journalist Fawad Ali Shah finds himself entangled in a web of legal proceedings initiated by the authorities within the confines of his nation.

Samina Zehri says Determination of nation will not decrease until end of last terrorist

Independent Report QUETTA: Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri has strongly condemned the terrorist attacks in Mach Bolan, Kolpur and Sibi. In her condemnation statement, she expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and loss of government property in the incidents of terrorism in Mach, Kolpur and Sibi yesterday.

She said that the enemy wants to sabotage the peace and order situation in the country which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of those martyred

in the attacks and said that the security forces personnel who prevented the terrorists from carrying out major operations in the aforementioned incidents are the heroes of the nation. Expressing pain and sadness to the families of SHO Mach and other martyrs, she said that the martyrs demonstrated professional bravery and crushed the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and martyred themselves while performing their duty. The nation will always remember his sacrifice. She paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attacks in Mach, Kolpur that their timely action saved the country.

She said that the enemy wants to sabotage the peace and order situation in the country which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of those martyred

in the attacks and said that the security forces personnel who prevented the terrorists from carrying out major operations in the aforementioned incidents are the heroes of the nation. Expressing pain and sadness to the families of SHO Mach and other martyrs, she said that the martyrs demonstrated professional bravery and crushed the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and martyred themselves while performing their duty. The nation will always remember his sacrifice. She paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attacks in Mach, Kolpur that their timely action saved the country.

She said that the enemy wants to sabotage the peace and order situation in the country which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of those martyred

in the attacks and said that the security forces personnel who prevented the terrorists from carrying out major operations in the aforementioned incidents are the heroes of the nation. Expressing pain and sadness to the families of SHO Mach and other martyrs, she said that the martyrs demonstrated professional bravery and crushed the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and martyred themselves while performing their duty. The nation will always remember his sacrifice. She paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attacks in Mach, Kolpur that their timely action saved the country.

She said that the enemy wants to sabotage the peace and order situation in the country which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of those martyred

in the attacks and said that the security forces personnel who prevented the terrorists from carrying out major operations in the aforementioned incidents are the heroes of the nation. Expressing pain and sadness to the families of SHO Mach and other martyrs, she said that the martyrs demonstrated professional bravery and crushed the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and martyred themselves while performing their duty. The nation will always remember his sacrifice. She paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attacks in Mach, Kolpur that their timely action saved the country.

She said that the enemy wants to sabotage the peace and order situation in the country which will not be allowed to succeed under any circumstances. Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of those martyred

in the attacks and said that the security forces personnel who prevented the terrorists from carrying out major operations in the aforementioned incidents are the heroes of the nation. Expressing pain and sadness to the families of SHO Mach and other martyrs, she said that the martyrs demonstrated professional bravery and crushed the nefarious intentions of the terrorists and martyred themselves while performing their duty. The nation will always remember his sacrifice. She paid tribute to the security forces for thwarting the terrorist attacks in Mach, Kolpur that their timely action saved the country.