

QUETTA VOICE

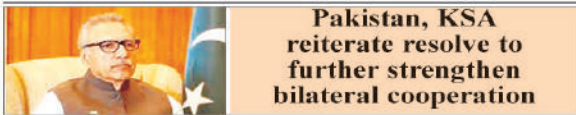
Email address: quettavoice@gmail.com

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Pakistan, KSA reiterate resolve to further strengthen bilateral cooperation

PM Imran Khan stresses need to strengthen people-to-people linkage with Saudi Arabia

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday emphasised the need for further strengthening people-to-people linkages, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said.

During a meeting with Saudi Arabia Minister of Interior Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, PM Imran Khan noted the conclusion of the agreement on the transfer of offenders between the two countries.

The premier expressed hope that a large number of Pakistani prisoners in Saudi Arabia would be repatriated to Pakistan through this framework.

PM Imran Khan praised the leadership role of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in promoting peace and prosperity and acknowledged the endeavours of Saudi Arabia for peace and security in the region and beyond.

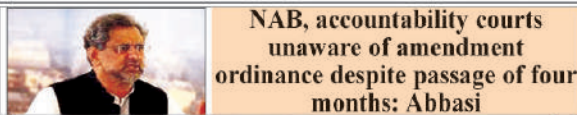
He also lauded the vision of Prince Mohammad bin Salman for Saudi Arabia's progress and prosperity and his invaluable contribution to the abiding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

PM Imran Khan particularly thanked the Kingdom for its steadfast support to Pakistan, "especially in challenging times". He thanked the Saudi leadership for the recent "financial budgetary support extended to Pakistan."

Condemning the Houthi militia attacks targeted towards Saudi Arabia, the premier reaffirmed Pakistan's

full support for the Kingdom's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Speaking on the occasion, Prince Abdulaziz conveyed cordial greetings to the Crown Prince to the Prime Minister and reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He also acknowledged the positive contribution of Pakistanis in the development of the Kingdom and reiterated the resolve to work closely with the Pakistan side on all matters relating to his ministry "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are bound in a fraternal relationship marked by mutual trust and understanding, close cooperation, and an abiding tradition of supporting each other," the statement added. Web Desk.



NAB, accountability courts unaware of amendment ordinance despite passage of four months: Abbasi



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairing a meeting regarding improving the yield of crops especially cotton.

Pakistan Day Parade: Levies force to represent Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: Levies Force will represent Balochistan province in the Pakistan Day Parade on March 23rd in Islamabad, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo visited

EME Centre Quetta Cantonment and inspected the Levies forces' preparation in this regard.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister stated that the Levies force plays an important role in maintaining the law and order situation in the

province. He appreciated the role of the Pak Army in imparting professional training to the Levies Force to boost its professional capabilities.

"It is a matter of honor that Levies force will be representing Balochistan in Pakistan Day Parade",

the CM stated. He noted that Pak Army has imparted the best training to Levies personnel to battle against the menace of terrorism and extremism.

Senior officials from the Pak Army, Levies were also present on the occasion.

Cabinet's Tuesday meeting calls off due to PM's Quetta visit

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet meeting due on Tuesday (today) has been called off due to the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Quetta, sources said on Monday.

The Cabinet took back the agenda issued for the meeting on Tuesday.

PM Khan will meet with the Balochistan Chief Minister Abdul Qudus Bizenjo and Governor Amanullah Khan Yasinzai.

On his visit, the PM will be flanked by federal ministers, MPAs and special assistants.

In the last few days, security forces had thwarted successfully the terrorists attack TC Headquarters in Noshki. INP

Zardari felicitates Gumbat Institute staff over successful liver transplant

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Pakistan and President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPP-P), Asif Ali Zardari expressed pleasure on the successful liver transplant at Gumbat Institute of Medical Sciences. He also felicitated Dr. Rahim Bakshi Bhatti on his successful liver transplant.

Asif Zardari paid tribute to doctors and staff of Gumbat Institute. He said that by the grace of Allah, Sinch is at the forefront of serving the people.

He said, "It is a blessing of Allah Almighty that a great man like Dr. Adil Rizvi is a resident of Sindh. Cancer, kidney, heart and liver treatment is free of cost in Sindh."

President Zardari said that PPP will come to power and create institutions like the NICVD all over the country. The PPP has a manifesto for the people's health and education, he added. INP



Blast injured two security personnel on Sariab Road Quetta

ISLAMABAD: A bomb explosion has injured two security personnel on Quetta's Sariab Road on Monday morning. Police said a vehicle of frontier corps was on a routine patrolling when targeted by miscreants.

Two FC personnel were slightly injured in the blast. The injured soldiers were rushed to the hospital for medical treatment. Police and security personnel reached the spot as an investigation into the incident went underway.

The blast caused the suspension of traffic on Sariab road as security personnel put a cordon off the area. Police sources said the miscreants had planted an improvised explosive device in a motorcycle parked on the roadside.

Dumar strongly condemns the terrorist attack.

Finance Minister Balochistan, Noor Muhammad Dumar has strongly condemned the terrorist act. In a statement, Mr. Dumar said the perpetrators of the blast would be brought to justice.

This incident has come two days after the security forces killed 20 terrorists and completed clearance operations in Balochistan's Panjgur and Koski districts. At least 12 security personnel were also martyred in terrorist attacks.



QUETTA: Chief Secretary Balochistan Muthar Niaz Rana is meeting Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo.

NAB, accountability courts unaware of amendment ordinance despite passage of four months: Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Monday said that National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and accountability courts are unaware of amendment ordinance despite passage of four years.

Talking to media, the PML-N leader criticized the so-called justice in the country, asking whether the anti-graft watchdog was established only for housing schemes. The Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) leaders have mortgaged State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) before International Monetary Fund (IMF), he added.

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi further said that IMF will now directly dictate SBP.

Earlier, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said, "The opposition is united in the Parliament while the talks with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) are ongoing."

Addressing the ceremony in Hyderabad, the senior PML-N leader said that no project during the past three years has been completed under CPEC.

He said that PML-N has established law and order, there was a chaos in the country.

Abbasi said that the motorway was a plan to connect the provinces. The government will give the answer as to why the CPEC project was not started, he asserted. Talking to media, the PML-N leader criticized the so-called justice in the country, asking whether the anti-graft watchdog was established only for housing schemes. The Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) leaders have mortgaged State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) before International Monetary Fund (IMF), he added.

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Saudi interior minister, Sheikh Rashid discuss regional security situation

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Interior Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef met Pakistan counterpart, Sheikh Rashid, after arriving in Islamabad on Monday for a day-long visit.

According to Radio Pakistan, the two ministers discussed issues of mutual interest, including the regional security situation.

"The two ministers emphasized on strengthening ties between the Ministries of Interior of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. They said better liaison between ministries is needed to address various issues, including security challenges," the report said.

Rashid said that Pakistan valued its relations with Saudi Arabia as they were based on mutual trust and Islamic brotherhood.

He said that the two million Pakistanis working in the kingdom were a treasured asset and thanked the Saudi government for taking excellent care of them.

Both countries have shared concerns in Afghanistan, President Alvi.

Later, the Saudi delegation met President Dr. Arif Alvi during which he highlighted that both countries had "shared concerns" in Afghanistan. He also urged the international community to help the Afghans in their hour of need.

According to Radio Pakistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia also reiterated the importance of further strengthening and diversifying bilateral cooperation in various areas of mutual interest.

President Alvi said that the two countries had an excellent relationship which needed to be "further cemented for the mutual benefit of the two countries", the report said.

He expressed the hope that the Saudi government would give "positive consideration" to release Pakistani prisoners in the kingdom who had completed their sentences. Web Desk.

Staff Reporter

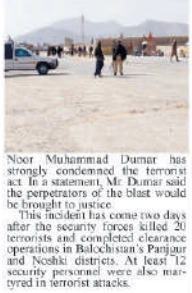
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Dumar strongly condemns the terrorist attack.

Finance Minister Balochistan,



PM Imran to visit Moscow this month: FM Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said on Monday that Prime Minister Imran would visit Moscow this month on the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Radio Pakistan reported.

Referring to a statement issued by the Foreign Minister, the state broadcaster quoted him as saying that Pakistan's relations with Russia were on a "positive trajectory."

Last month, Prime Minister Imran had held a telephonic conversation with Putin, during which, the premier said, both leaders had invited each other to visit their countries.

At the time, the premier tweeted that he had thanked the Russian leader for his "emphatic" statement against insulting Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him), wherein Putin had criticized the publication of blasphemous sketches of Holy Prophet (PBUH) in French magazine Charlie Hebdo and said that insulting the Prophet (PBUH) did not count as an expression of artistic freedom but was a "violation of religious freedom."

PM Imran said the two had also discussed ways to move forward on trade and other mutually beneficial cooperation between the countries.

In this connection, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) had also issued a statement, saying: "The prime minister underscored that Pakistan's bilateral relationship with Russia was on an upward trajectory with an increased focus on trade, economic ties and energy cooperation. He reiterated the government's resolve for the realization of the Pakistan Stream Gas Pipeline Project."

Prime Minister Imran said he looked forward to his visit to Pakistan as well as his own visit to Russia at an appropriate time, the statement had added.

The foreign minister's announcement about Prime Minister Imran's visit to Moscow comes just as the premier concludes a four-day visit to China, which Qureshi described in today's statement as "timely and highly INP

BAP to review its alliance with ruling PTI in federal government

QUETTA: Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) has decided to review its alliance with the ruling Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) in the federal government. This decision was made at a meeting of the provincial ruling party BAP in Quetta on Sunday.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo, Chairman Senate Mir Sadiq Sanjrani, federal minister Zubaida Jalal, senators, MNAs, and MPAs attended the meeting. The meet-



ing thoroughly discussed its alliance with the ruling PTI in the Center. The party expressed reservations about its share in the federal government and termed it an injustice, a press release issued by the party said. CM Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo would take up the issue with the Prime Minister Imran Khan, it said. PTI continues to ignore BAP despite being the largest parliamentary ally. Sense of deprivation among the lawmakers and people of Balochistan developed because of the approach of the federal government, the press release added. The party would make its final decision if the PTI failed to address reservations, it concluded.

PPL and the Case of Balochistan

Information Commission Balochistan: Why this delay

Editor Asim Khan
Almost a year passed, the Balochistan government is yet to establish the Information Commission (IC). The provincial assembly had adopted the Right to Information Bill in February 2021 and the opposition lawmakers had expressed reservations over the bill and called for amendment. Nevertheless, the treasury members adopted the bill.

The Balochistan cabinet had approved the RTI Bill in August 2020. Since then, the government has not taken any practical steps to establish the Information Commission. All three provinces and Islamabad had formed RTI commissions empowering citizens to seek information about government functionaries.

The February 2021 RTI bill empowers citizens to seek information on details of development projects, jobs, quality of work, officials' decisions about government departments. Since the passage of the bill, the Balochistan government has not discussed the formation of the IC.

Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa formed ICs. Other provinces have also appointed chief information commissioners and information commissioners to devolve information at grassroots level. The commissions have made various decisions regarding government departments on citizens application.

Undoubtedly, RTI is an effective instrument to promote democratic institutions and eradicate corruption from the country. Information is considered to be one of the powerful tools to ensure transparency in the utilization of funds and appointment of candidates on government jobs. Above all, it plays key role as a watch dog about major government decisions.

RTI plays key role in ensuring good governance. RTI is also very crucial in the establishment of good governance in the country. People of Balochistan continue to suffer because of worst governance. The province is lagging behind other provinces of the country in terms of key social indicators including education, health, sanitation, clean drinking water and electricity.

For Balochistan, the establishment of IC is indispensable since the people enjoy the right to information but with no proper platform to lodge their protest. Chief Minister Mir Qudus Bizenjo led government should go beyond words and establish the IC to empower the masses to seek information about government functionaries.

As Secretary of Finance, I had initiated a case for getting Balochistan in PPL, the biggest oil and gas producing company. This company owns all its assets based on Balochistan's Suji Gas Field. Unfortunately, political leadership didn't press for its due share.

Here in my analysis of PPL from inception. Recent developments have not been captured but it tells the story.

Overview
Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has been major player in the energy sector since the mid-1960s. As a major supplier of natural gas, PPL today contributes over 20 percent of the country's total natural gas supplies. PPL produces and exports Natural Gas Liquid, and Liquefied Petroleum Gas. The company's history can be traced back to the establishment of a public limited company in 1965, with major shareholding by Bureo Oil Company (BOC) of the United Kingdom for exploration, prospecting, development, and production of oil and natural gas.

PPL employees were allocated 12 percent shares from the government equity. In September 1997, BOC divested from the Exploration and Production (E&P) sector worldwide and sold its equity in PPL to the Government of Pakistan (GOP). Subsequently, the government reduced its holding through an initial public offer in June 2004, which was further decreased with



The initiation of the Barzai Employee Stock Option Scheme (MESOS) in August 2007 when PPL employees were allocated 12 percent shares from the government's equity.

Most recently, GOP further divested its 5 percent shares, amounting 3.55 percent of the total paid-up capital, in PPL through Secondary Public Offering in 2014. Currently, the company's shareholding is divided between the government, which owns about 68 percent, and private investors, which hold nearly 25 percent.

PPL has acquired 100 percent shareholding in O&G Ltd, a company incorporated in England and Wales. The name of the subsidiary has been changed to PPL Europe E&P Limited. PPL operates eight production fields across the country. PPL pursues an aggressive exploration agenda aimed at enhancing hydrocarbon reserves and exploring new reserves. PPL together with its subsidiaries has a portfolio of 47 exploration assets of

which the company operates 27, including one contract in Iraq, while 20 blocks, comprising three offshore licenses in Pakistan and two onshore concessions in Yemen, are operated by joint venture partners.

PPL has developed a reliable foundation and infrastructure for providing clean and safe energy.

Over the years, PPL has developed a reliable foundation and infrastructure for providing clean and safe energy through sustainable exploitation of indigenous natural resources while adhering to best practices of corporate governance and employee health and safety and constraining the ecological footprint of its operations. As a result, Monitoring and Inspection, Design and Construction, Drilling and Well Engineering, Joint Operations, Operational Technical Support Services and Projects departments, Mazari, Adhi and Kandhot fields, Suji Field Gas Compressor Station, Suji Field Production, Suji Field Engineering and Well Engineering stand certified for ISO 9001 Quality Management System.

Similarly, Kandhot, Mazari and Adhi fields, Suji Field Gas Compressor Station, Suji Field Production, Suji Field Engineering and Well Engineering, Design and Construction, Projects, Health, Safety and Environment and Exploration departments of the Federal Hospital have been certified

Mehnooz Ali Khan
14001 Environmental Management System and OHSAS 18001 Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series. Suji Refinery is also certified for OHSAS 18001.

Currently Government of Pakistan holds 68% Shares out of total shares outstanding of 676.959 Cr. Current Year Government of Pakistan holds 68% Shares out of total shares outstanding of 676.959 Cr. Current Year Government of Pakistan has paid 80% dividend to shareholders and government's shareholding got Rs.36.826 billion as Dividend. The net Profit registered by the company was Rs. 80 Billion. Government also earned billions in tax revenue as well. The government of Balochistan has slightly above Rs.3.0 billion as Royalty from the Suji field gas production. Legally, the 18th Constitutional Amendment, Article 172(3), provides for equal share in the profit of oil and gas companies operating in a province. In this case, the government has yet been made even after a lapse of 10 years. So it is the right of the province to claim its share in holding and profits of the company.

The company divested 5% shares to the public in 2014 and the government of Balochistan was not consulted in violation of the Constitution. The author has served as the Chief Secretary of Balochistan

Going beyond normalcy: Life: Why name is tragedy

Pakistan is a developing country whose resilience is best exhibited through the behavior of its public in times of crisis. Be it in the response to natural disasters, or epidemics and public health crises, Pakistanis have emerged courageously to face the challenges as they arise.

As a recent multi-dimensional index developed by The Economist called Normalcy Index illustrates, Pakistan has shown a capacity to manage its day-to-day matters despite the pandemic. The NI measures the eight unique indicators of public behaviour which cover various aspects of socioeconomic importance. When we explore the sub-components of the NI, we see that in most of the 56 countries, there is a movement towards amplified retail activity. This particular indicator has shown convergence to the pre-pandemic level. Moreover, the other activity indicators

such as the use of public transport, spending time outside, increased traffic, and office occupancy are converging factors towards pre-pandemic levels. On the other hand, some indicators are not performing at a similar pace, such as going to the cinema, the number of people taking flights, and attendance during sports activities.

In Pakistan's context, there is a remarkable trend illustrated according to the initial estimates of this index. In July 2021, Pakistan was ranked third on the NI. The recent ranking illustrates that Pakistan has topped the table. The country has done well to sustain economic activity during the pandemic; and the government's strategy regarding smart lockdowns has been successful. The measures taken by the government and the public to contain the spread of the virus have been successful. This draft illustrates that Pakistan can confront crises in a sober manner.

However, while Pakistan has performed better than many Western countries as a response to the pandemic, there are mountains of public health issues to deal with. These include rising inflation burdening the largest (and poorest) segment of society, a rise in international commodity prices, and amplified volatility in the exchange rate.

Moreover, policymakers are under the duress of international pressures such as increased conditions from the IMF to receive a \$200 million tranche under the Sixth Extended Fund Facility (EFF). The current a deadlock in the government-IMF talks is related to the State Bank Bill Amendment 2021. The proposed bill is a direct attack on Pakistan's economic sovereignty in return for more debt. More recently, the government sent a draft to the IMF. This draft excludes the complete immunity clause for Governor SBP and the officials of the central bank. However, Pakistan needs to take drastic steps to divert its economic dependence from the shackles of the IMF. Inflationary pressures persist with increasing international commodity and energy prices. On the Global Hunger Index, Pakistan falls in the 'serious' category, ranked at 92nd among 116 countries. The government needs to make adjustments to ease the hard-pressed public. The government needs to increase the tax base through income tax and property tax which may offset the rent-seeking behaviour of the public. Fiscal consolidation to ensure food security, especially with uncertainties related to climate change, could facilitate the public. Another potential risk for Pakistan would be a refugee influx due to an alarming economic situation in Afghanistan. This Afghan war movement

also will have a constraining impact on Pakistan's capacity and resources. Yes, one must appreciate that Pakistan is closer to the pre-pandemic normalcy on the indicators mentioned on the NI. But in broader context, normalcy is not enough. Pakistan needs to aim towards super-normalcy to counter the heaps of challenges that it confronts.

The most crucial step the government needs to prioritise is expanding the tax base through reforming the tax collection process by increased accessibility and user-friendly interface on digital platforms. This would encourage more people to file their tax returns. Another significant measure would be to maintain a firm stance during negotiations to prevent long-term consequences. Regardless, it is clear that to offset the inflationary impact, Pakistanis will need to be more resilient than ever.

Importance of clean environment will get a spring better than ever

Muhammad Zaheer
While I write these lines, a dense greyish layer covers the atmosphere outside my window, limiting the visibility to just a few feet. I wear my two kids under five, periodically coughing while asleep from the other room. Our Lahore's bad air for their respiratory condition, the outdoor smog, a burning smog in the air, and coughing kids remind me of the LUMS Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) panel discussion a few days back. While answering a question, Punjab's environmental minister reiterated that Lahore's current atmospheric conditions are not smog.

Rather, a private company overestimates air pollution with their faulty low-cost monitors and misguides the public to sell their air purifiers. He shared the figures from Punjab's health department to support his claim. The number of hospital visits due to respiratory symptoms was around 97,000 during the first week of March this year, which declined to just a few thousand in late November. While the lowest sensor overestimates particulate air pollution under high humidity (75%) conditions, they are not the reference instruments for regulatory air monitoring, they at

least provide guidelines values for the citizens to plan their outdoor activities during high pollution hours. The performance of low-cost monitors can be enhanced by standard reference instruments at least three current available with the EPD. The private sector proposals to the Punjab Lahore's bad air for their respiratory condition, the outdoor smog, a burning smog in the air, and coughing kids remind me of the LUMS Environmental Action Forum (LEAF) panel discussion a few days back. While answering a question, Punjab's environmental minister reiterated that Lahore's current atmospheric conditions are not smog. Rather, a private company overestimates air pollution with their faulty low-cost monitors and misguides the public to sell their air purifiers. He shared the figures from Punjab's health department to support his claim. The number of hospital visits due to respiratory symptoms was around 97,000 during the first week of March this year, which declined to just a few thousand in late November. While the lowest sensor overestimates particulate air pollution under high humidity (75%) conditions and is not the reference instruments for regulatory air monitoring, they at least provide guidelines values for the citizens to plan their outdoor activities during high pollution hours.

The performance of low-cost monitors can be enhanced by standard reference instruments at least three, currently available with the EPD. The private sector (IQAir) and the EPD cooperation can potentially enhance the current monitoring capacity ten times. Reliable emission data is the bottleneck for all policy interventions to mitigate air pollution. Regarding patients with respiratory symptoms, a quick look at the figures shows that the fourth wave of COVID-19 was at a single in March. The number of daily cases touched 4,000 by the end of March. This was a significant drop from 300 daily cases in November. A minor impact of air pollution on people's health based on these numbers is not correct. The minister emphasised aiding environment to the curriculum. This is an excellent suggestion. The terms such as water, carbon and ecological footprints, air quality indices, and particulate matter are not the reference in early school education will create awareness and help to provide environmentally sensitive generation. Environmental

protection is a political development. Pakistan has not clearly laid out an ambitious plan to reduce air pollution. The whipsir is left with the hope that Imran Khan had to chew his words on the resolve of establishing the writ of the TLP in dealing with TLP. Understandably, the slogan TLP uses as a driving force is so potent, resonant and sacrosanct that one can't dare to challenge it. I would really mean when he called the current situation a 'real' crisis. He said that he had been so devastated by the current situation that he had decided to leave the country. He said that he had been so devastated by the current situation that he had decided to leave the country. He said that he had been so devastated by the current situation that he had decided to leave the country.

Noor Mukadam case: Court dismisses all three petitions of Zahir Jaffer against IG Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Monday dismissed all the three petitions put forward by Zahir Jaffer, the main accused in the Noor Mukadam murder case. Geo News reported.

On February 3, Zahir Jaffer's advocate Sikandar Zulqarnain had filed three petitions in the court, one of them against the IG Islamabad after the Islamabad police issued a statement regarding 'sufficient evidence against Zahir'.

In one of the petitions, the court was asked to direct the Inspector General (IG) of Islamabad Police Aslan Younus to proceed 'fairly and equally' and 'clarify the strong evidence against Jaffer'.

In the second petition, it was stated that the phone number mentioned by the complainant Shaikat Mukadam should be verified.

The third application filed by the advocate said that the map of the crime scene should be corrected as 'it is wrong' and legal action should be taken against the investigation officer (IO).

Talking to the media, the plaintiff's lawyer Shah Khawar said that the 'move has not affected prosecution's stance'.

However, the court decided to dismiss all the pleas filed by the main suspect.

Sufficient evidence against Zahir Jaffer

On January 25, a meeting related to Noor Mukadam's murder case was led by IG Islamabad Mohammad

Aslan Younus which confirmed that strong and sufficient evidence has been collected against the main accused Zahir Jaffer.

The forensic report confirmed that Noor was raped before she was killed. It further stated that Zahir's skin was found underneath the victim's nails as she tried to save herself.

A Swiss army knife and a knuckle punch were also recovered from the crime scene which was covered with the victim's blood, per the report.

These are the findings of forensic evidence and the investigation team is committed to seeking justice for Noor Mukadam,' the IG had said. The third application filed by the advocate said that the map of the crime scene should be corrected as 'it is wrong' and legal action should be taken against the investigation officer (IO).

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QUETTA: Senator Manzoor Kakar and Member NHA Shahid Ehsanullah are meeting Governor Balochistan Syed Zanoor Ahmad Agha.

SHC orders demolition of illegal building in Karachi's garden

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday ordered to take down an illegal portion of Al-Jannat Royal Residency, a nine-floor building located in Karachi's Garden West.

SHC took up a case related to illegal construction in Garden West. The applicant moved Sindh High Court against the construction of Al-Jannat Royal Residency as the builder added three more floors to the building against approved six-floor construction.

The SHC ordered the Sindh Building Control Authority (SBCA) to immediately stop further construction on the site of Al-Jannat Royal Residency.

Further, the court while ordering not to give sub-lease to anyone, directed to raise an illegal portion of the building within 45 days and submit a progress report.

The court also directed to take action against the builder and the involved officers of the SBCA and barred utility providers from giving connections of electricity, water and gas.

The court in its order said strict action against the applicant should be taken if the order of the court was used for blacklisting.

Separately, the SHC after showing resentment over the non-compliance of its orders had directed the concerned authorities to raise the fourth floor of the Aliza Arcade in Karachi's Gulshan-e-Iqbal INP.

Pakistan reports 3,338 COVID-19 cases as positivity rate dips to 7.45pc

LAHORE: Pakistan has reported 38 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 3,463,111. The nationwide number of cases has jumped to 29,516 on Sunday.

According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) 3,338 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 24 hours.

Punjab remains the worst-hit province in terms of deaths followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Till now 13,252 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab, 7,905 in Sindh 6,023 in KP, 988 in Islamabad, 761 in Azad Kashmir, 268 in Balochistan, and 189 in GB.

Furthermore 552,202 coronavirus cases, 489,565 confirmed in Sindh, 489,655 in Punjab, 203,110 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 231,628 in Islamabad, 46,713 in Azad Kashmir, 34,819 in Balochistan and 10,896 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

Pakistan has again conducted 25,422,966 coronavirus tests and 44,779 in the last 24 hours. 1,344,403 patients have recovered in the country whereas 1,684 patients are in critical condition.

The COVID-19 positivity rate was recorded at 7.45 percent. So far, 108,173,867 people have received their first dose of coronavirus vaccine including 89,350 in last 24 hours. 84,711,497 citizens have been fully vaccinated while 785,143 received their second dose in last 24 hours.

The number of total administered doses has reached to 82,296,648 with 1,734,514 in the last 24 hours INP.

No rapid antigen tests needed to come to Pakistan now: NCOC

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center or NCOC met Monday with Asad Umar in chair to decide to end RAI requirements from Tuesday, February 8. Travelers who have been deported or are coming on land routes will still have to take a test.

The NCOC also decided to approve a 50 percent crowd attendance for the Lahore leg of the PSL cricket matches.

The NCOC specified that children below 12 years are allowed, all people must be fully vaccinated, valid vaccination certificates must be shown at entry to the stadium and masks inside the venue are mandatory. A full crowd will be allowed from February 16.

Meanwhile, the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority has set new prices for the Covid-19 polymerase chain reaction or PCR test.

In the last 24 hours, as many as 291 positive cases were reported in the capital. The positivity rate has reached 7.85%.

During review of positive cases, the authority has decided to set new prices for the PCR test. Three companies i.e. Roche, Abiotech and Qiagen kits will charge Rs5000 and others will charge Rs1500.

According to the IHRA, people will be given details about their kits in the reports and laboratories must add names that are written on the machine, agent names and batch numbers on the report INP.

SHC demands govt explanation over evening closure of burns road

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Sunday heard a petition against closure of roads in the evening of Burns Road Street. The court expressed its concern over closing the road owing to the foot street bustle-bustle in the evening.

'What is the logic behind the road closure, who has closed the road? Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi questioned. 'How a patient will be shifted to hospital from the area,' the bench asked.

'The district commissioner has himself decided closure of the road,' petitioner's lawyer said. 'If the residents of the locality were heard before the decision,' Justice Rizvi questioned. 'What the residents will do when the entries will remain open till 3:00am in the night,' the Justice remarked. 'Why the local people were not heard before notifying the decision of closing the road for thousands of people,' Justice Rizvi said.

'There should be some logic, the administration should not work with closed eyes,' the judge remarked. 'Police keep barriers at road till 7:00pm in the evening. DSP Traffic told the court. 'There are narrow alleys, where even small cars could not pass,' Justice Rizvi said. 'Ask the authorities, if they heard the public before decided to close the road,' the bench said. 'In case of no reply, Deputy Commissioner South should appear in court and give explanation,' the bench further said. The court adjourned further hearing of the case for four weeks. It is to be mentioned here that the district authority of Karachi South, last year in January decided to turn Iqbal Burns Road known for its food variety and narrow into a food street. The residents of the area challenged the South government's move to close the road for traffic after 6:00pm, in the Sindh High Court INP.

PM hails role of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in promoting Islamic unity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has appreciated the leadership role of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in promoting Islamic unity and cohesion, and edged the endeavours of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for peace and security in the region and beyond.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Minister of Interior of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who arrived in Pakistan on Monday.

Premier Imran Khan also lauded the vision of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the Kingdom's security, prosperity and his invaluable contribution to the abiding fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

He particularly thanked the Kingdom for its steadfast support to Pakistan, especially in challenging times. He thanked the Saudi leadership for the recent financial budgetary support extended to Pakistan. Concerning the Houli militia attacks targeted towards the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's full support for the Kingdom's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Thanking the Saudi leadership for hosting a large Pakistani community, PM Khan emphasized the need for further strengthening people-to-people linkage. Noting the conclusion of the Agreement on Transfer of Offenders between the two countries, the Prime Minister expressed the

hope that a large number of Pakistani prisoners in KSA would be repatriated to Pakistan through this framework.

Prime Abdulaziz conveyed cordial greetings of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince to the Prime Minister and reaffirmed the close fraternal relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He also acknowledged the positive contribution of Pakistanis in the development of the Kingdom and Saudi Arabia are bound in a fraternal relationship marked by mutual trust and understanding, close cooperation, and an abiding tradition of supporting each other. Thanking the Saudi leadership for hosting a large Pakistani community, PM Khan emphasized the need for further strengthening people-to-people linkage. Noting the conclusion of the Agreement on Transfer of Offenders between the two countries, the Prime Minister expressed the

Key political figure to 'join' PPP amid Bilawal's South Punjab visit

ISLAMABAD: An important political figure is expected to join the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) during the visit of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to the South Punjab.

Chief Minister Muttaz Qadir will visit South Punjab for three days where he will meet with the anti-governor long march. Local leaders and South Punjab workers of PPP have started preparations for the convention.

Earlier, former president Muttaz Qadir and his son PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited the province. Muttaz Qadir, president Shehbaz Sharif and vice president Maryam Nawaz accompanied the Minister of Punjab. The convention in Multan on Feb 9 is part of the preparations for the anti-governor long march. Local leaders and South Punjab workers of PPP have started preparations for the convention.

Group painting exhibition "Galaxies" to provide platform to young artists held

RAWALPINDI: To provide a platform to young artists, a week-long group painting exhibition titled "Galaxies" was organized by Punjab Council of Arts (PUCAR) in Rawalpindi. Member Punjab Assembly (MPA) Seemab Jabeen, chief guest of concluding ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Seemab Jabeen said that the works of art in the exhibition are closer to reality. She said Pakistani artists are rich in art and are making the country famous all over the world.

The MPA said that the Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar was taking significant steps to promote art and culture. She said that the best way to express emotions. The



QUETTA: Finance Minister Noor Mohammad Dumar is presiding over the meeting of the Secretariat Officers Association.

Dacoit shot dead during police encounter in Jhang

Jhang: A dacoit was killed on Monday by the firing of his own accomplices during a police encounter in Fateh Pur area of Ahmad Pur Sial Jhang.

Reportedly, during an alleged police encounter a dacoit, Shahid Abbas, was hit by the bullets fired by his own accomplices and died on the spot. While his two companions managed to flee the scene.

According to police spokesperson, dacoit Shahid Abbas was involved in a murder case and 21 other criminal cases. When police intercepted three suspicious motorcycle riders for checking, they opened fire on the cops. The law enforcers ran towards a field and hid behind crops from where they retaliated to the dacoits firing.

The spokesperson said that dacoit Shahid died by the firing of his own accomplices and both his companions managed to run away.

The slain dacoit was wanted by Bahawalpur police in cases of murder and dacoity incidents in Chishtian, he added.

He further informed that murdered dacoit Shahid had also injured a police officer a few days ago while putting up resistance in order to escape arrest at the hands of police. The body of the slain dacoit was shifted to TIQ Hospital Police recovered a motorcycle and a pistol from his possession.

DPO Jhang Hassan Asad Alvi said that police would soon apprehend the fleeing dacoits. When police intercepted three suspicious motorcycle riders for checking, they opened fire on the cops. The law enforcers ran towards a field and hid behind crops from where they retaliated to the dacoits firing.

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The slain dacoit was wanted by Bahawalpur police in cases of murder and dacoity incidents in Chishtian, he added INP.

Punjab govt committed to promote interfaith harmony: Ejaz Alam

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Human Rights and Minorities Affairs Hina Ejaz Alam said on Monday that the provincial government was committed to promote interfaith harmony for which it was taking all possible measures.

He stated this while addressing an important press conference at the end of week-long interfaith seminar here at DGPR on Monday.

HMPA Uzma Kardar, Areeb shop Desai, Nadeem Sarwar, Gaurang Singh, Roskin from Hindu Community, Shahid Rehmani, Head of Youth Development Foundation, Prof. Syed Mahmood Ghaznavi and others were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Ejaz Alam said that interfaith harmony was celebrated in 195 countries all over the world including Pakistan while the Department of Human Rights and Youth Development Foundation jointly organized various seminars to promote mutual love and affection.

He said that in the last three and a half years, record work has been done by the Punjab government on interfaith. Punjab is the first province to propose an interfaith day and it was also appreciated by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, he added.

The provincial minister further said that the youth were promoting love and peace while the role of the Youth Development Foundation in this regard was commendable. Only by taking the young generation of Pakistan into confidence, Prof. Alam said, the message of peace can be spread, he maintained.

He strongly condemned the assassination attempt on William Safir and said that the elements spreading unrest in Pakistan should know that all the religious minorities living in Pakistan are one and first and foremost Pakistanis INP.



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.