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Member APNS & CPNE

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Appears before IHC in compliance of court orders Making the entire state accused on enforced disappearances matter is not correct: PM Kakar

ISLAMABAD (Online): Care taker Prime Minister (PM) Anwar ul Haq Kakar has appeared in Islamabad High Court (IHC) in missing Baloch students case being summoned by the court.

Justice Mohsin Kiyani remarked we held several hearing in two years. Baloch students were lifted. Some are terrorists some joined TTP. Some people returned to their homes. The state agencies too have to work and they have to be accountable. This case has run then people have reached home due to efforts of institutions. The institutions are not exempted from or above law. If



people go missing then allegations are leveled against state of Pakistan. We had constituted committee comprising heads of intelligence institutions for this purpose. Care taker PM Anwar Ul Haq Kakar said while giving statement before the

appearances is not correct. Who is such stupid and foolish that he will conduct advocacy of enforced disappearances. The people were burnt alive on coastal highway 3 months earlier. The case of enforced disappearances of Baloch students came up for hearing before Justice Mohsin Kiyani Wednesday.

Attorney General (AG) opened his arguments.

The court inquired if new people are too missing in addition to old list.

AG told 8 among 12 old persons were missing. IHC directed Emman Mazari counter check it what he said about your list.



QUETTA: Newly elected members take oath during Balochistan Assembly session



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif addressing parliamentary party meeting

Ayaz Sadiq to run for speaker election Shehbaz best choice for premiership in current circumstances: Nawaz

Says upcoming govt will have to provide relief to masses; You did not oppress me but people of Pakistan by imposing individuals 'who don't believe in logic'

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo Nawaz Sharif has expressed hope that Pakistan will come out of difficulties in the next two years by taking difficult decisions as his party is all set to form a coalition government in the Centre.

"I believe the next 1.5

Continued on page 2



QUETTA: Adelegation led by acting Vice Chancellor University of Balochistan Dr. Zainab Bibi meeting with Governor Balochistan Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar

Newly elected MPAs vow to work for solution of problems of masses

Independent Report
QUETTA: The newly elected members of provincial assembly have pledged to work for solution of the issues being faced by the province and its people.

While speaking to the media persons at entrance of the provincial assembly before the maiden session, the MPAs-elect including Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Zamarak Khan Achakzai, Rehmat Baloch, Aasadullah Baloch, Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch, Malik Naeem Bazai and others were thankful to the people who elected them.

They said that the people have voted them to

power and therefore, they would do their best to resolve the issues being faced by their people.

They said that the people have lot of expectations from them, so they would try to come up to their expectations to their best.

They said that Balochistan is a backward province and it would be our utmost endeavour to do something for our province.

Zamarak Khan Achakzai said that unemployment and poverty are major issues in the province, and we would make endeavours to resolve these issues.

Caretaker Minister Information: Pak-Afghan trade resumes at Pak-Afghan border Chaman

Independent Report
QUETTA: The Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai announced the resumption of trade activities at the Pak-Afghan border in Chaman, effective on Wednesday.

In an official statement issued here, the Minister Information said that all previous obstacles hindering trade have been addressed.

Previously, trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan through Chaman was disrupted.

Jan Achakzai said that some 20 trucks carrying goods crossed the Chaman border.

Earlier, the state has implemented a single document regime, requiring passport for crossing the international border.

COAS underscores need for nationwide consensus on curbing intolerance

Lauds ASP Shehbaz for her selfless devotion to duty and professionalism

RAWALPINDI (Online): Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir has lauded Lady Police Officer Syeda Shehbaz Naqvi for diffusing a volatile situation and protecting a woman from a violent mob at Ichra Bazaar Lahore.

He was talking to Assistant Superintendent of Police Syeda Shehbaz Naqvi who called on him in Rawalpindi today. The Army Chief underscored the importance of social harmony and the need for nationwide consensus on curbing intolerance.

dressing concerns and grievances.

Syed Asim Munir underlined Islam's eternal message of kindness and benevolence as the arbitrary actions on the basis of heresy undermine outlook of the society.

Acknowledging the vital role being played by Pakistani women in all walks of life since independence, he said they have distinguished themselves at home and abroad, by virtue of their talent, tenacity and commitment.

The Army Chief said



He further emphasized upon the rule of law and advised against taking law in one's hands when legal avenues are available for ad-

women are an invaluable part of Pakistan's society and their respect is enshrined in our religion as well as our social ethos.

Leaves of all staff of Govt departments cancelled: Work continues on providing relief to rain & flood affected people on emergent basis: CS

Shakeel Qadir Khan says government can't think even to leave rain and flood affected people in isolation during critical time

Independent Report

QUETTA: The Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan has stated that work is continued on an emergent basis to provide relief to the rain and flood affected people in the province besides their rehabilitation.

He said that the government can't think even to leave the rain and flood affected people in isolation during critical time.

He directed to all commissioners to cancel leaves of all staff of provincial government departments in view of the urgency of rain and flood.

The Chief Secretary was chairing a high level meeting on the situation of rain and flood in different areas of the province besides the losses caused, here on Wednesday.

The Chief Secretary was briefed about the situation and arrangements made in the rain and flood

hit areas of the province.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Secretary said that there are chances of rains all over the province in coming days.

He said that he has directed to all commissioners to get ready to tackle any untoward situation during the rains and floods.

In addition to this, the commissioners have also been directed to store the non-food items in their respective areas, he maintained.

He mentioned that ration has been distributed among some 600 families in the rain and flood hit areas of the province.

While on the other hand, the affected families are also being shifted to the safer places, he maintained.

Referring situation in Gwadar, the Chief Secretary said that the constant rains have affected the buildings in the port city.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan presiding over a meeting regarding relief activities and rehabilitation of rain and flood affected people of the province

57 newly elected MPAs take oath in 1st session of 12th BA

Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Sadiq Sanjrani, Jam Kamal Khan and Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Mir Zafar Zehri didn't turn up for taking oath in maiden session of assembly

Independent Report

QUETTA: As many as 57 newly elected members of provincial assembly took oath of their membership in the first session of 12th assembly here on Wednesday.

The MPA-elect, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai, appointed as the presiding officer for the first session by the Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar, administered oath to the members of assembly.

Those who took oath of the membership in first session were included: Nawab Sanullah Zehri, Nawab Muhammad Aslam Raisani, Dr. Abdul Malik Baloch, Mir Asim Kurd, Mir Asadullah Baloch, Ms. Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Ms. Farah Azeem Shah, Maulana Hidayatur Rehman Baloch, Mir

Rehmat Baloch, Mir Zaid Reki, Mir Ziaullah Langove, Mir Zahoor Ahmed Buledi, Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai, Mir Shoaib Nausherwani, Nawabzada Tariq Magso, Asghar Khan Tareen, Asfandyar Kakar, besides others. Sardar Akhtar Mengal, Sadiq Sanjrani, Jam Kamal Khan, Mir Zafarullah Zehri and Sarfraz Bugti didn't turn up for taking oath in maiden session of assembly.

Earlier, fataha was offered to the departed souls of those died in different incidents during general elections.

Later, the chair adjourned the session till 03:00 PM today (Thursday) for election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

Extra-ordinary arrangements were made on occasion of the first session of

newly formed Balochistan Assembly in and around its premises.

The security was beefed up to avert any untoward incident during the session. The police and other law enforcers were deployed at different locations around the assembly's building.

No unauthorized person was allowed to enter the premises of the assembly's building.

The special passes were issued to the media persons to cover the maiden session of 12th assembly.

Earlier, the arrival of members of assembly was started at around 01:00 PM. The MPA-elect of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP), Ali Madad Jatak was the first among the MPAs to enter the premises of assembly building.

Elections of Speaker BA, Deputy to be held today

Independent Report

QUETTA: The elections for slot of Speaker and Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly are scheduled to be held today (Thursday).

This was announced by the Presiding Officer for the first session of Balochistan Assembly, Engineer Zamarak Khan Achakzai while presiding over the session on Wednesday afternoon.

Zamarak Khan Achakzai announced that the elections for slot of Speaker and Deputy Speaker Balochistan Assembly would be conducted at 03:00 PM today.

According to him, the nomination papers can be submitted by the candidates with the Secretary Provincial Assembly for Speaker and Deputy Speakership by 12:00 noon today.

The elections of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of assembly would be conducted through secret ballot.

Six terrorist killed in N Waziristan IBO: ISPR

Independent Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces conducted an intelligence based operation (IBO) in North Waziristan District, on reported presence of terrorists.

According to ISPR, during the conduct of operation, intense fire exchange took place between troops and the terrorists, as a result of which six terrorists were killed, while one soldier also got injured.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities including target killing as well as extortion & abduction of innocent civilians.

PTI urges IMF to consider political instability in bailout talks

Independent Report

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has asked the International Monetary Fund to factor in the country's political stability in any further bailout talks, two people familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The PTI has sent a letter to the IMF detailing its position, two senior sources in the party said, adding more details would be made public in due course.

The IMF has yet to receive the letter, the lender

said in an email to Reuters.

Last week, the IMF declined to comment on the country's political situation after PTI founder's aides said they would urge the lender to call for an independent audit of Pakistan's disputed Feb 8 elections before engaging in further talks with Islamabad.

Sohail Ahmed of Karachi-based Topline securities said the letter was unlikely to have a major market impact.

"The IMF will do its own due diligence," he said.



PESHAWAR: Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) are taking oath during the first session of the Provincial Assembly, at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Peshawar

116 members take oath of KP Assembly amid uproar

Independent Report

PESHAWAR (APP): Newly elected 116 members of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly on Wednesday took oath amid uproar and anti party slogans by members.

The proceeding of the house was chaired by Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mushtaq Ghani with recitation from the holy Quran.

Before taking the oath, the newly elected members of the provincial assembly chanted slogans against each other and threw shoes and pitchers on opposition benches.

The Speaker took no-

tice of the slogans of PTI workers in the house and directed them to remain silent.

The house offered Fataha for father of Ali Amin Gandapur and other martyrs of security forces

Special arrangements including multimedia screens were installed inside and outside of the assembly hall for special guests and party members.

The internet service was closed in the assembly premises due to security reasons.

Despite strict security measures, workers of political parties managed to enter the assembly hall.

Youth-centric think tank CDS launched to roll out national dialogue platform

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Centre for Development and Stability (CDS), youth-centric think tank focussing educated youth, media, experts and intelligentsia, has been launched with the prime goal of providing a national dialogue platform to resolve pressing issues and channelise innovation to improve governance and nation building.

The Centre for Development and Stability was launched here at the Riphah University Islamabad Campus under the slogan "empowering innovation for sustainable growth and stability." Speaking on the occasion, Director General of CDS, Dr Irfan Ashraf said the country was lagging in the field of research on pressing issues like terrorism, one of the biggest scourges faced by the nation. "Our vision is to conduct and provide research on economic and geopolitical issues by approaching educated youth, young students and media persons to navigate their innovative ideas for outcome-oriented endeavours.

"Our youth is directly affected by unemployment and poor performance of political leadership and governments and the international hostile powers are exploiting such fault lines to divide and spoil the nation," he added.

Dr Irfan Ashraf underlined that under the CDS platform field visits and interactions with stakeholders in Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), Sindh and would also take vice-chancellors of various universities on board and generate a direct debate between policymakers and the youth.

"We will try to bridge the gap between youth and policymakers. We welcome all research ideas and surveys,

and encourage everyone to take part in CDS activities," he added. The Centre, he said would take the initiative to research policy problems provide possible solutions and offer policy advice to government officials for informed decision-making. The platform would also combat the challenge of disinformation address pressing issues and underline urgent needs, such as Pakistan's water crisis, climate change and economic deterioration, he added.

The Forum would provide accurate and timely reports founded on ground-based research, facts and data related to global conflicts and tensions, explore root causes of poor governance and national integration through inclusive initiatives and youth mobilisation, he said.

The key research would focus on geopolitical development, industrial sector challenges, water and energy crises, tourism, mines and minerals potential, road infrastructure improvement, climate change impacts, refugee crisis, trade and economic policies, terrorism and cyber security, Dr Irfan said. "The CDS will hold international events with the country's diplomatic missions on board, will launch exchange programmes for university students at the international level and engage national level experts for our solution-oriented reports," he said.

Dr Irfan mentioned that the Centre would also provide support to students through short documentaries, interviews and movie-making, whereas the research authors will be given complete credit for their publications under the proud slogan of work for positivity and empowerment of youth.



GWADAR: Police and Rescue officials are busy in relief and rescue efforts to help people affected by flood due to heavy downpour of winter season, in Gwadar



QUETTA: Awami National Party (ANP) newly elected MPA, Naeem Khan Baza talking to media persons after taking oath, outside Balochistan Assembly in Quetta

Jamali directs deptts to expedite rescue, relief works in rain-hit areas

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan caretaker Home Minister Mir Zubair Jamali on Wednesday directed the concerned authorities to expedite rescue and relief activities in rain affected areas of Gwadar and Turbat district without any delay. He said that all necessary steps should be taken to shift the people to safer places and provide immediate relief to them without further delay.

The caretaker minister also expressed his sorrow over the loss of life and damages to property caused by heavy winds and torrential rains in Gwadar and Turbat district.

He said that provincial government would not leave the victims alone in

Multan Sultans arrive in Karachi for PSL 9 matches

KARACHI (APP): Multan Sultans have touched down in Karachi to resume their campaign in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) Season Nine.

The team, Multan Sultans franchise, has arrived in Karachi to play their remaining matches of HBL PSL 9.

Their upcoming clash is scheduled against Karachi Kings on March 3.

Multan Sultans made their journey from Lahore to Karachi via a commercial flight.

Following their arrival, the team will take a day's rest, with the training schedule in Karachi to be announced subsequently.

WAPDA digitalizes pre-historic rock carvings in Diamer Basha Dam Project

MIRPUR (APP): The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) signed a contract worth Rs. 46.5 million with Quality Solutions Technologies (Pvt) Ltd. for consultancy services for digitization of significant rock carvings in the direct area of the impact of Diamer Basha Dam with modeling and preparation of data for 3D printing.

The major scope of services includes site documentation through a terrestrial scanner and consolidation, as well as the archiving and modeling of scanned data for various applications. The duration of the contract is eight months, as was officially stated.

"In a ceremony held the other day, General Manager Diamer Basha Dam Project (WAPDA) Nazakat Hussain and Director Business Development Quality Solutions Technologies Saad Ahmed Khan signed the agreement on behalf of their organizations.

Member (Water) WAPDA Jawaid Akhtar Latif, CEO Diamer Basha

MQM's mandate like stolen car which everyone avoids to purchase: Haleem Adil

KARACHI (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh President, Haleem Adil Shaikh has said that audio, video leaks and confession of Mustafa Kamal are shameful scandalous and retribution of misdeeds.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, he said that mandate of Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) was like a stolen car which everybody evades to purchase.

Haleem Adil Shaikh said that MQM along with stolen mandate went to acquire ministries.

He said that MQM went to sell mandate and it should made the Form 45, public if it possess as per its claims.

The PTI leader said that Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) have stolen mandate while MQM robbed the mandate.

He said that people of Karachi voted in favour of PTI and Jammāt-e-Islami (JI) and all should accept the said reality. It would be better to return the stolen property to its owner, he added.

May 9 protest vandalism case: PTI founder, Asad others acquitted

ISLAMABAD (Online): District sessions courts Islamabad has acquitted PTI founder, Faisal Javed, former PTI leader Asad Umar and others in May 9 protest and vandalism case registered in police station Tarnol. Judicial magistrate Muhammad Shabbir issued the decision on accepting acquittal pleas.

The lawyers Anna Ali, Sardar Masroof Khan and Mohsin Ghaffar appeared in the court during the hearing of the case.

It has been said in the decision that the accused filed separate applications regarding their acquittal under section 249-A. The accused cannot be awarded

US stands with the 'truth' in Pakistan, says State Department

WASHINGTON (INP): The United States has emphasized on importance of respecting sovereignty and democratic process while trashing allegations of interference in Pakistani politics.

Addressing media men at his daily news briefing in Washington on Tuesday, State Department spokesman Matthew Miller categorically denied allegations of interference in Pakistan's political affairs, dismissing such reports as baseless and false.

Miller stressed that the future of Pakistan will be determined solely by the Pakistani people, highlighting the nation's right to self-determination.

He further reaffirmed the United States' commitment to upholding the principles of free speech and a free press, not just in Pakistan, but across the globe.

"We stand with the truth in Pakistan," declared the spokesman, underscoring the US government's commitment to supporting freedom of speech and a free press globally. Miller reiterated that the United States advocates freedom of the media in all countries, including Pakistan.

When asked "President Trump has said - he's still saying that US was involved in Pakistani poli-

Solangi visits NA Secretariat, Hall to review arrangements for opening session of NA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi here on Wednesday visited the National Assembly Secretariat and the National Assembly Hall to review arrangements for the inaugural session of the newly elected National Assembly.

The officials of National Assembly Secretariat briefed the minister about the arrangements for the opening session of the National Assembly.

The Director General Media informed the minister that special arrangements had been made by the National Assembly Secretariat for the convenience of the newly elected members.

He also informed about the registration of the members of the assembly, the preparation of necessary documents for them and the necessary rules and regulations of the National Assembly.

The DG media said that special arrangements had been made for seats in the assembly hall for the newly elected members.

The minister also visited the Facilitation Center established in the Parliament House for the convenience of the newly elected members of the assembly and met the staff there.

On this occasion, Solangi was also briefed on the issues of the Facilitation Center and the facilities provided to the newly elected members.

Corps Commander Peshawar meets Utmanzai tribe elders

ISLAMABAD (APP): Corps Commander Peshawar Lieutenant General Hasan Azhar Hayat on Wednesday met Utmanzai tribal elders from North Waziristan and thanked them for fighting alongside the Pakistan Army in the war against terror.

According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Utmanzai tribal elders, while appreciating the unwavering spirit of the Pakistan Army, said that the tribal people valued its sacrifices in the war against terrorism.

On the occasion, the Corps Commander said, "The Pakistan Army is using all its resources for the welfare of the people in the tribal areas. It is taking concrete steps along with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to ensure the representation of the youth in minerals and other sectors, including better provision of education, besides the gradual return of other tribes to their respective areas."

The tribal elders expressed the commitment that the tribal people would always stand beside the Pakistan Army and other law enforcement agencies for the solidarity and integrity of the country.



QUETTA: Activists of Hazara Democratic Party hold protest during Balochistan Assembly Session

Usama Mir makes history as best spinner bowler in PSL

LAHORE (INP): Multan Sultans' Usama Mir has etched his name in the annals of Pakistan Super League (PSL) history by delivering an outstanding bowling performance against Lahore Qalandars in the 14th match of PSL 9.

Exceptional display by Mir on the field led to the dismissal of six Lahore Qalandars' players, conceding just 40 runs in his allotted four overs. Multan Sultans secured a convincing victory over defending champions Lahore Qalandars, triumphing by a significant margin of 60 runs in the match held yesterday.

With this stellar achievement, Usama Mir surpassed the legendary Shahid Afridi, establishing himself as the premier bowling spinner in an innings in the history of PSL. Previously, this record was held by Afridi, who had claimed five wickets for seven runs while representing Peshawar Zalmi against Quetta Gladiators in 2018.

Shehbaz best choice for... Continued from page 1

added.

The three-time former premier said Pakistan is "badly injured" and the difficult decisions were the need of the hour to resolve the country's woes.

He said that the biggest problem in Pakistan is inflation.

He said the upcoming government will have to provide relief to the masses by bringing down inflation, food prices and utility bills as well as stabilising local currency value against the US dollar. The PML-N supreme also heaped praise on his younger brother and party president Shehbaz Sharif, saying he dealt with immense challenges during his brief stint in power.

Nawaz said that he would not have completed his time in power had he been nominated to lead the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM)-led government instead of his younger brother.

"In the current circumstances, Shehbaz Sharif is the best choice," he said while officially declaring him the candidate for the prime minister's slot.

Nawaz said party leader Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

PTI to accept election results, avoid levelling baseless allegations

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader, Chaudhry Abid Sher Ali has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) should accept election results instead of levelling baseless allegations of rigging and raising hue and cry over non-issues.

Interacting with a private news channel on Wednesday, he said that keeping in the prevailing situation of the country, all political parties needed to join hands setting aside political differences for making collective efforts to drag the country out of confronting crises.

Abid Sher Ali said that the PTI and other stakeholders should find the best way for the betterment of the country as they had challenged victories of PML-N candidates based on alleged rigging during the general elections 2024.

PTI does not want to prove anything but only to pressurize institutions for the decision according to their wishes, he added.

The PML-N leader said that certain elements were in the habit of levelling baseless allegations and creating confusion among the public.

The country was going through a critical phase and it could not afford any irresponsible behaviour, he said, adding that any grievances related to the results of elections should be taken to the appropriate forum.

Lahore Qalandars lose 10 out of 11 matches under Shaheen Afridi's captaincy

LAHORE (INP): The Pakistan Super League (PSL) has witnessed a dismal performance from Lahore Qalandars under the leadership of captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, much to the disappointment of cricket enthusiasts.

In the ninth edition of PSL, Lahore Qalandars' campaign has taken a severe blow, with the team losing all six of their initial matches, effectively jeopardizing their chances of advancing further in the tournament.

Shaheen Shah Afridi, while shouldering the responsibilities of both national team and franchise captaincy for Lahore Qalandars in 2024, has endured a challenging tenure. Leading the team in 11 matches, Afridi faced defeat in 10 encounters, managing to secure only one victory.

The solitary triumph came in a crucial match against the Kiwis in Christchurch on January 21, offering a fleeting moment of respite amidst a string of disappointments.

Multan Sultans' recent dominant performance against Lahore Qalandars, resulting in a resounding 60-run victory, has further exacerbated their plight. With this defeat, Shaheen XI's prospects of making it to the playoffs in PSL have significantly dwindled.

The underwhelming run of Lahore Qalandars under Shaheen Afridi's captaincy underscores the challenges faced by the team, prompting calls for reflection and strategic reevaluation to salvage their campaign in the remaining fixtures of the PSL.



KARACHI: Cricket lovers are showing their zeal during the Pakistan Super League (PSL-9) T20 match between Islamabad United and Karachi Kings, held at National Bank Cricket Area in Karachi

اشتہار بنام عوام الناس
ہرگز عوام الناس کو کھلی جائے کہ ہمارے ملک میں گورنر اور چیف جسٹس کی جڑی بیڑی نہیں ہوگی۔
میں نے کئی بار اس کی رائے منی ہے۔
N-50 کی نئی روڈ میں حوضی ہری ہے۔
روڈ میں حوضی کا بندوں کے سگم ہو چکا ہے۔
آفری صحت کی امانت کے بعد پندرہ (15) دن کے اندر کی جملہ انحصار بندوں کو ہرگز بند نہ کرے۔
مذرا اعتراض ہو تو یہ بھی سن کر سن کر۔
بعد میں کئی ممبرانہ اعتراضات کیلئے تیار ہوگا۔

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Dr. Amjad Saqib emphasizes creativity, collaboration, conflict management for societal progress

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib Wednesday emphasized creativity, communication, collaboration, and conflict management as essential for societal progress. He said this in his thought-provoking address at the 7th International Conference on Research and Practices in Education, hosted by Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU).

The conference, themed "Transforming Education: Empowering Learning for Life," served as a pivotal platform for discussions surrounding the vital role of education in societal development.

Dr. Amjad Saqib's address underscored the sig-

nificance of the conference as a milestone in the realms of research and practice, emphasizing the intrinsic value of education in shaping societies. He highlighted the importance of creativity in addressing contemporary challenges, advocating for innovative approaches and the integration of cutting-edge technologies to surmount obstacles.

Dr. Amjad Saqib stressed the critical importance of promoting a culture of critical thinking, asserting that courage to question and dissent was essential for societal progress.

He elucidated the pivotal role of communication, collaboration, and conflict management in effecting positive change, emphasizing their indispensable con-

tribution to nurturing leadership qualities and resolving societal conflicts.

Addressing the pressing issue of Climate Change, Dr. Amjad Saqib underscored the urgent need for concerted efforts to mitigate its impacts and promote environmental sustainability. He called for the indigenization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to align with local contexts, asserting that Islam's teachings inherently uphold the principles of sustainable development.

Dr. Amjad Saqib redirected attention to the marginalized segments of society, particularly women living in extreme poverty whose children were deprived of access to education.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf planting a sapling of Roxburghii (Pinus) after the inauguration ceremony of Yadgar-e-Dastoor monument on a green belt along Constitution Avenue in the Federal Capital.

Improving investigations more perpetrators of human trafficking bring to justice, US DCM

ISLAMABAD (Online): US Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) in Islamabad, Andrew Schofer said in a statement that the challenging reality of human trafficking is that criminals exploit many systems of communication, finance, transportation, and commerce — all of which were originally designed for the collective public good.

"I would like to thank our partners at the Sustainable Social Development Organization and the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network for bringing together like-minded individuals to discuss strategies to combat trafficking in persons in Pakistan" he said.

Traffickers, however,

constantly evolve their networks to take advantage of emerging technologies and migratory trends. They use the same tools that are essential to connecting and enriching our global community for their transnational criminal activities.

This is precisely why tackling a global problem like human trafficking requires a global coalition — one that transcends borders and industries. Getting ahead of the traffickers requires us — governments, civil society, front-line workers, and the private sector — to forge meaningful partnerships and harness advanced tools to effectively counter these

criminal entities.

By leveraging technology, we can better address the nexus between finance and human trafficking and better detect online exploitation. By sharing information and resources, we can better equip front-line stakeholders to track and respond to evolving trafficking trends.

By improving investigations and prosecutions of trafficking cases, we can bring more perpetrators of these crimes to justice. And by partnering with survivors, we can better establish trauma-informed anti-trafficking policies and strategies. Together, these efforts can help us bring an end to human trafficking.



ISLAMABAD: Participants posing for a group photograph after seminar titled "Determining the Health Cost of Inadequate Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Pakistan, at a local hotel in the Federal Capital."

Ombudsperson stresses Eliminating workplace harassment, promoting gender equality to secure economic stability

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Ombudsperson against Harassment, Fauzia Viqar stressed the pivotal role of FOSPAAH in addressing harassment and promoting gender equality in line with Pakistan's socio-economic development goals.

In the ongoing pursuit of fostering a safe and equitable workplace environment and advocating for the enforcement of women's property rights, the Federal

Ombudsperson Secretariat for Protection against Harassment (FOSPAAH) in collaboration with the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIU) the Office of Students Advisor, arranged an awareness seminar for the IIUI Boys Campus, said a press release.

Ms. Fauzia Viqar who was the chief guest speaker at the seminar addressed the diverse audience, emphasizing the complexities of harassment faced by both

males and females.

She highlighted the need for males to be vigilant as their counterparts may also face harassment, citing examples from both local and international contexts.

Through her words, Ms. Viqar instilled a sense of responsibility among attendees to contribute to a gender-equal Pakistan, where every individual is treated with dignity and respect as mandated by Article 14 of the Constitution and can actively participate in the nation's development.

SDPI, Hailey College ink MoU on research, training initiatives

ISLAMABAD (APP): Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Hailey College of Commerce, University of the Punjab have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on joint research, knowledge sharing, and training initiatives revolving around sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The MoU was signed by the Executive Director SDPI, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri and Principal of Hailey College of Commerce, Lahore Prof. Dr. Hafiz Zafar Ahmed here on

Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that SDPI and Hailey College's collaboration's tangible output could be introduced some sort of degree that can also help produce professionals managing finances of social sector.

Both the institutions could collaborate on joint training, certifications, conferences, workshops, and other endeavours, he said, adding that since 1996, SDPI has 30 years history of training and learning from its in-house school of learning and training.

Speeding car runs over persons sleeping on footpath, killed two

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least two people were killed on the spot while others several injured when a speeding car ran over persons sleeping on a footpath in Karachi in the wee hours.

According to details, rescue officials said that the accident occurred near the Nagan Pull area of Karachi where a car skidded off the road and ran over people sleeping on a footpath. As a result, two people lost their lives, a private news channel reported.

IFA mandates licenses for all food businesses in ICT

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Food Authority (IFA) has instructed all businesses dealing with food within the Islamabad Capital Territory to obtain a license to ensure the safety and cleanliness of food consumed by citizens.

Under the guidance of the Deputy Commissioner of Operations Food, this directive aimed to enhance public health standards and guarantee the quality of edibles circulating in the region, said the spokesman of ICT, Dr. Abdullah Tabassum.

The issuance of food licenses has commenced to streamline compliance with the new regulation. Any entity involved in food-related activities, ranging from production to distribution, must obtain this essential license to operate legally. Failure to comply could result in penalties or cessation of operations, he added.

To facilitate the process, applicants need to visit the IFA office located at Multipurpose Sports Center, F6 Markaz, Islamabad.



Director General, Federal Judicial Academy, Islamabad, Hayat Ali Shah addressing District courts staff from all over Pakistan in the inaugural ceremony of three days training course at the Academy.



ISLAMABAD: Students of Model College 18/3 performing in lok songs competition held in connection with Students week celebration.

CDA taking steps to make Islamabad more green

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA), Environment Wing took several steps to eliminate environmental pollution to make the city more beautiful and green.

In this regard, as part of the plantation campaign in F-9 Park, 15,000 plants have been planted initially by destroying paper mulberry and poisonous weeds, which are compatible with the local environment and have no negative effects on human health.

The process of destroying such poisonous plants which have negative effects on human health and the environment has also been started.

According to the details, under the supervision of Member Environment, Capital Development Authority (CDA), NIH doctors along with private

NGOs participated in the tree planting campaign conducted in Islamabad's F-9 Park.

It should be noted that under CSR, the private company Mari Petroleum has given 20,000 saplings to CDA in the plantation campaign and this series of plantations will continue in the coming days.

Furthermore, under the plantation drive, Environment Wing was continuing to plant plantations on the slopes around various highways, connecting roads, intersections, green belts, roads and drains in the city to reduce environmental pollution.

On this occasion, Member Environment highlighted the importance and usefulness of increasing green areas and planting new saplings, including eliminating environmental pollution.

Court summons PTI founder in female judge threatening case

ISLAMABAD (Online): District and Sessions Court Islamabad has summoned PTI founder in female judge threatening case.

The case came up for hearing before civil judge Murid Abbas Wednesday.

The court issued summon notice to PTI founder in the case.

The court ordered that Superintendent Adiala jail should present PTI founder on next hearing.

The court summoned PTI founder on April 3.

The lawyers had filed application during previous hearing for production of Imran Khan in the court.

EPI called upon parents to cooperate with Polio teams

ISLAMABAD (APP): Director Expanded Programme on Immunization Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad Wednesday appealed that the parents to cooperate with the polio teams which were knocking at their doors to administer polio drops to their children of less than five years so that they could be saved from the crippling disease.

Talking to a Private news channel, he said that after collecting environmentally positive samples government had initiated this move and launched its second nationwide polio, adding, that the presence of poliovirus in environmental samples are main cause of concern for us.

It is need of the hour that the parents should cooperate with polio vaccination teams for making polio free society and save their children from lifetime disability, he added.

"Our primary focus is the welfare of every child,

and we are dedicated to leaving no stone unturned in our efforts to eradicate this disease," he affirmed.

"Given the recent detection of the poliovirus in environmental samples, it is imperative that we remain vigilant and ensure all children are protected," he mentioned. Replying a question, he said the government is working hard to eradicate this menace, but we cannot succeed without the support of parents and community. "We have held multiple vaccination campaigns this year to boost children's immunity and we will continue these drives into the next year until we achieve our target goals," he added. He said that vaccination cannot be done forcibly rather it has to be done in agreement with parents.

He also expressed his disappointment over the refusal of several parents to vaccinate their children against polio and other vaccine-preventable diseases.

Dr Mehlag's novel translated in Urdu language

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prominent Algerian writer Dr Fadila Melhag's novel (When Life Desires You) was translated in the Urdu in Pakistan which considered a historical precedent and pioneering step in establishing a bridge of cultural communication between two great brotherly countries.

The novel was published by the Karachi Editor's Club, in Urdu translated by Head of the Translation Department at the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) Islamabad Dr Lubna Farah, said a news release on Wednesday.

The Karachi Editor's Club also issued for the first time in Pakistan two collections of short stories from Algeria in Urdu language by Dr Fadila Melhag (Outside the Field of Literacy) and (For display... Unpaintable) also translated by Dr Lubna Farah.

The novel "When Life Desires You", the experience of secret migration from the south to the north to deal with issues of clandestine immigration, through the experience of a long journey between the south and the north.

Dr Fadila Melhag a distinguished literary talent, brilliant academic researcher, excellent academic career, diverse literary and scientific production.

Int'l training workshop on 'Irrigation System & Water Management starts

ISLAMABAD (APP): Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD) in collaboration with African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO) Wednesday organized here international training workshop on 'Irrigation System and Water Management'.

International participants from 10 Asian and African member countries including Pakistan are attending this training PROGRAMME, which would continue till March 7, said a press release.

Abdulraheem Hasan, Deputy Head of Mission from Jordan Embassy and Ambassador M. Nyambura Kamau from Kenya High Commission, as well as distinguished guests belonging to various government departments and nation-building organizations.

In his inaugural address, Dharejo welcomed the participants from AARDO member countries and commended their efforts, especially Dr. Manoj Nardeosingh, for organizing the event in Pakistan.

He mentioned that with agriculture at our core, Pakistan faced water stress aggravated by climate change. The government initiatives, including major dam projects like Diamer-Bhasha and Dasu, aimed to bolster irrigation systems.

He expressed his views that the collaboration promised valuable exchanges of experiences and best practices from across the AARDO countries. Dharejo expressed a strong presumption that the training programme, complemented by in-house sessions and field visits, would provide profound insights to the participants.

The training programme was inaugurated by Secretary, Establishment Division, Inamullah Khan Dharejo as chief guest, while Additional Secretary, Establishment Division, Dr. Muhammad Nawaz, also present on the occasion.

Secretary General of AARDO, Dr. Naroj Nardeosingh, and the Assistant Secretary General, Rami Hamdallah joined the session virtually.

However, the ceremony was attended by members of diplomatic corps, including

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman IPO-Pakistan addressing the Seminar on Intellectual Property as Empowerment through knowledge and wealth creation at NUST University.

Secy education agrees to revise teachers' service structure

ISLAMABAD (APP): Secretary Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary, has agreed to revise the further service structure for the teachers of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) Colleges.

This decision came during a meeting held here last day with representatives of the Federal Government College Teachers Association (FGCTA).

The meeting chaired by Secretary Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary.

The representatives of teachers and professionals include Dr. Rahima Rehman, the president of FGCTA, the professor Farhan Azam, the vice president of FGCTA, and Anum Kaleem, the joint secretary of the association, also at-

tended the meeting.

During the discussions, the FGCTA representatives addressed issues concerning Federal Government Colleges.

The proposals outlining the necessary revisions to the four-tier service structure were presented that marking a significant step towards addressing the concerns raised by college teachers.

The revised service structure aims to provide teachers with improved career progression and recognition for their contributions to the education sector.

Dr. Rahima Rehman, while talking to this news agency said that secretary's commitment underscored the government's dedication to creating a conducive environment for teachers and fostering excellence in the nation's educational institutions.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari presenting the shield to Deputy Director IFRC Juja kim.

COMSTECH, Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital to arrange free cataract eye surgery camp

ISLAMABAD (APP): COMSTECH and Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Pakistan in collaboration with Al-Nur Foundation Somalia, and Benadir University Somalia, are organizing a free cataract eye surgery camp in Mogadishu, Somalia, from March 01-10.

The goal of this initiative is to eliminate avoidable blindness by providing free cataract surgeries to those in need. The camp will be held at Dalmar Specialized and Teaching Hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia.

According to COMSTECH, the free cataract eye surgery camp embodies its vision to prioritize healthcare accessibility and community welfare.

This initiative is poised to make a significant impact on the lives of individuals in need. By offering free medical consultations, medications, eye-glasses, and surgeries to address cataract-related issues, the camp aims to alle-

viate the burden of visual impairment and improve the overall quality of life for participants. This initiative underscores the collective effort of COMSTECH, Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Pakistan and other partners to fulfill their commitment to serving communities, particularly those underserved or marginalized, by providing essential healthcare services that empower individuals to lead healthier and more productive lives.

Through such collaborative endeavours, COMSTECH continues to demonstrate its dedication to advancing healthcare accessibility and making a tangible difference in the lives of people across Pakistan.

COMSTECH the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) was established by the Third Islamic Summit of OIC held at Makkah.



ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way on newly constructed overhead bridge sector E-11 in the Federal Capital.

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Democracy damaged

The legal controversies surrounding the elections refuse to abate. Another row has broken out over who has the lawful authority to summon the first sitting of the newly elected National Assembly.

President Arif Alvi has refused to exercise the prerogative till all reserved seats have been assigned, but NA Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf has called a session on Thursday anyway to satisfy the constitutional deadline. It is unclear, however, whether the latter has any authority to do so, which may throw the legality and legitimacy of Thursday's proceedings into question and trigger another court battle.

It appears that this fresh controversy could have been avoided had the ECP by now decided whether the Sunni Ittehad Council, which the majority of PTI-backed independents have joined, deserves its quota of reserved seats or not. The ECP was supposed to decide the matter in an open hearing yesterday but adjourned the proceedings again, leaving the matter hanging.

The issue at hand is not a unique case, and several past precedents have been cited that seem to support the SIC's claim to its share of reserved seats for women and minorities. In any case, the power to decide the matter rests with the ECP. Why, then, is it allowing the controversy to linger?

From its complicity in the failure to hold timely elections for the KP and Punjab assemblies to its role in delaying the general elections over a controversy-ridden census, from its failure to ensure a free, fair and inclusive environment for electioneering to its flouting of myriad rules and laws governing the electoral process on election day and thereafter — the charge-sheet against the ECP has not stopped growing.

Have the country's laws not been trampled upon enough? Does the foundation of the 16th National Assembly also need to be laid on a violation of constitutional process?

There were immense expectations attached to the democratic process over the past year, with millions hoping it would provide them a pathway to deliverance from the many crises afflicting the country. Instead, the nation witnessed once again how casually constitutional schematics can be subverted when the powerful decide to rob the public of its voice.

Meanwhile, the institution created and empowered to safeguard the country's democratic framework either stood by and watched it be mutilated or became complicit in its weakening through its own disdain for the law. It must be asked: is there somewhere that the ECP and its backers intend to draw a line? The majority of Pakistan's population is young and impressionable. What they have seen over the past year cannot engender any hopes for a just and progressive society. Lasting damage has already been caused by the actions of a few. How long will they continue to be tolerated?

Rafia Zakaria

In Pakistan, we do things family style, and politics is a part of family. Elections are contested family style — brothers, uncles, sons and daughters all running from different constituencies.

The most eminent families have entire political parties available at their disposal, and heading them means a decent shot at the best, highest and most lucrative public posts in Pakistan. So it has been in Pakistan for decades, so it likely will be for the foreseeable future at least.

In keeping with this pattern of Pakistani politics, Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and the niece of the former (and future) prime minister Shehbaz Sharif, was sworn in as chief minister of Punjab on Monday.

There was something new though: while her selection was in accordance with the dynastic pattern of Pakistani politics, she will be the first female ever to hold

the post in the country's history. The new chief minister chose to wear green on the day of her swearing-in, as have the female scions of families past who have been the recipients of other firsts in Pakistani politics.

Having waited a long time for this moment, the new chief minister chose to give a lengthy speech that contained many promises. These promises deserve to be underscored since such commitments are often lost in the ether (another Pakistani pattern). The province of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz announced, would be turned into an economic hub to facilitate businessmen and businesses. While the government would carry out its regulatory duties it would be done in a way that was pro-business.

The intentions behind the promise may be commendable, but it is worth noting that one of the economic afflictions of the country is the excessive grants of subsidies to businesses and not ordinary folk. It remains to be seen how the new chief minister will recon-

cile this critique with her plan of turning Punjab into an economic hub.

A number of promises were also made to the youth of Punjab, who will be able to avail merit-based scholarships and internships, and be encouraged to start tech start-ups. Maryam Nawaz also plans to provide school buses for children and an air ambulance with free medication.

As far as women are concerned (an area of special attention since the chief minister is also a woman) they will be provided with a crisis helpline and there would also be day-care centres at workplaces — both private and public workplaces. The chief minister also plans to create 'respectable' women's hostels where working women can reside in safety.

It is not impossible for female (or male) leaders to fulfil promises if they have the will and drive to do so. In Bangladesh, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed, also the progeny of that country's first president Sheikh Mujibur

Rahman has achieved significant economic success for her people.

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the share of women in the workplace increased to 42.6 per cent in 2022 from 36pc five years earlier. Promises have been made to increase the share to 50pc. It is notable that this push to increase the labour share is seen particularly among the women in rural areas.

That is not all of it; international organisations see Bangladesh as a 'fast-track' country that is improving its delivery of health services particularly for women. Part of this was the establishment of 16,000 community clinics and 13,000 maternity clinics. This has meant vast improvements in the maternal mortality rate in the country as well.

Admittedly, Sheikh Hasina has been around a long time, but if the total terms of dynastic rule in Punjab are considered, a good deal of time has passed and not even a fraction of the progress

seems imminent. If anything, even working programmes like the Lady Health Workers Programme in Punjab were underfunded even with a Sharif at the helm.

This means that even successful programmes that were providing health services delivered in the rural areas faced major obstacles. Similarly, all sorts of hotlines are created on a seeming regular basis (likely because it is a cheap measure) but one is uncertain about how many women have been helped in any concrete way.

There was a time when the myth of one woman rising to the top was widely accepted in Pakistan. This myth holds that just because one woman reaches a top post, so too can other women achieve the same.

In Pakistan, the high achievements of one woman simply mean that her family of men is usually powerful enough to allow her to transcend her gender. In Pakistan, if you have a certain surname, you can overcome the fact that you are a woman. As a matter of fact, they

allow your achievement to carry the added glamour of being the 'first' woman in addition to the cushion provided by their family. Add a few promises geared to improving the condition of women and their job is done.

A departure, given the current condition of the country, would be strict austerity measures for the politicians to whom cabinet positions and other top posts will be handed out by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz in the coming days.

One crucial symbolic move could perhaps be a voluntary cessation of the budget allotted to the chief minister for personal expenditures such as those on cars, homes, travel and similar activities. A deliberate effort towards plain non-branded garments would make the chief minister a woman who leads by example in times of complete deprivation and hardship for Punjab and the rest of the country. Setting a good example, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz should know, is something that is both cheap and available to everybody.

Sharif dynasty's new face

Zahid Hussain

She had long been groomed as heir apparent to the country's most prominent political dynasty and her election as Punjab's chief minister this week marked her crowning. Maryam Nawaz, the daughter of former three-time prime minister Nawaz Sharif, now holds one of the most powerful political positions in the country.

With uncle Shehbaz Sharif assured of being elected prime minister for the second time, the Sharif family is fully back in the saddle. The spectacle at the swearing-in ceremony in Lahore, with a beaming newly elected chief minister sitting between father and uncle on the stage, was most revealing.

A sombre-looking Nawaz Sharif and his ebullient younger brother watched the passing of the baton to the new generation. Maryam exuded a strong sense of entitlement as she stood up to take oath for the coveted position that perhaps matters most for the family's hold on power. It provides yet another ironical twist to the ongoing power game.

The family has regained control of its bastion but with questionable legitimacy.

It is apparent that the family's return to power largely owes itself to the support of the same power that was responsible for its ouster a few years back. It's a Pyrrhic victory for a dynasty that seems to have lost much political capital in the process. Widespread allegations of manipulation of the electoral results have cast a dark shadow over the transition of power.

Nawaz Sharif had returned home after years in self-exile in the hope of winning a fourth term as prime minister, but he chose to step down in favour of his younger brother after his party failed to win a majority in the elections. He obviously would not have liked to head a coalition of disparate elements.

But there seems to be another, perhaps more plausible, reason behind his decision, ie, to make it possible for his daughter to take charge in Punjab. The patriarch is certainly not out of politics and will remain the main power behind the scenes and keep the family together.

Yet it may not be an easy ride for the Sharifs, who have gone through cycles of rise and fall over the past four decades. It's not just that the PML-N will be heading a minority government at the centre; there will also be a coalition government in Punjab. The party has been able to muster a majority in the provincial assembly after winning over the loyalty of a number of independents.

It was not an auspicious start for the new Punjab Assembly session, with a huge police force deployed outside the building on the lookout for some PTI members, including the opposition candidate for chief minister, who is wanted in several cases. Aslam Iqbal and several other PTI members won the elections while in hiding.

With the police chasing him, Iqbal could not file his nomination papers, and the PTI-backed independents, who have joined the Sunni Ittehad Council, had to name another candidate for the post at the last minute. Meanwhile, the party has still not received its share of reserved seats for women and religious minorities. The group at

the end boycotted the election, allowing Maryam Nawaz to get elected unopposed as the first woman chief minister in Pakistan.

Maryam has been associated with the PML-N for many years, largely working behind the scenes before actively joining politics in her father's third term. Her role became more prominent after Sharif's ouster from power in 2017 and his conviction. She rapidly rose in the party's hierarchy. The 'talented' daughter was appointed vice president over and above the senior leaders of the party.

Maryam had also been convicted in the Panama case and sent to jail briefly raising her stakes as heir apparent. The episode catapulted her onto the national political stage. She became the face of resistance with her powerful anti-establishment speeches. Her rallies drew large crowds that helped to revitalise the party. Her role was also a huge departure from the party's conservative culture that discouraged putting women in leadership positions. But that charisma was soon lost as her speeches lacked sub-

stance. Meanwhile, her appointment as the party's senior vice president and chief organiser, which virtually made her the third most powerful person in the PML-N hierarchy after her father and uncle, has proved divisive.

Many senior party leaders openly expressed reservations over her premature elevation. Most prominent among them was Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, one of the most senior PML-N leaders and former federal interior minister, who left the party over the issue. The most recent one to exit the party is former prime minister and the PML-N's senior vice president Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. He also quit the party after being superseded by the much junior daughter of the party leader.

It has been very obvious that the family comes first in order to maintain its dynastic hold over the party and national power politics. It is not surprising that the party's mass support base has dwindled over the years, with no induction of new blood from outside the family.

While support from

the security establishment may have helped the dynasty return to power, it can't remain propped up for long without delivering on good governance and addressing the grave challenges faced by the country. The elections, though rigged, must come as a wake-up call for dynastic politics. Indeed, Maryam's inaugural speech in the assembly, though unnecessarily long, seemed well-prepared signifying her government's human development priorities.

There was more about her government's future plans than lamenting what had happened in the past. She also called for reconciliation with the opposition, but with the denial of democratic rights these are just hollow words signifying nothing. Punjab has the largest number of political prisoners.

She also talked about women's rights but forgot to mention female political prisoners languishing in jails for months without charge. If Pakistan's first woman chief minister wants a new beginning she must start with the release of political prisoners and bring an end to human right violations.

Hawks in charge

Mahir Ali

Last Sunday, Aaron Bushnell, a 25-year-old senior airman in the US Air Force, set up a video stream and, outside the Israeli embassy in Washington, poured an inflammable liquid over himself and self-ignited, yelling "free Palestine".

In a video posted on social media shortly before, he had declared that he would "no longer be complicit in genocide", adding: "I am about to engage in an extreme act of protest but compared to what people have been experiencing in Palestine at the hands of their colonisers, it's not extreme at all. This is what our ruling class has decided will be normal."

His last Facebook post says: "Many of us like to ask ourselves, 'What would I do if I was alive during slavery? Or the Jim Crow South? Or apartheid? What would I do if my country was committing genocide?' The answer is, you're doing it. Right now."

Bushnell died seven hours after US Secret Service agents doused his flames. This tragedy might have been avoided if he had deemed anti-war activism more effective than martyrdom. Mainstream American media outlets seem reluctant to point out the parallel with Norman Morrison who, almost six decades ago, self-immolated outside the Pentagon.

He was immortalised by the late British poet Adrian Mitchell, who noted (in part): "He did it in Washington where everyone could see/ because/ people were being set on fire/ in the dark corners of Vietnam where nobody could see... He simply burned away his clothes,/ his passport, his pink-tinted skin,/ put on a new skin of flame/ and became/ Vietnamese."

Bushnell's 'new skin of flame' turned him into a Palestinian in Gaza, where infants who survive the incendiary Israeli onslaught are dying of starvation. To Joe Biden, the unfolding genocide is merely 'over the top'. He faced a potential reckoning yesterday in the Democratic Party primary in Michigan, where influential Democrats — from Arab and Muslim legislators to a variety of trade unions and progressives, including some Jews — have been demanding that the administration distance itself from Israel.

But even in the unlikely event that the 'uncommitted' votes trump the Biden partisans, it is unlikely that the self-proclaimed Zionist in the White House will shift his stance — which routinely involves mildly berating the Netanyahu regime for its indiscriminate slaughter while steadily supplying the weapons of mass slaughter and destruction.

There are obviously some differences with the other proxy war the US is engaged in — the one in Ukraine, against Russia, which had been brewing for years before Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion two years ago — albeit one in which the civilian death toll, deplorable at any level, is considerably lower than what Israel has managed to achieve in just five months.

If anyone assumed that Ukraine would have automatically empathised with the Palestinians, they would have been wrong. The appeal of Israel's ethno-nationalist proclivities and its genocidal tendencies is strong, particularly among neo-Nazis whose pivotal role in Ukraine's military and civilian establishment over the past 30 years tends to be underplayed by those who seek to portray Kyiv as a democratic bulwark against authoritarianism.

Putin, mind you, isn't just an authoritarian. His murderous tendencies have been evident since long before the West decided he was no longer a viable partner for Nato and its ilk. His regime's brutality in Chechnya could be ignored as a part of the spurious 'war on terror', but the US had its eyes on Georgia and Ukraine as Nato recruits, after exiting the Cold War military alliance to Russia's periphery — in violation of verbal promises that Mikhail Gorbachev naively trusted.

Nonetheless, there was no immediate provocation that pushed Putin into a war of attrition two years ago. His immediate goals — capturing Kyiv, for instance — proved elusive. Every arm of government has been deeply corrupted in the past three decades, and Moscow's military strength fell short of the Kremlin's expectations, thankfully. The robust resistance that Ukrainian forces put up restricted Russian advances. But last year's much ballyhooed counteroffensive was a flop.

Despite the CIA being entangled in Ukraine's security structure for 30 years, and particularly profoundly since the troubling events of 2014, Russia lately appears to have gained the upper hand. Halting the spiral would require compromise on both sides, but diplomacy is not a part of the picture at this point.

Waiting for Putin to kick the bucket, or for his regime to fold by other means, is not a viable strategy. But arming Kyiv in the expectation that Russia will eventually halt its 'special military operation' is equally delusional.

If Israel and Hamas can negotiate, there's no reason why Moscow and Kyiv cannot — except for the American hawks standing in the way.

Paper cuts deep

Shahzad Sharjeel

Pakistan, Palestine, and South Africa have much in common. The Indian subcontinent's division, which gave birth to Pakistan, was not meant to occur until a year later. Why our 'freedom' was advanced by a year is a subject for another piece. We could be the precedent that paved the way for the creation of Israel in 1948.

All three countries constantly face existential threats. In South Africa's case, it was the sagacity of Madiba, as Nelson Mandela is lovingly referred to by his countrymen, that prevented the country from sliding into chaos. Throughout their existence, it is mainly the US-led Western 'support' that props up Pakistan and Israel to the detriment of the Palestinians in the latter's case.

The biases of Pakistan Studies notwithstanding, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, an icon of the Freedom Movement, had his start in South Africa. Jinnah and Gandhi were lawyers and both wore peculiar spectacles; the similarity comes to a halt there. Nelson Mandela and Gandhi both spent considerable time in colonialists' jails. Pakistan and Israel are the only two countries founded and, dare one say, floundering on ideology.

Among their legacies, important public figures leave behind papers and personal effects. We are not referring to the parchment made of wooden pulp per se or heirlooms valued for material reasons. Today, the Cambridge system generation's first encounter with 'papers' comes with the prefix 'past'. In the 1980s, the Matric brigade blamed every flunked subject, sometimes an entire academic year, on A.U. Khan's 'Guess Papers' for

miserably failing to live up to the promise in the title.

My first encounter with a more serious side to papers, which usually constitute unpublished musings and private missives, concerned Muhammad Ali Jinnah's papers. A very bushy-browed and nattily attired Zawwar Zaidi was their editor. Yes, the same person who, as an octogenarian, was thrown out of his official residence as the gravitas associated with the founder, including, of course, the editor of his papers. Dr Zaidi had given up his lifelong career at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, to edit the Jinnah Papers. Ironically, SOAS retained his office for as long as he lived.

Universities, libraries, think tanks, museums, and private trusts the world over vie with each other to attain and share the contents of famous personalities' papers with the public. Most authors and public figures entrust their papers to these entities way before their careers plateau. Governments allow generous tax breaks in return. Franklin Roosevelt caused a rethink in the Internal Revenue Service as he claimed a tax break running into millions of dollars in return for the rights to his papers to a university. Since then, the amount for tax breaks has been capped. The role of the printed word and papers in the lives of public office holders is again a topic for another day; in our part of the world, it is unfortunately restricted to cheque books and controlling newsprint.

Primarily driven by poverty and illiteracy, research, writing, and reading have not caught the nation's fantasy.

Publications that are considered commercial successes and boast of running the 20th edition have sold only 10,000 copies, as each print run is only 500 copies. Some publishers now run editions of 300 copies only.

In the age of AI and digitisation, when hardly anyone puts the proverbial pen to paper, researchers and biographers have their work cut out for them. From Benazir Bhutto's BlackBerrys to Imran Khan's smartphones, not even the state sleuths could find them, let alone lesser mortals like gumshoe hacks. One must, however, give the devil its due, for we would not have the likes of the Panama Papers if it were not for technological advancement. As one former prime minister can attest, paper cuts can be deep.

Going back to the trio of the subcontinent, Palestine, and South Africa, of late, Makaziwe Mandela, Madiba's daughter, has been trying to auction off his personal effects to construct a memorial park near his burial site. A South African court initially issued an injunction against it, but later, the high court in Pretoria allowed it. If the auction goes ahead, the next best thing would be for a wealthy individual or a foundation to buy and gift the great man's effects to the people of Palestine. South Africa is the only country to have shown the courage to take Israel to the International Court of Justice over genocide in Gaza.

The Palestinians can return Madiba's effects to the South Africans as a gesture of gratitude. This will merge Mandela's legacy and the Palestinians' indomitable spirit forever.



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah chairs a meeting to review the Law and Order situation, held at CM House in Karachi.

CM for launching joint operation against dacoits, street crime, mafia

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday directed the police and other Law enforcement agencies to improve law and order situation in the province with launching of joint operation against dacoits in Kacha areas, drug mafia and street criminals in the cities.

He issued the directives while chairing first meeting regarding law and order situation in Sindh here at CM House.

Sindh Chief Secretary Fakhre Alam, Principal Secretary Agha Wasif, DG

Rangers Sindh Major General Azhar Waqas, Inspector General Police Riffat Mukhtar, Additional IG Karachi Khadim Hussain Rind, Commissioner Saleem Rajput, all DIGs of Karachi Region were present in the meeting while DIGs of other Divisions attended the meeting via video link.

Addressing the meeting, the chief minister said he was not satisfied with the prevailing law and order and street crime situation in the province.

He said law and order situation in Sindh's Kacha area was deteriorated since long time and there was need of giving special focus to improve the situation by eliminating dacoits from these areas so that people could be secured and they could live a peaceful life.

The chief minister said after formation of all provincial governments, an operation would be launched in Kacha areas of Sukkur and Larkana Divisions with coordination of Punjab and Balochistan governments.

As far as drug peddling is concerned, his policy is clear, he said and added the Police and

Jamal Shah visits Urdu Science Board, reviews literary activities

LAHORE (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Syed Jamal Shah paid a visit to the Urdu Science Board (USB) here on Wednesday. Director of Urdu Science Board Zia Ullah Khan Toru with other officials welcomed the minister.

During a meeting chaired by Minister Syed Jamal Shah, Director Ziaullah Khan Toru briefed about the board's objectives, performance, literary activities and future plans.

Zia Ullah Khan Toru said under the guidance of the federal minister, secretary and director general National Language Promotion Department took steps to enhance the institution's position and address challenges.

Addressing the gathering, Jamal Shah stressed the importance of promoting children's folk literature in national languages. Commending the Urdu Science Board's achievements, he underscored the necessity of furthering the

publication of quality books. He expressed the need to encourage the younger generation to contribute to literature in their native languages.

Jamal Shah remarked that national academic and literary organizations were pillars and adornments of society. As a part of the visit, the minister explored the library and Urdu Science Kitab Ghar.

Later on, he planted a sapling on the board's lawn, symbolizing a commitment to growth and sustainability.

Maryam Nawaz gives task of one month for cleanliness in the province

LAHORE (Online): Newly elected Chief Minister (CM) Punjab Maryam Nawaz has directed district administration and the respective institutions to ensure cleanliness across the province.

She presided over a meeting related to "Suthra Punjab" in CM secretariat Lahore Wednesday.

CM Maryam Nawaz while giving task of cleaning rubbish and waste material in Punjab within month said time

of one month is given and then I will see where it was implemented and where it was not implemented.

Maryam Nawaz while issuing directive to district administration and respective institutions said people should get rid of broken streets, filthy water standing on roads and overflowing gutter.

She travelled from Jati Umra to office like a common citizen. On here directives traffic was not stopped on her way.



LAHORE: Director Urdu Science Board Lahore Ziaullah Khan giving a briefing to caretaker Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Jamal Shah.

IGP Sindh chairs crucial meeting to enhance security measures

KARACHI (APP): Under the leadership of IGP Sindh, Riffat Mukhtar Raja, a significant meeting was convened at the Central Police Office (CPO) in Karachi, focusing on the prevailing law and order situation in the province and subsequent police actions.

In attendance were Additional IGP Karachi, DIGs from various ranges, Special Branch officials, and Zonal DIGs.

Addressing the meeting, the IGP emphasized the importance of implementing operational directives issued by the newly elected chief minister of Sindh to ensure peace and security across the province. He stressed the

need for further directives to solidify the execution of operational measures.

The directive from the chief minister mandates stringent and organized actions against street crimes and rural area criminal activities.

The IGP urged all district officers to bolster their police station deployments and intensify patrolling in streets, markets, and neighbourhoods to instil a greater sense of security among citizens.

Riffat Mukhtar Raja underscored the pivotal role of law enforcement agencies as the focal point for public hopes and attention in matters concerning peace, security, and protection.

DC reviews cleanliness arrangements

LAHORE (APP): Implementation of the vision of a neat and clean Punjab, initiated by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, has begun.

Lahore Deputy Commissioner Rafia Haider made a sudden visit to Outfall Road here on Wednesday and assessed cleanliness and maintenance arrangements. The presence of Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) staff in the field was also checked.

The DC said strict action would be taken against supervisors in case of field workers' absence from duty. All temporary waste collection points would be maintained waste-free on a daily basis, he added. It was further emphasised that Lahore is the heart of Pakistan.



CHARSADA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Haji Ghulam Ali offering Fateha on the sad demise of martyred SP Ejaz Khan during his visit to Mardan.

Projects of Punjab Human Capital Investment reviewed in meeting

BAHAWALPUR (APP): A meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held to review the Punjab Human Capital Investment Project under the chair of Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Farooq Qamar.

The meeting included briefings on the progress and promotion of the Health, Education, and Empowerment Program successfully ongoing in 12 selected districts of Southern Punjab. The program aims to improve healthcare, economic well-being and standard primary education initiated by the Punjab government.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Director Development Faisal Shahzad along with

officers from relevant departments. Emphasizing effective measures for providing facilities for women's better health throughout the district under the umbrella of the Punjab Human Capital Investment Project, the Additional Deputy Commissioner urged officers of relevant departments to ensure transparency for the success of the program.

Deputy Director Development Faisal Shahzad mentioned that under the Health, Education, and Empowerment Program, banners, streamers, brochures, and other promotional materials have been provided to relevant institutions for public awareness.

Governor condoles with family of martyred Ejaz Khan

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Haji Ghulam Ali on Wednesday went to the house of martyred Superintendent Police, Ejaz Khan in Sherpao and expressed condolence to his family members.

Governor offered fateha and prayed to rest the departed soul in eternal abode with peace.

He said that the nation is proud of the sacrifices offered by KP police for the defense and sovereignty of the motherland.

He added that sacrifices offered by police would not go in vain and always be remembered.

Later, he visited the Umerzai, district of Charsadda and met with family members of a renowned religious scholar, late Moulana Subhanullah.

He prayed to rest the departed soul in peace and grant courage to family members to bear the irreparable loss with patience.

Durrani says: JUIF to boycott election of KP CM, assembly Speaker, Dy Speaker

PESHAWAR (APP): JUIF leader and former opposition leader in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Akram Durrani on Wednesday said that his party members would not take part in the election of speaker and deputy speaker of the provincial assembly and the chief minister.

Addressing a news conference here after taking an oath of the house, he said the party would sit in the opposition in National and provincial assemblies, adding that JUIF would not be part of any strategy of the PMLN and PPP.

Criticizing the situation during the oath-

taking in the assembly here, he said that for the first time in the province, there was an unprecedented situation. Despite political and ideological differences in the past, there was respect for others which was not seen on the first day of the assembly proceeding.

"Today, the assembly was presenting the picture of a bus stand or a market," he deplored.

He said the house was disrespected as much so that no one could even think of coming to assembly. Durrani predicted more chaos and unrest in the province in the coming day.



KARACHI: Huge fire flames and dark smoke rise from burning bushes after fire broke out incident due to unknown reasons as the fire brigade officials are busy in extinguishing fire, located on Korangi Crossing area.

LHC dismisses contempt of court plea against RO filed by PTI backed candidate

LAHORE (Online): Lahore High Court (LHC) has dismissed contempt of court petition filed by PTI backed candidate Suleman Akram Raja against Returning Officer (RO) of NA-128.

Justice Baqar Ali Najafi announced reserved judgment regarding petition of Suleman Akram Raja.

The court while announcing reserved judgment dismissed

Suleman Akram Raja petition declaring it non-maintainable.

It is pertinent to mention here LHC had reserved judgment on contempt of court plea of Suleman Akram Raja on February 21 after hearing arguments.

The petitioner said that RO had not given notice on the occasion of preparation of form 48 despite assurance.

59 criminals arrested with drugs, weapons

MULTAN (APP): Police claimed on Wednesday that 59 criminals were arrested and recovered drugs, illegal weapons from their possession during a crackdown launched across the district in the last 24 hours.

In line with special directives of the City Police Officer (CPO) Sadiq Ali, the police launched a crackdown against criminals and arrested ten drug peddlers besides recovering 105 litres liquor, three bottles of imported wine, and Hashish from their possession. The police have also arrested three illegal weapon holders and recovered three pistols and rounds from them. Meanwhile, ten proclaimed offenders were apprehended who were wanted to police in different cases of dacoity, robbery, theft, and other crimes while seven court absconders were also held by the police. The police arrested seven other outlaws for stealing electricity through direct wires and 22 kite sellers with 2034 kites and chemical thread.

PML-N Ulema wing stresses unity, respect for democratic norms

LAHORE (APP): Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad, general secretary of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Ulema and Mashaikh Wing, has commended Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's recent gesture of goodwill towards opposition leader.

He hailed her visit as a milestone in Punjab's political history, underscoring the importance of embracing

democratic norms for progress. Amjad emphasised the significance of respecting the public mandate and urged political adversaries to refrain from instigating chaos.

In a statement, issued on Wednesday, Amjad urged members of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to accept the outcome of elections gracefully, stressing constructive criticism as a cornerstone of both Islamic and democratic societies.

Azma highlights Punjab govt's welfare plans

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Azma Bukhari said on Wednesday Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's politics would die down with the performance of Maryam Nawaz's government.

Speaking to the media, she said the new Punjab government was set to announce various development projects for public convenience. She said CM Maryam Nawaz held meetings shortly after taking the oath of office, focusing on improved healthcare facilities, the clean Punjab programme, and much more.

The PML-N leader

highlighted that village cleanliness project, with a deadline set by the chief minister is currently under way. She said the Punjab government would accomplish unfinished works and projects left incomplete by the previous administrations.

Azma said the government would deliver dedicated hampers with sufficient quantities of essential items including sugar, flour and other to the doorsteps of deserving individuals during Ramadan. She promised that a proper mechanism for the purpose would be announced later.

LHC dismisses Salman Akram's contempt plea against RO

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday dismissed a contempt petition, filed by Salman Akram Raja, an independent candidate, against the returning officer of NA-128 constituency, after declaring it not maintainable. Justice Ali Baqar Najafi announced the reserved verdict on a petition, filed by Salman Akram Raja. The court had reserved its verdict on February 21, after hearing arguments of the parties.

Salman Akram had submitted that the returning officer had assured of issuing notice to him before preparation of form 48. However, despite the assurance, the returning officer did not issue any notice before preparation of form 48, he added. He pleaded with the court to initiate contempt proceedings against the returning officer.

UAJK, P&D Department forge MoU for strategic policy research

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) and the Planning and Development (P&D) Department of the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (GOAJK) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote evidence-based research and offering crucial insights for policymakers.

The said collaboration was formalized through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here on Wednesday.

The MoU was signed at the City Campus which

in the presence of dignitaries, including Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi and Additional Chief Secretary (Development) GoAJK, Midhat Shehzad, alongside other distinguished officials from both the government and UAJK.

Representing their respective institutions, Secretary of Planning and Development, Mr. Amir Latif Awan and Director of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC), UAJK, Dr. Rauf Ahmed Janjua formally executed the signing of the MoU.

PFA takes action against five food business points

LAHORE (APP): The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) imposed the emergency prohibition orders (EPOs) on five food points and penalised 13 eateries with Rs 327,000 cumulative fine during an inspection drive in Gawalmandi, Wagha Town and on Sheikhpura Road.

The food safety teams visited several points to ensure provision of healthy, hygienic and adulteration-free food to

consumers. He said that the raiding teams thoroughly inspected the production area, kitchen premises, food quality parameters and safety standards in a daylong operation. The authority stopped production of five food points including meat processing units and restaurants by imposing emergency prohibition orders till further orders. He said the food authority took action over poor storage.



PESHAWAR: Activists of Awami National Party (ANP) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, outside Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Peshawar.

Unlocking 5G potential: Huawei's Li Peng highlights commercialization of 5.5G

ISLAMABAD (APP): At the 5G beyond Growth Summit hosted by Huawei at MWC Barcelona 2024, Li Peng, Huawei's Corporate Senior Vice President and President of ICT Sales & Service, discussed the path to business success in 5G and the potential of 5.5G commercialization.

The advent of 5G networks has emerged as a powerful catalyst for innovation in the global mobile industry. "5G is on the right path to business success," said Li. 5G began commercialization in 2019, and over the past five years, it has already gained 1.5 billion 5G users around the world. It took nine years for 4G to make this happen said a news release received here on Wednesday.

Currently, 20% of global mobile subscribers are using 5G. These users generate 30% of all mobile traffic and contribute to 40% of mobile service revenue.

Li explained, "5.5G is entering commercial use in 2024, and as 5.5G AI, and cloud converge, carriers can unlock the potential of new applications and capabilities."

He went on to say that carriers around the world should focus on high-quality networking, multi-dimensional monetization,

emerging services, and generative AI to grasp these opportunities.

Mobile users have proven willing to purchase experience upgrades for their mobile packages if their networks are high enough quality. The traffic generated by these users is, therefore, expected to significantly increase, allowing carriers to maximize the value of traffic. This has led to more and more carriers proposing strategic goals that include the construction of high-quality 5G networks.

Operators can provide tailored solutions with new differentiated services leveraging 5G and edge to diverse industries and enterprises. Tailoring solutions to meet the specific needs of diverse industries and enterprises will help align costs with revenues. Some carriers in the Middle East, for example, have already deployed Massive MIMO networks, and the optimal experience delivered by these networks has made the 5G FWA rollout a success. Currently, 5G FWA has connected nearly 3 million households, making it a powerful engine of revenue growth for carriers. More than 20% of global 5G carriers have already adopted speed-tiered pricing models.



ISLAMABAD: Meeting with Provincial Government Balochistan, 28-02-24, regarding conduct of Agricultural Census 2024 under the chair of Muhammad Sarwar Gondal, (SI) Member (SS/RM).

Gondal chairs meeting to engage the stakeholders in planning of 7th Agricultural Census

Independent Report
QUETTA: A meeting chaired by Member (Support Services / IT), Mr. Muhammad Sarwar Gondal was held at PBS Provincial Office Quetta to engage the stakeholders in planning of 7th Agricultural Census.

The 7th Agricultural Census will be conducted in the country after 13 years of the 6th Agricultural Census conducted in 2010. 9727 SMS Gateway has been activated for 7th Agricultural Census.

Balochistan has 6223 rural Mouzas/Villages/

villages in Balochistan will be covered in 7th Agricultural Census.

Total 933 supervisors and enumerators have been provided by the Balochistan government for enumeration and supervision of the field operation. Total 34 Census Support Centres at each district have been established throughout the province. To enumerate the big holdings (NCH), Process Re-engineering plan has been devised. "Three in One" approach to implement the "Integrated Digital Count" strategy for 7th Agricultural

Census of Pakistan in 2024. The field operation will be conducted in September-October 2024. Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), considering international best practices under the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (UNFAO) guidelines, has decided to integrate Agricultural, Livestock, and Agricultural Machinery Censuses, to cover three in one go as 7th Agricultural Census. Information that will be collected through Agricultural Census will be utilized for evidence-based policy making therefore,

efficient and effective management of human and financial resources are crucial for 7th Agricultural Census. PBS has established 157 Agricultural Census Support Centers for seamless execution and management of field operations throughout the country. Provincial Stakeholders Viz. Board of Revenue, Agricultural (Extension), Livestock, Balochistan Bureau of Statistics, Crop Reporting Services, Education departments will support for Field Operation, Supervision and Monitoring. Budget of Rs 650 million is estimated for 7th Agricultural Census.

Reservoir filling of SK hydropower project begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Suki Kinari Hydropower Project started successfully on Wednesday, marking the completion of another significant milestone and laying a solid foundation for the scheduled power generation target of the Project.

According to the press statement issued here on Wednesday, the project has mainly been invested by China Gezhouba Group Overseas Investment Company, belonging to China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC).

The important moment of reservoir filling was witnessed by owners of S K Project Company, engineers, personnel, and other construction participants. The Dam of the Project is an asphalt concrete core-wall rockfill dam with a crest elevation of 2,239.5 meters, a maximum height of 54.5

meters, a crest width of 10 meters, a length of 258 meters, and a total backfill volume of about 1.9 million cubic meters, the statement added.

During construction, S K Project Company efficiently coordinated all construction participants, optimized the design schemes, accelerated the construction period, and achieved the dam capping target on May 2023 as scheduled.

After capping, S K Project Company led the relating parties in the commissioning of M&E work, reservoir area slope support and other related work, and finally starts the reservoir filling as scheduled with several months' efforts.

The Project is included in the first batch of priority projects list of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which serves as the first step of the "Belt and Road".

PTCL Group announces Shog TV Box Powered by Android TV at Mobile World Congress

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD / BARCELONA: Pakistan's largest telecommunications and integrated ICT services provider, PTCL Group, is set to launch in Pakistan a

formative user experience. Designed for optimum convenience and seamless control, the new Android TV Set-top Box will offer the ultimate entertainment experience. With pre-in-



cutting-edge Shog TV Set-top Box powered by Android TV, to transform the TV viewing experience for its customers. It was announced by the President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Hatem Bamatraf, and Karen Teo, VP Android Partnerships APAC, Google during Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2024 in Barcelona, Spain. The Android TV Set-top Box will feature multiple Google apps, including the Play Store, in addition to a sleek User Interface (UI) and captivating graphics to provide a trans-

stalled apps like YouTube and Netflix, users will be able to have an immersive big-screen experience with their favourite entertainment content. Users will be able to smoothly navigate between TV and other compatible Android apps to make the most of their leisure time.

Commenting on the development, President and Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G Hatem Bamatraf said, "I am thrilled by the launch of this innovative Shog TV Box powered by Android TV in Pakistan in collaboration with Google."

Maladministration in FBR Business community looks towards FTO for fair treatment

Independent Report
KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has proposed that the office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) should be utilized to deal with maladministration at Federal

& adjudication powers should be the guiding principles to reform FBR to meet the requirements of the businesses and the economy alike.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh emphasized that FTO Board of Revenue (FBR) to create a fair, corruption-free and broadened taxation system. Business Community looks towards FTO for fair treatment at the hands of tax machinery, he added.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh noted that broadening of the tax base, simplification of the taxation system and the separation of tax collection should be enabled to have advisors and technocrats on board from all sectors of the economy to have an inclusive and effective reform agenda. He also acknowledged thousands of fair, swift, objective and cost-free resolutions of taxation and customs disputes provided to the aggrieved parties by the office of FTO.

Opening of D. Watson Superstore in Swat lauded

ISLAMABAD (INP): Commissioner Malakand, Saqib Raza Aslam has lauded the D. Watson Group for opening its new superstore in Swat and hoped that it would provide a good shopping experience to the consumers, create jobs in the area, and make a useful contribution to the local economy.

Speaking as Chief Guest of the grand opening ceremony of D. Watson Superstore, Commissioner Malakand said that Swat was a very friendly trading center and the people of the area warmly welcome the tourists.

Diامر Basha Dam WAPDA sings contract worth Rs 46.5 mln with QST for digitization of rock carvings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has signed a contract worth Rs. 46.5 million with Quality Solutions Technologies (QST) (Pvt) Ltd for consultancy services for the digitization of significant rock carvings in the direct area of impact of the Diامر Basha Dam, along with modelling and preparation of data for 3D printing.

The major scope of services included site documentation through terrestrial scanners and consolidation as well as archiving and modelling of scanned data for various applications. The duration of the contract is eight months, according to a news release issued here on Wednesday.

In a ceremony held the other day, General Manager Diامر Basha Dam Project (WAPDA) Nazakat Hussain and Director Business Development Quality Solutions Saad Ahmed

Khan signed the agreement on behalf of their organizations.

Member (Water) WAPDA Jawaid Akhtar Latif, CEO Diامر Basha Dam Company Amir Bashir Chaudhry, Advisor WAPDA Cultural Heritage Management Feryal Ali Gauhar and Chief Engineer (Contracts) Diامر Basha Dam Project Abdur Rashid were also present on the occasion. Diامر Basha Dam Project is being constructed in Northern Pakistan.

Member (Water) WAPDA Jawaid Akhtar Latif, CEO Diامر Basha Dam Company Amir Bashir Chaudhry, Advisor WAPDA Cultural Heritage Management Feryal Ali Gauhar and Chief Engineer (Contracts) Diامر Basha Dam Project Abdur Rashid were also present on the occasion. Diامر Basha Dam Project is being constructed in Northern Pakistan.



GILGIT: Worker busy in connecting parts of the traditional fire stove at his workplace.

NUST, IPO-Pakistan hold seminar on IP Rights

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a bid to highlight the pivotal role of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in fostering innovation, business growth, and empowerment, National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and IPO-Pakistan on Wednesday jointly organized a seminar titled "Intellectual Property as Empowerment through Knowledge and Wealth Creation".

The seminar was organized by the Innovation and Commercialization Office NUST (ICON), and attended by Air Vice Marshal @ Dr Rizwan Riaz, General Manager of Intellectual Property Rights & Legal Affairs Ms. Eram Zaidi, Director of Innovation & Commercialization Ms. Sana Maqbool, and Manager of IP & Legal Affairs Shahbaz Ahmed, alongside the Chair and his team from IPO-Pakistan, said a news release. Chair IPO-Pakistan Ambassador @ Farukh Amil led the discourse, focusing on various dimensions of IPRs, encompassing innovation, business strategies, trademarks, copyrights, patents, and technological advancements. The session aimed to elucidate the importance of Intellectual Property in fostering business growth, generating employment opportunities.

Opposition should cooperate with new govt for political stability: Mian Zahid

KARACHI (INP): Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain has said that it seems that opposition was not ready to play a constructive role.

In a statement issued here on Wednesday, he said that it will be good if a person holding a constitutional position avoids negative actions in politics for the sake of the interests of a political party.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the new government should be allowed to work as it will be difficult for it to manage the opposition or the economy at the same time.

It seems that the opposition was not ready to play a positive role in the national interest and that it wants to see the country in a political and economic crisis, he added. The business leader said that a letter to the IMF was an attempt in the said direction, while not calling the meeting of the National Assembly by the President was also equivalent to not accepting the system.

Utilize full potential of the mining sector for economic growth. Atif Ikram Sheik

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh said Pakistan's mineral sector, valued in billions of dollars. Himalayan pink salt was the identity of Pakistan all over the world and its export in international markets will be a welcome sign. He was talking to a delegation of Miracle Salt Collective Inc which called on Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI & Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Chairman FPCCI Capital Office, Mr. Ch Naseer Chairman Building Association Islamabad is

also present on this occasion. During the meeting the President FPCCI Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh hoped that the salt export from the country would increase after the signing of joint venture between Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) and Miracle Salt and it will also further strengthen the trade ties with the US. "This joint venture is a manifestation of the fact that Pakistan has the most suitable destination for foreign investment. "The scope of our endeavors go beyond the pink rock salt project. We should utilize the full potential of the mining sector

to become a new driver of Pakistan's economic growth," he added.

Atif Ikram Sheikh President FPCCI requested to Government to impose minimum price on export salt and also put ban on Salt Raw Stone to export, should be add value-added for export to protect local industry and make employment. Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Chairman FPCCI Capital Office said that Pakistan possesses one of the world's largest salt deposits stretching over 350 km area lying between Jhelum and Kohat districts.



ISLAMABAD: Labourer busy displaying tuff tiles at IJP Road in the Federal Capital.

Mobilink Bank's "Change to Sustain" program drives sustainability with Rs.2.5bln

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank, a leader in digital financial services, launched its sustainability program, "Change to Sustain," signaling a step forward in its journey towards operational transformation and promoting environmental stewardship within the banking sector. Fueling this initiative is the strategic allocation of PKR 2.5 billion towards renewable energy financing. Embedded with its sustainability strategy, fifteen (15) Mobilink Bank branches are slated to undergo solarization, harnessing solar energy and reducing carbon emissions. Across all 109 nationwide branches, the Bank will also spearhead a large-scale tree plantation drive, contributing to preserving local ecosystems and biodiversity. These initia-

tives underscore Mobilink Bank's dedication to driving positive environmental impact while reinforcing its position as a responsible leader in the industry.

VEON is a global digital operator that provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of world's population.

The "Change to Sustain" initiative is a concerted effort to drive sustainability practices by integrating Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles into the Bank's operations. The initiative strives to promote green business practices, advocate for climate action, raise awareness about sustainability issues, empower women-led climate resilience solutions.

Gold rates decrease by Rs.1,100 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola 24 karat gold decreased by Rs1,100 and was sold at Rs 214,800 on Wednesday compared to its sale at Rs 215,900 on the last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs944 to Rs184,156 from Rs185,100 whereas the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs168,810 from Rs169,674, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

NCP items worth over Rs 11m seized

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): In continuation of operations against smuggling of non custom paid (NCP) items, the district police Wednesday recovered NCP diesel and other items worth Rs 11 million during different action. According to police spokesman, a team of Yarik police led by SDPO Saddar Circle Muhammad Saleem Baloch along with SHO Khubab Wali Baloch, during patrolling, stopped a bus bearing registration number (BSA-773) for checking and recovered NCP items including 90 sacks of Iranian plastic bags, 90 sacks of dry milk.

'Urgent' for G7 to seize Russian profits for Ukraine: Yellen

Monitoring Desk
SAO PAULO: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Tuesday it was urgent for G7 nations to jointly seize profits from frozen Russian assets and redirect them to Ukraine, as the group prepared to meet on the issue.

Calls have been mounting in the United States and Europe to set up a fund for Ukraine using billions of dollars in bank accounts, investments and other assets frozen by the West over Russia's 2022 invasion.

"It is necessary and urgent for our coalition to find a way to unlock the value of these immobilized assets to support Ukraine's continued resistance and long-term reconstruction,"

Yellen told journalists in Sao Paulo, Brazil, where she will attend a meeting of G20 finance ministers Wednesday and Thursday.

"There is a strong international-law, economic and moral case for moving forward. This would be a decisive response to Russia's unprecedented threat to global stability. It would make clear that Russia cannot win by prolonging the war and would incentivize it to come to the table to negotiate a just peace with Ukraine."

Yellen urged joint action by the Group of Seven—Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Britain and the United States, plus the European Union—after evaluating the risks, which include triggering fi-

nancial instability.

"The G7 should work together to explore a number of approaches: seizing the assets themselves, using them as collateral to borrow from global markets," she said.

G7 officials say the group is due to meet on the sidelines of the Sao Paulo gathering to discuss support for Ukraine, as its grueling fight against Russia enters its third year.

Ukraine has warned it desperately needs more military and financial assistance, as a fresh \$60 billion US package remains stalled in Congress. That has cast a spotlight on the estimated \$397 billion in Russian assets frozen by the West, ranging from central bank assets to yachts.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks to Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during a visit to Riyadh.

US won't send troops to 'fight in Ukraine'

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The White House said on Tuesday that the United States would not send troops to fight in Ukraine.

President Joe Biden "has been clear that the US will not send troops to fight in Ukraine", National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said in a statement. The statement came after the French president suggested that Western troops could be sent to Ukraine.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller, asked whether the United States could send troops for other purposes such as training, said the Biden administration opposed any deployment to Ukraine.

"We're not sending boots on the ground in Ukraine. The president's been very clear," Miller told reporters.

Meanwhile, President Biden warned top congressional leaders of the dire cost of failing to help Ukraine, as high-stakes talks at the White House ended without a deal.

Biden called the rare Oval Office meeting to persuade Republican House speaker Mike Johnson to unblock vital aid for Kyiv, and avoid a government shutdown at home. The leaders said they were optimistic they could keep the government's lights on, but on Ukraine they remained deadlocked, with Johnson insisting on the need for more border reforms first.

Hamas holds up US airman as 'immortal' after Gaza protest

Monitoring Desk
JERUSALEM: Hamas on Tuesday said a US airman who died after setting himself on fire outside the Israeli embassy in Washington would "remain immortal" for his shocking anti-war protest.

Footage of the self-immolation was widely shared online, and the group said it was "an expression of the growing state of anger among the American people" over the Israeli aggression in Gaza. The airman "will remain immortal in the memory of our Palestinian people and the free people of the world."



U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks during a press conference to highlight her key priorities for the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings, in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

US Army calls Russia 'the enemy'

MOSCOW (Online): The US Army has branded Moscow the "enemy" while promoting a newly-published manual on the Russian military on social media.

The Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate's (CADD) new 280-page manual gives a detailed overview of Russian military strategy and tactics, and tries to predict how the country would conduct itself in future conflicts. The CADD promoted the manual in a post on X (formerly Twitter) on Monday, asking, "Do you know your enemy?"

The primary focus is on Moscow's ground forces, which would be pitted against the US Army in a hypothetical direct war.

The document, known as ATP 7-100.1 and released last week, is part of a series that the US Army Training and Doctrine Command

(TRADOC) has been developing for years. Previous publications provided similar studies of the militaries of other potential near-peer and peer opponents: North Korea, China, and Iran. The materials are not classified and intended for professional US and allied military officers.

With Russia currently involved in the Ukraine conflict, US military researchers stressed that they are still examining data gathered there and would revise their instructions accordingly.

They said it was "too early to assess the structure and equipping of any Russian unit for the next 5 to 10 years" with hostilities still ongoing.

Discussing Russia's relations with the US and its NATO allies, the manual says they are defined "by a perpetual state of competition and self-interest."

At least 31 killed in Mali bus accident, transport ministry says

Monitoring Desk
BAMAKO: At least 31 people were killed in Mali on Tuesday when a bus plunged off a bridge over a river near the western town of Kenieba, the transport ministry said.

The bus had been en route to Burkina Faso when the accident occurred at around 1700 local time, it said, adding Malians and citizens of elsewhere in the West African subregion were among the victims.

"The probable cause was the driver's failure to control the vehicle," it said.

Road accidents are more frequent in West Africa, where public transport is often overloaded and poorly regulated.

Africa accounts for about one quarter of the world's traffic deaths even though the continent has barely 2% of the world's vehicle fleet, UN data showed in 2023.

WHO expresses concern over anticipated Israeli assault on Rafah

RAFAH(Online): The World Health Organization has expressed concern over an anticipated Israeli assault on Rafah. In a social media post, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has expressed apprehensions of a full-scale incursion into Rafah, where over a million people are sheltering in crowded conditions, lacking food, water, medi-

cine. He asked Israel to consider the humanitarian implications and reiterated his call for a ceasefire and peace to prevail.

The President of the United States Joe Biden says Israel is ready to halt its attacks on Gaza during holy month of Ramadan.

In a statement, he expressed hope that the ceasefire deal will be signed next week.

Germany hosts peace talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Monitoring Desk
BERLIN: Germany is hosting two days of peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia five months after Azerbaijan recaptured its Karabakh region from its ethnic Armenian majority, prompting a mass exodus of ethnic Armenians. Azerbaijan has been increasingly hostile to outside involvement in brokering an agreement, with President Ilham Aliyev accusing the United States of jeopardising relations by siding with Armenia.

Hong Kong moves towards enacting tougher security law amid concerns about freedoms

Monitoring Desk
HONG KONG: A public consultation period for a new Hong Kong national security law closes on Wednesday amid concerns that the legislation, which authorities want to put in place soon, will further erode freedoms in the financial hub.

The law, known as Article 23, is aimed at addressing what officials call deficiencies or loopholes in the national security regime, which was bolstered just four years ago by another national security law imposed directly by China.

It will target crimes including treason, theft of state secrets, espionage, sabotage, sedition and "external interference" including from foreign governments. The Hong Kong legislature, which is domi-

nated by pro-Beijing lawmakers, is expected to approve it. The law comes as the former British colony is trying to improve its image, and economy, amid international criticism of a China-led crackdown on freedoms and dissent which has sent many pro-democracy politicians and activists into jail or exile.

Several lawyers and activists say the law criminalises basic human rights such as freedom of expression. "Many of these proposed provisions are vague and criminalize people's peaceful exercises of human rights, including the rights to freedom of association, assembly, expression, and the press," a group of 80 civil society groups, including British-based Hong Kong Watch, wrote in a joint letter.

Gulf nations ban Indian propaganda film 'Article 370' despite Modi's support

Monitoring Desk
NEW DELHI (INP): In an embarrassment for Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gulf countries have enforced a ban on Bollywood film, "Article 370," following its endorsement by Modi. Yami Gautam's movie, named after the Indian Constitution's Article 370, which granted special status to the UN-acknowledged disputed Jammu and Kashmir, explores the BJP's stance on its abrogation in 2019. The ban underscores the film's potential to provoke discussions about the intricate socio-political dynamics of Kashmir.

Macron breaks taboo on Western troops in Ukraine

Monitoring Desk
PARIS/KYIV: French President Emmanuel Macron has smashed a major taboo by floating the possibility of sending Western troops to Ukraine, raising the stakes in a showdown with a nuclear-armed Russia.

Hosting a conference of Euro-peak leaders on Monday night, the French leader refused to rule out the dispatch of Western troops to Ukraine as Russia's invasion stretches into its third year and Kyiv's military campaign appears to be faltering.

"We will do whatever it takes to ensure that Rus-

South Korea birth rate falls to all-time low

Monitoring Desk
SEOUL: South Korea's birth rate fell to a record low last year, the government said on Wednesday, despite having poured billions of dollars into efforts to encourage women to have more children and maintain population stability. The country has one of the world's longest life expectancies and lowest birth rates, a combination that presents a looming demographic challenge.

Neighbouring Japan is grappling with the same issue, and on Tuesday the fast-ageing nation announced that the number of births there had also dropped to a new low in 2023. South Korea's fertility rate — the number of children a woman is expected to have in her lifetime — dropped to 0.72 in 2023, down nearly eight per cent from 2022, according to preliminary data from Statistics Korea. This is far below the 2.1 children needed to maintain the current population of 51 million, which at these rates will nearly halve by the year 2100, experts estimate.

The government has spent vast amounts on trying to encourage more babies, offering cash subsidies, babysitting services and support for infertility treatment. But the birth rate has continued its chronic decline. "The number of newborns, birth rates, and crude birth rates (newborns per 1,000 people) are all at the lowest point since 1970" when data collection began, said Lim Young-il, head of the Population Census Division at Statistics Korea.

US strikes Houthi unmanned vessels, anti-ship missiles, drone

WASHINGTON (INP): US forces struck three unmanned vessels and two cruise missiles inside Yemen and an attack drone over the Red Sea on Monday that posed threat to ships in the area, the military said.

Yemen's Houthis have been targeting shipping for months and their attacks have persisted despite repeated US and British strikes aimed at degrading their ability to threaten a vital global trade route. On Monday's attack, US Central Command (CENTCOM) destroyed "three unmanned surface vessels, two mobile anti-ship cruise missiles, and a one-way attack unmanned aerial vehicle," it said on social media.

"The (vessels) and

(missile) weapons were prepared to launch towards... the Red Sea," CENTCOM said, adding that the drone was already airborne. Those strikes, made between the hours of 4:45 pm and 11:45 pm Sanaa time (1345 GMT to 2045 GMT), were done "in self-defense", it said.

CENTCOM determined that they presented an imminent threat to merchant vessels and to the US Navy ships in the region. Over the weekend, US and British forces carried out strikes against 18 Houthi targets across eight locations in Yemen, including weapons storage facilities, attack drones, air defense systems, radars and a helicopter, according to a joint statement.

Thousands of artists ask Venice Biennale to exclude Israel

Monitoring Desk
ROME: Almost 9,000 people, including artists, curators and museum directors, have signed an online appeal calling for Israel to be excluded from this year's Venice Biennale art fair and accusing the country of genocide in Gaza.

Israel has been facing mounting international criticism, including in the arts world, over its military offensive in the Palestinian enclave. "Any official representation of Israel on the international cultural stage is an endorsement of its policies and of the genocide in Gaza," said the online statement by the Art Not Genocide Alliance (ANGA) collective.

ANGA said the Venice Biennale had previously banned South Africa over its apartheid policy of white minority rule, and excluded Russia after its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Italian Culture Minis-

ter Gennaro Sangiuliano said the appeal was an "unacceptable, as well as shameful... dictat of those who believe they are the custodians of truth, and with arrogance and hatred, think they can threaten freedom of thought and creative expression."

He said in a statement that Israel "not only has the right to express its art, but also the duty to bear witness to its people".

The Venice Biennale press office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Signatories of the appeal include Palestine Museum US director Faisal Saleh, activist US photographer Nan Goldin and British visual artist Jesse Darling, who won last year's Turner Prize.

Dubbed the "Olympics of the art world", the Biennale is one of the main events in the international arts calendar.

Famine 'imminent' in northern Gaza, warns WFP

Monitoring Desk
UNITED NATIONS: Famine is "imminent" in northern Gaza, where no humanitarian group has been able to provide aid since January 23, the World Food Programme warned Tuesday, as Israel wages war on Palestinian militant group Hamas.

With a dire humanitarian emergency unfolding in the Gaza Strip and the main UN aid agency there struggling to cope, other bodies have called for help in reaching the thousands of Palestinians in desperate need.

"If nothing changes, a famine is imminent in northern Gaza," WFP's deputy executive director Carl Skau told the UN Security Council, while his colleague from the UN humanitarian office OCHA, Ramesh Rajasingham, warned of "almost inevitable" widespread starvation.

As aid remains blocked from entering northern Gaza by Israeli forces, and only enters the

rest of the territory in dribs and drabs, UN aid chief Martin Griffiths last week wrote to the Security Council calling on members to act to prohibit "the use of starvation of civilian population as a method of warfare."

"Here we are, at the end of February, with at least 576,000 people in Gaza—one-quarter of the population—one step away from famine, with one in six children under two years of age in northern Gaza suffering from acute malnutrition and wasting," OCHA's Rajasingham said.

Some 97 percent of groundwater in Gaza is "reportedly unfit for human consumption" and agricultural production is beginning to collapse, deputy Maurizio Martina, warned director general of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Aid is ready and waiting at the border, a spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also said Tuesday.

Houthis say they can reassess Red Sea attacks if Israeli 'aggression' stops

Monitoring Desk
LONDON: Yemen's Houthis said on Tuesday they could only reconsider their missile and drone attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea once Israel ends its "aggression" in the Gaza Strip.

Asked if they would halt the attacks if a ceasefire deal is reached, Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam told Reuters the situation would be reassessed if the siege of Gaza ended and humanitarian aid was free to enter.

"There will be no halt to any operations that help Palestinian people except when the Israeli aggression on Gaza and the siege stop," he said.

Shipping risks have escalated due to repeated Houthi strikes in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab Strait since November in what they describe as acts of solidarity with Palestinians against Israel in the Gaza war.

US and British forces have responded with sev-

eral strikes on Houthi facilities but have so far failed to halt the attacks.

Top global container line Maersk on Tuesday told its clients in a statement that they should prepare for disruptions in the Red Sea to last into the second half of the year and to build longer transit times into their supply chain planning.

Seafarers remain in the firing line and have signed agreements to receive double pay when entering the high-risk zones and have the right to refuse to sail on ships passing through the Red Sea.

Galaxy Maritime Ltd, the UK-registered owner of car carrier Galaxy Leader which was hijacked by the Houthis on Nov 19 with its 25 crew members, said on Tuesday that the mariners from Bulgaria, Ukraine, Mexico, Romania and the Philippines had "nothing whatsoever to do with the conflict in the Middle East".



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen attends a joint press conference with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, EU and Canadian leaders, on the second anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

Thousands told to flee homes in Australia amid heat spike, bushfire threat

Monitoring Desk
SYDNEY: Tens of thousands of residents in Australia's southeast were told to evacuate on Wednesday due to an intense heatwave that authorities said could further spread a massive bushfire in Victoria state, which faces its worst conditions in four years.

Extreme fire ratings have been issued for large parts of Victoria with the Wimmera region in the west given a catastrophic ranking, the top warning level. Mildura, a rural city of about 56,000, could touch

45 degree Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit), the Bureau of Meteorology said.

A potential fire impact zone that covers several rural towns has been identified as officials urged around 30,000 residents there to leave their homes by Wednesday morning. "Today will be a very challenging day for firefighters," Jason Heffernan, Chief Officer at Victoria fire department told ABC television. "Today is one of those days when communities may need to take immediate action at very short notice."

Pak Army leading front front in efforts: Rescue operation continues in rain affected Gwadar city & Jiwani, says Jan Achakzai

Independent Report
 QUETTA: The caretaker Provincial Minister for Information, Jan Achakzai has stated that the rescue operation is continued in the rain affected Gwadar city, Jiwani and adjoining areas and the Pak Army is leading from the front in the rescue efforts.

In an official statement issued here on Wednesday, the Pak Army, Pak Navy, Levies force, NDMA, PDMA, GDA and local administration are extending cooperation in the rescue and relief activities.

He said that the rain water is being pumped out from the populous areas.

In this regard, there is shortage of machinery and as such the concerned authorities have been asked to provide suction machinery and motor pumps, he added.

Jan Achakzai said that the NDMA has also provided necessary machines to the Pak Army jawans.

In addition to this, the jawans are busy in providing food, ration and medicines in the affected areas.

The teams of doctors and engineers have been formed to take part in the relief and rehabilitation activities.

The caretaker Minister also said that rescue operation is being conducted under an effective strategy while remaining in contact of all concerned institutions.

He said that the situation is improving gradually as a result of effective rescue operation.

He was optimistic that the situation would be controlled within two and three days.

He mentioned that two out of six link roads have been restored which otherwise were suspended from Gwadar city.

While around 300 people have been shifted to the safer places, Jan Achakzai maintained.

He said that Gwadar has not been declared as calamity hit as yet. However, the damages are being assessed there, but no loss of life has been reported so far, he said.

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QUETTA: Activists of Pashtunkhwa National Awami Party (PKNAP) are holding protest demonstration against alleged rigging in General Election 2024, outside Balochistan Assembly.

Solangi says: Radio Pakistan Academy becomes functional again

ISLAMABAD (APP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi said on Wednesday that Pakistan Broadcasting Academy (PBA) which was a unique training institution for radio programmes had become functional again.

The financial difficulties rendered the academy non-functional, he said while addressing the inauguration ceremony.

Thanking Director General Radio Pakistan and other concerned officials for relaunching Pakistan Broadcasting Academy, the minister said that it was a pleasure to see this academy functioning again today.

He said he learned several languages including Saraiki, Punjabi and especially English with the help of radio.

Today's youth were lucky as modern facilities like internet were not available in the past, Solangi remarked.

"Today radio is providing information to its listeners with modern technology," he said, adding it had become a pedagogy, giving the youth access to training and education.

The minister said that Pakistan Broadcasting Academy was in tune with the modern requirements by engaging the youth of remote areas of Pakistan in its training programs via Zoom.

Thanks to modern technology, one could be part of a radio programme from any part of the world, he said.

The participation of youth from all over Pakistan in the first training program of Radio Pakistan Academy was encouraging, he stated. The minister said that Radio Pakistan staff would also be trained through this academy.

Solangi said that the media had adapted to new revolutions, especially the concept of artificial intelligence.

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HUB: Relatives of victim are blocked road as they are holding protest demonstration against his killing and demanding justice for him, at Eastern Bypass in Hub.

ECP rejects Nawaz plea for re-election in NA-15

ISLAMABAD (Online): Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has dismissed PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif petition seeking nullification of election and re-election in NA-15 Mansehra.

ECP announced decision of election petition filed by Nawaz Sharif in regard to NA-15 Mansehra. Nawaz Sharif was defeated in this constituency.

The ECP has directed Nawaz Sharif to resort to Election Tribunal (ET) besides ordering RO to compile the final result within three days.

Nawaz Sharif had demanded nullification of election in NA-15 and re-polling in the constituency.

Jahangir Jadoon counsel for Nawaz Sharif requested in ECP that election was illegal, unconstitutional and against the election rules.

Member Election Commission (EC) Babar

Hassan Bharwana inquired are you wanting to say that election in entire country was illegal, unconstitutional and rigging stricken.

Counsel for Nawaz Sharif said I am talking ONLY about NA-15.

Later the EC reserved judgment on the application.

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the election petition filed by Nawaz Sharif in respect of NA-15.

At the inception of hearing of petition Barrister Jahangir Jadoon counsel for Nawaz Sharif said report of RO has not been provided so far. He cannot give arguments without reading RO report.

Babar Awan counsel for successful candidate Gustasap Khan said RO report has been received by all. Gustasap Khan won the election with the lead of 25000.

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ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf inaugurating Yadgar-e-Dastoor and Bagh-e-Dastoor in front of Parliament House.

Prevent Israel from unleashing ground offensive on Rafah, Pakistan urges UNSC

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan has called for preventing Israel's planned offensive on Rafah, saying it will further intensify the suffering of the Gaza Palestinians and risks widening the conflict.

"Israel's planned offensive in Rafah must be stopped," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistani to the UN, told the UN Security Council on Tuesday, while underscoring the threat of famine.

The Pakistani envoy also warned against the imminent threat of famine in the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, pointing out Israel's ongoing 5-month genocidal military campaign in Gaza has killed 30,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, and displaced the entire 2.3 million population of Gaza, with half a million people facing starvation. Compounding the already dire situation, he said Israeli forces not only leveled Gaza's cities, they have also brazenly destroyed agricultural land and Gaza's fishing fleet.

Earlier, three United Nations humanitarian officials warned that there is a high risk of conflict-induced famine in the Gaza Strip if the war does not stop soon.

"If nothing is done, we fear widespread famine in Gaza is almost inevitable, and the conflict, which since October has claimed the lives of almost 30,000 people and injured more than 70,000, according to the Ministry of Health in Gaza, will have many more victims," said Ramesh Rajasingham, director of the coordination division in the U.N. humanitarian office.

Rajasingham said at least 576,000 people in Gaza — 25% of the population — are one step away from famine, and practically the entire population is relying on insufficient humanitarian food assistance to survive. "Unfortunately, as grim as the picture we see today, there is every possibility for further deterioration," he said. "Gaza is seeing the worst level of child malnutrition anywhere in the world," said Carl Skau, the World Food Programme's deputy executive director. "One child in every six under the age of 2 is acutely malnourished."

Maurizio Martina, assistant director-general of the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization, explained how the entire food supply chain has been impacted by the war. Farmers have been forced by Israel to evacuate their land or fled shelling that has destroyed crops; cattle and poultry are dying from hunger or killed in bombings; fishing is prohibited; and ground water is contaminated. In his statement, Ambassador Jadoon said, "Israel's indiscriminate killing of civilians; its destruction of civilian objects indispensable for human survival.

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Fatwa by PUC, Dar-ul-Ifta Pakistan Political activities prohibited at Makkah, Madina holy sites

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) and Dar-ul-Ifta Pakistan on Wednesday jointly issued a religious decree (Fatwa) strictly prohibiting political activities, sloganeering, and hoisting of banners or flags, in any form, at the holy sites of Makkah and Madina.

The Fatwa was announced by PUC Chairman and Dar-ul-Ifta Pakistan President Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi along with prominent religious leaders, during a press conference.

Emphasizing the sanctity of holy sites, Ashrafi urged the intending Hajj pilgrims to spend their time there in worshipping and praying to the Almighty instead of indulging in petty political activities.

Expressing concern over attempts by some individuals to display banners and flags at the holy sites, he stressed that such actions were unacceptable and could lead to disturbance of peace in the holy precincts.

He reiterated that adhering to the directives and laws of the Saudi Arabian government was imperative for all visitors and pilgrims, as otherwise they might land into trouble.

Ashrafi highlighted efforts by PUC, International Tazem-e-Harmain-e-Sharifain Council, and Hajj Organizers Association of Pakistan to organize educational sessions for pilgrims across the country. They were also striving to involve representatives from the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah in the training sessions, he added.

He appreciated that all the arrangements made under the Government Hajj Scheme were in accordance with the Saudi instructions, while the private Hajj groups were also following suit. The cooperation of the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, and the Saudi Embassy in Pakistan was also appreciable, he added.

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QUETTA: Provincial Amir JUI Maulana Abdul Wasey presiding over a meeting.

Strengthening cooperation with China national consensus in Pakistan: Ambassador Hashmi

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi has said that there is a national consensus across political parties and various segments of society on further strengthening bilateral ties with China.

"Over the 73 years, Pakistan-China relationship has become very solid and assumed unique characteristics in terms of interstate relations. Ours is a relationship that is not affected by internal developments in either country or regional and international events. That is why we refer to it as an ironclad relationship that has stood the test of time," he told Global Times in an interview.

"With the recent elections, a new government is being formed, and I am confident that it will play its role in further bolstering our strategic cooperative partnership with China," he added.

To a question about new areas where China and Pakistan can further enhance cooperation, he believed cooperation between Pakistan and China is already very multi-dimensional, covering almost every area. For example, we have just completed 10 years of intense and multi-dimensional cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which is the pioneering project of President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Ambassador Hashmi said, the first phase of CPEC was primarily focused on two things: infrastructure (including transport infrastructure) and energy. Both these areas are key ingredients for any economy to grow rapidly.

The first decade of CPEC has laid important ground for fast-tracking development. Moving forward, it will be important to prioritize industrial cooperation and industrialization, including through promoting special economic zones and attracting and facilitating new investments.

"We welcome Chinese enterprises and businesses to invest in diverse sectors such as agriculture, mining, information technology, textiles, engineering, and electric vehicles," he added.

While elaborating on Pakistan's plan for the next decade of development within the CPEC, he said, "I would use three terms for next phase of CPEC: connectivity; infrastructure, and industrialization; and agriculture. Connectivity is a multidimensional concept including but not limited to physical, digital, and people-to-people connectivity."

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Secretary Health directs DHOs to ensure medical aid to flood affected people

QUETTA (APP): Secretary Health Balochistan Abdullah Khan has directed the District Health Officers (DHOs) of Gwadar and Kech to ensure medical aid to the flood-affected people.

The secretary has ordered the DHOs of Gwadar and Kech to send the medical teams, medicines, and equipment to flood-affected areas to provide medical aid to the people in flood-affected areas. Media Coordinator of the Health Department Dr. Wasim Baig said.

Abdullah Khan said that to prevent serious diseases such as diarrhea and dysentery caused by contaminated water, water purification tablets (Aquatabs) are being immediately dispatched to various flood-affected areas.

He instructed that to convene a meeting of the emergency response committees of the flood-affected districts and informed the relevant authorities immediately about the need for medicines and other medical supplies.

Abdullah Khan stressed that the District DSRUs (Disease Surveillance and Response Units) should start working immediately to deal with the spread of the disease.

The Provincial Coordinator Malaria Control Program has been instructed to take immediate steps to prevent malaria in the area given the increase in malaria cases following the stagnant water in the flood-affected areas of Gwadar.



QUETTA: Director General BEA Muhammad Naeem Bazai and Representatives of Nutrition International in a group photo with participants of training workshop organized by Balochistan Food Authority and Nutrition International.

Flights operation suspended as heavy rains deluge Gwadar

GWADAR (INP): The flights' operation at Gwadar International Airport was stopped on Wednesday after persistent heavy rains, lashing different parts of Balochistan since Tuesday, flooded the airport as well as other parts of the port city.

According to the spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the water level reached six inches at the apron and other parts of the airport, which necessitated the closure of the flights' operation.

The spokesman further said that all airlines had been informed about the decision.

On the other hand, residents of the city continue to face difficulties as not only low-lying but other areas of the city too were flooded till last reports came in.

Rainwater could not be drained out from the areas like Mulaband and Faqir Colony.

Rainstorms have brought routine life to a halt as several homes have been destroyed while boats anchored at the port have also been broken.

Roads and streets have been submerged and according to reports, at least seven were damaged while the downpour left many people out of their shelters and disrupted the power transmission system.

Clips showed the coastal town inundated. Locals called upon the authorities concerned to step up relief efforts. The PDMA authorities too rushed to cope with the situation.

The flights' operation at Gwadar International Airport was stopped on Wednesday after persistent heavy rains, lashing different parts of Balochistan since Tuesday, flooded the airport as well as other parts of the port city.

According to the spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the water level reached six inches at the apron and other parts of the airport, which necessitated the closure of the flights' operation.

The spokesman further said that all airlines had been informed about the decision.

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GWADAR: Pak Army personnel are providing all possible assistance to the rain-affected areas during rescue and relief operation after heavy downpour.

To cope with new challenges Governor calls for preparing comprehensive strategy with guidance & support of experts

QUETTA: The Governor Balochistan, Malik Abdul Wali Khan Kakar has stated that comprehensive strategy can be prepared with thoughtful guidance and support of the experts to cope with new challenges of present and future era.

The Governor said that the world is changing at a fast pace, and if some sectors are about to become extinct on one hand, then some new sectors are also emerging on the other hand.

He was speaking to Vice Chancellor, Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS), Professor Dr. Khalid Hafeez who called on him here at the Governor House on Wednesday.

The Governor said that we can move forward towards light of knowledge and consciousness coming out from the darkness of ignorance at the mass level by benefiting from educational and research material available on the internet especially the ever new inventions.

He said that the science and technology has become essential part of the human life in the 21st century without which it is nearly impossible to lead successful life.

The Governor said that today the human being has entered the artificial intelligence and robotic science.

He said that the nations which can't meet modern requirements in the ever changing world, they would suffer certain hardships in near future.

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Rescue, relief work continue in rain hit Gwadar areas: DC

QUETTA (APP): Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gwadar Aurangzeb Badini on Wednesday said that local administration has started relief works in rain hit Gwadar areas to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that local administration and rescue teams are actively engaged in relief operation. He said that all relevant staff members are working to drain water from residential and low-lying areas.

We have prepared to relocate the citizens to safer locations, the DC said.

Despite extreme weather, the DC said all out efforts are being made to restore the connections disrupted due to heavy wind and raining.

The assessment is being made regarding damages to property and infrastructure in rain hit locations, he said.

He said that all concerned departments in the city and surrounding areas are vigilant and alert to cope any situation that may arise after the heavy rain in the Gwadar and adjoining places, he added.



LAHORE: Members of Lahore Bar Association are holding protest demonstration for acceptance of their demands, held at GPO Chowk in Lahore.

President, PM polls will be disputed, if SIC not given reserved seats: PTI

ISLAMABAD (INP): The President and Prime Minister's elections will become disputed, if the SIC would not be granted its quota of reserved seats, quoting PTI's lawyers.

Barrister Ali Zafar talking to media said, "We would go to the Supreme Court if this unlawful embezzlement took place. The Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) didn't refuse reserved seats ever," the lawyer said. "We told the election commission to show us that letter, but they didn't do so," he said.

Barrister Gohar said that the house will not be completed till presence of all members of the assembly. He also urged the electoral body to decide the matter today.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) today reserved its decision on the Sunni Ittehad Council's plea seeking reserved seats in assemblies.

A five-member bench of the ECP headed by CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja took up the plea. Barrister Ali Zafar in his arguments before the electoral body said PTI-backed independent candidates joined the SIC after winning the elections. It is our right to have reserved seats in the assembly, he added.