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PM Imran launches interest-free loan programme worth Rs407bn

Blast kills 3 including a police official, injured over two dozen in Quetta

Syed Ali Shah, Manan Mandokhail News Desk

A blast on Quetta Fatima Jinnah road has killed three people including a police officer on Wednesday evening. Over two dozen people were injured in the blast. Police investigation suggests a police mobile was the target of the blast. "The condition of the injured people is serious", Waaseem Baig, the Spokesman, Civil Hospital Quetta said. Over two dozen injured were brought to civil hospital Quetta for medical treatment. Mr Baig said. Over two dozen injured were brought to civil hospital Quetta. Spokesman Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Muhammad Anjals was also among the martyred, hospital sources said. "Almost 25 kilogram of explosives were used in the blast", Syed Fida Hossain Shah, the Inspector General of Police Quetta said. He said, "we are investigating the incident". A police mobile was on a routine patrolling in the area when the bomb went off, Mr. Shah stated.

Firefighters reached the spot to extinguish flames of fire. Bomb disposal squad also reached the site of the explosion to conduct complete sweep of the area. Police cordoned off the area to probe into the incident.

CM Bizenjo condemns the attack. Home Minister, Balochistan, Abdul Qudus Bizenjo has strongly condemned the terrorist attack by a statement issued after the blast. Mr. Bizenjo has directed the Inspector General of Police to file a report about the terrorist act. He directed the police to arrest the culprits involved in the terrorist act.

Roaring flames of fire could be witnessed on the site of the blast. Rescue workers and police were quick at the spot. "We have no information about the nature of the blast", a police official said. Police closed all roads leading towards Fatima Jinnah Road Quetta for traffic.

Govt betraying citizens as well as IMF: Shehbaz Sharif

MQM-P strives for rights of common man in Pakistan: Khalid Maqbool

Syed Ali Shah

QUETTA: Central Convener Muttalaha Qasmi Movement (Pakistan) Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui has said that his party strives for the rights of the common man in the country. Mr. Siddiqui and other central leaders of the MQM-P arrived in Quetta on Wednesday. Party supporters received the leaders at Quetta airport. "Our struggle and manifesto are for a common Pakistan", he told a news conference at Quetta Press Club. Other central leaders of the party were also present on the occasion. When asked about his party's support to the Pakistan federal government, Mr. Siddiqui said that despite an alliance, MQM-P has always recorded its reservations and protest with regard to the country. "We have one minister in the federal cabinet and refused to take another ministry", he said. "MQM strives for a developed and prosperous Pakistan", Siddiqui Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui stated that Muttalaha has always struggled for the supremacy of parliament and the constitution.

LAHORE: Opposition leader in National Assembly and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif said on Wednesday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is betraying the citizens of Pakistan as well as International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The former Chief Minister (CM) of Punjab expressed hope that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan won't take another "U-Turn" on his decision regarding petroleum and electricity prices.

PM-N leader asked that if the petroleum prices have been effective, then why the cost of other commodities remains unchanged.

The president further said that the current government has taken back the relief provided to the citizens by increasing the price of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). INP



QUETTA: Muttalaha Qasmi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) chief Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui addressing a press conference.

PM Imran Khan provides relief to the people for the first time during three and half years: Sheikh Rashid

ISLAMABAD: Interior minister Sheikh Rashid has said that Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan has given relief to people for the first time during three and half years.

"PM Imran Khan scaled down the prices of petroleum products and electricity. Imran Khan has extended relief to the poor masses for the first time during three and half years which is a big thing. Now we should provide relief in the prices of atta, ghee and sugar to facilitate the poor, he said this while talking to media men here Wednesday.

He underlined the petrol and diesel prices have been slashed by Rs 10 per liter following PM Imran Khan announcement. Imran Khan has done a good job and we should hail it.

Coming to PPP long march, he said Bilawal Awala long march is our own long march. There is no need to worry about it. Let Bilawal come to ISLAMABAD. It is all right.

Commenting on Bilawal long march in poetical vein he said in a couplet " youn ro to kishay ke abroo na ganwa, ghar hi hi ghari hi me rate to ach hi bar".

He underlined Australian cricket team has come to Pakistan after 24 years. Its credit goes to PTI government. India frustrated New Zealand cricket team visit to Pakistan through conspiracy.

He remarked we are running an independent and impartial foreign policy under the leadership of Imran Khan. What is happening in Ukraine and other countries is all before us. Online

Pakistan reports 22 more covid-19 deaths, 765 new infections

ISLAMABAD: The Covid-19 on Wednesday claimed the lives of 22 people in Pakistan, pushing the death toll to 36,218.

The data released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOCC) showed Pakistan registered 765 new cases of the pandemic.

During the past 24 hours, Pakistan conducted 34,296 tests. The positivity rate remained 2.23 per cent. The number of Covid-19 patients in critical care at various hospitals across the country has dropped to 981.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Pakistan has conducted overall 26,498,814 tests to diagnose the coronavirus including 34,296 tests during the past 24 hours.

Sources privy to the development said that the NCOCC has dispatched letters regarding the decisions to the federal government and the provinces, while the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has also been informed. INP

Fire gutted scrap warehouse in Quetta

QUETTA: Valuables worth millions of rupees were reduced to ashes when fire broke out in a scrap warehouse located at Sahal Road in Quetta in the wee hours on Wednesday.

The blaze spread very quickly and engulfed the entire building of the godown. Ten fire brigades vehicles reached the spot after being informed and brought the fire under control after a hectic effort.

The rescue sources said that no one died or wounded in the blaze. However, valuables worth millions of rupees were reduced to ashes by the fire. Sources further said that the cause of fire is still not known. INP

Sardar Rind resigns as Special Assistant to PM Imran Khan



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan addressing at the cheques distribution ceremony of Kamyab Pakistan Interest Free Loans at Faisal Mosque.

PM Imran launches interest-free loan programme worth Rs407bn

Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday launched an interest-free loan programme worth Rs407 billion under the Kamyab Pakistan Programme, which he said would contribute to making the country's low-income groups self-reliant.

Addressing the programme's launching ceremony at Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, the premier said 4.5 million families would benefit from interest-free loans under this initiative to set up small businesses, construct houses, start farming and acquire technical education.

He added that Rs2.5bn had been disbursed by the government among the low-income groups in various welfare schemes so far, and that banks had also given loans worth Rs55bn after the government encouraged them to facilitate the common man. The prime minister stressed the need for transforming Pakistan into a welfare state, along the lines of the state of Iceland, saying that the

country was envisioned as a social-welfare state. But deviation from this ideology increased difficulties for the common man, he regretted. The prime minister said the Kamyab Pakistan Programme, which was aimed at making the country a welfare state, would be further expanded. He said that he would be launching the Kamyab Pakistan Programme (KPP) tomorrow (Thursday). A body envisioned by him for researching how best to disseminate lessons from the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to the public.

The prime minister further said the "biggest" initiative taken by his government to facilitate citizens was the

issuance of 'Naya Pakistan Health Card'. He added that by the end of March, all families in Punjab would get the health card, restricting the announcement he had made at the launch of the programme for the province in December last year.

PM Imran also spoke about his recent announcement of slashing petrol and electricity prices, saying that that government was able to take the step due to "revamp" tax collection by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). Earlier this week, the prime minister had announced the slashing of petrol price by Rs10 per litre and electricity tariff by Rs5 per unit as part of a series of measures to bring some relief to the public. The announcement was met with criticism and suspicion by many, particularly the opposition. The move was dubbed a 'Holy Prophet' (PBUH) to the public.

Sardar Rind resigns as Special Assistant to PM Imran Khan

News Desk

Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind, a member of provincial assembly from Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) has resigned as the Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday. "I have sent my resignation to Prime Minister, Imran Khan", Sardar Rind told a private TV channel in Islamabad on Wednesday. "I sent the resignation two days back", he mentioned.

The PTI leader lamented that the high command of the party has failed

to take him on board with regard to major decisions regarding Balochistan. "PTI government is not ready to listen to our grievances", Sardar Rind said. Yar Muhammad Rind is still the parliamentary leader of the ruling PTI in Balochistan. The Premier had appointed Sardar Rind as Special Assistant on water resources, power and petroleum. PTI is the third-largest parliamentary political group in the Balochistan Assembly. The party is also part of the coalition government led by the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) in the province.

After the federal government's approval, Ogra will issue a notification in this regard. INP

Ogra approves 16.37% hike in gas prices

ISLAMABAD: People should get ready for another economic shock as the Ogra has sent a summary to the federal government to raise gas prices by 16.37 percent on average.

According to details, the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority on Wednesday approved a 37 percent average hike in gas rate for Sui Northern and 6.35 percent increase for Sui Southern.

The Ogra approved Rs4/MBHFTU hike in the rate for Sui Northern and for Sui Southern. It approved Rs20/MBHFTU increase. The gas companies submitted their requests for the hike in 2021-22.

The final decision will be taken by the government on Ogra's recommendations.

After the federal government's approval, Ogra will issue a notification in this regard. INP

Iran Air Force Brigadier General Pilot Vahedi calls on COAS Bajwa

Rawalpindi

Commander Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force Brigadier General Pilot Hamid Vahedi called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ on Wednesday.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation between the two countries were discussed. COAS said that Pakistan wants peaceful and close ties with its neigh-

bors. He further stressed on the need for collective efforts towards regional stability. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in defence & security field. The visiting dignitary acknowledged professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields. He also appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation and effective border management measures. Online

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NADRA to verify employees recruited on Balochistan domiciles

Dawood Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) would launch the verification process of government employees recruited on Balochistan's domicile certificates. Standing Committee of the National Assembly about Aghaz-e-Haqoq Balochistan decided to conduct verification of employees recruited on the provincial quota.

It was revealed that no recruitment from Balochistan was made in the National Assembly, Senator Secretariat, and other divisions during the last three years. The Committee decided to conduct verification of employees on the Balochistan quota. Bogus domicile employees should be exposed and brought to book, the Standing Committee directed.

Balochistan has a 6% quota in government jobs

The details provided to the Cabinet Committee by the Establishment Division in the initial investigation said that under the "Aghaz-e-Haqoq Balochistan package", all ministries have been directed to ensure that when recruiting from grades one to 22, make six percent of this quota for people belonging to Balochistan and recruit.

According to the report of the Establishment Division, a total of 3049 persons belonging to Balochistan have been recruited in 54 ministries and agencies in the last three years. However, details of the grades of those recruited by the Establishment were not provided.

An interesting revelation in the report was that not a single person belonging to Balochistan was recruited in the three years of the present government in the Parliament, the National Assembly, and the Senate Secretariat, which approved the Aghaz-e-Haqoq Balochistan package.

INFORMATION

Information Commission Balochistan: Why this delay

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 amid the uproar. 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 and eradicate the curse of corruption from the country. Official 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 information commissions 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 the curse of 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 etc.

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 and establish the IC to empower the masses to seek information about government functionaries.

The writer is the executive director of a data analytics company, and a heavy user of national statistics data.

Prime Minister Imran Khan recently launched a campaign 2023 from Mandi Bahaudin and indicated he would be looking after the election preparation for 2023 within the party himself. Similar indications and preparations can be seen to be taking off in other political circles.

The time is ripe as a series of local government elections has already warmed up the election machinery within the political parties. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is already seeing electioneering and the aftermath of hotly contested local government elections which have thrown up lots of surprises.

As expected in May 2023 when Punjab, the country's largest province, is expected to hold an election close to 100,000 seats. What is the public mood in the province about the campaign? Who are the favourites in the coming months of the campaign? What would motivate and demotivate the electorate in the coming months to side with or go against a political party. How have the past four years affected the popularity of the two main rivals: PTI and PML-N?

During December 2021 and January 2022, Gallup Pakistan conducted a nationally representative survey of over 5000 men and women in almost 130 constituencies covering both urban and rural areas as well as representative sections of society. The report - 'Public Pulse Report' - has generated controversy and healthy debate about the findings of this survey and how can we use these numbers to gauge the mood of the public?

First, there are strong indications that Nawaz Sharif is re-emerging as a popular choice with a high approval rating in all provinces of the country. With a popularity rate of 38 percent in Punjab, 46 percent in Sindh, 51 percent in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and 51 percent in Sindh, Nawaz Sharif's approval rating is the highest among leaders. Second, is Shahbaz Sharif, a two-time chief minister of Punjab, the president of the PML-N (he has 21 percent approval rating in Punjab by Imran Khan, the current PM, at 36 percent. The important finding is that the PML-N and Imran Khan's rating (polls in 2018, 2020 showed 40 percent and 30 percent

Campaign 2023 and the people

approval rating, which is not very different from his current rating at 36 per cent), the real change in the electoral contest is happening because the Sharif's support has lost image in the eyes of the electorate. Nawaz Sharif had a popularity rating of a mere 28 percent in December 2018 which now stands at almost 55 percent, a similar rise has been seen for Shahbaz Sharif (from 24 percent to 46 percent). Prior to the 2018 elections, the Sharifs enjoyed a similar rating. We see now and it seems the three charges of corruption, mismanagement and not being good enough Muslims (the controversy which led to the rise of the TLP) seem to be receding into the background. Moreover, in the PML-N's The report shows the odd choice of CM Buzdar and the current provincial government's not being good enough, especially when juxtaposed with very publicly expressed support for the PML-N. Second, the public pulse shows that the real contest still remains

By Bilal I Gilani

misplaced. Despite a very tumultuous four years in power, support for the PPP for the national theatre of politics is limited. The survey findings show that Bilawal Bhutto, despite having gained so much attention over the past three years, seems to be stuck at a 28 percent approval rating in the 2018, 2020 and 2022 public opinion polls. The survey finds a minor rise in his popularity in Punjab from 18 percent to 21 percent in December 2018 to 24 percent in January 2022. The PPP's effort to regain national character and make a dent in the public imagination again in Punjab seems to be having limited success as of now. Will the PPP be able to carry over its self-chosen exile as a primarily Sindh-centric party in the 2023 elections? The report shows a rather bleak outlook. However, all political forecasts are forecasts in the end and it is politicians who are able to change the weather and not the voters. The PML-N is still a formidable political force and any estimates or predictions or its precipitous fizzling out (some have likened 2023 to the 1991 election) for the PTI like 2018 was for the PML-Q in 2013 and 2018) are perhaps

Elite wars

As much as some would like to dismiss the cold war analogy to explain the current state of the world, the fact is that every development on the global political chessboard only confirms that the world has practically entered a second phase of the cold war.

Countries are increasingly allowing their reactions to be determined by how their policy choices about several natural and man-made disasters will sit with principal actors.

When considerations other than what a crisis should warrant shape our response, our decision-making is constrained by factors that lie outside of our control and within the realm of the great game of which we are just one part - whether we like it or not.

How else can we explain the existence of Nato long after it served its primary purpose? Why is Nato's eastward expansion even a question when Russia has genuine security concerns about the West? Why should Western leaders resort to hard talk and sabre-rattling and make threats, knowing well what the cost of the war is for the Ukrainian people?

When events such as the coronavirus pandemic - the biggest public health disaster in recent times - and the Olympics get politicized, it signifies the return of the great game in its latest avatar. Another manifestation of realignment underway around the pivot of the cold war is the gradual weakening of global institutions meant for conflict management and resolution. It is also marked by a stiff competition to interpret the rules and norms that govern these institutions.

War is a result of the failure of human efforts to manage a conflict. No matter how noble any war objectives are, it is still founded on the selfish interests of the dominant classes of human agency, chaos and destruction. The scars it leaves on the emotional health of its victims do not fade to erase, even after active hostilities cease.

The developing world crisis poses a bigger tragedy that has come to define our world - the powerlessness and dehumanisation of billions of people. A fact that is becoming glaringly pronounced with every development. This ongoing conflict shows how the cold war mindset continues to drive the actions of many players who are interested in extending their area of influence as a symbol of historic agreements between citizens and states.

When the global financial crunch allows the ever-hungry capitalist elite to manipulate the administrations into announcing bailouts and largesse, it diminishes democracy as a worthy ideal and turns it into an instrument for achieving petty gains - while people are left to deal with job losses, reduced social services, higher taxes, and increasing health and education expenses.

In the first two decades of this century, the tiny global elites strengthened themselves at the cost of struggling millions who were eyeing day dreams had new Mergals and persecuted people in Occupied Kashmir, Afghanistan, Palestine and elsewhere, who are suffering from the ravages of war, occupation and persecution, continuing to live in a state of helplessness and moral bankruptcy of the prevailing world order. And while these people may belong to different geographical regions and speak different languages, they are bound by the shared vulnerability to the games that are played in their name. The ill-effects of the elites' insatiable hunger for domination do not

War games

By Anant Ali Chaudhry

At this point in my life, I've been consistently opposed to war for about twice as long as I spent as a Marine in Vietnam (with precisely the attitude toward war you would expect). The changing world of the 21st century and the stresses against the 2003 US invasion of Iraq have been mental and, in some ways, a relief. The information toward participation in the 1991 Gulf War has been immoral.

Every international conflict tests that conviction. THIS is the one war that makes me reconsider and conclude "hey, THIS war, unlike any other I've witnessed, is unavoidable, necessary, and just."

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not that war. It is a war that makes me reconsider and conclude "hey, THIS war, unlike any other I've witnessed, is unavoidable, necessary, and just."

Where I find myself in the political decision-making who brought this conflict upon us. There's been quite a bit of harrumphing and table-turning in EU, NATO circles over the invasion as a "violation of every worthwhile principle" and "a brawl between overgrown street gangs with delusions of grandeur." It was avoidable, it is unnecessary, and it is unjust.

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Ukraine crisis: scramble for power transcending limits

Dr. Syed Akhtar Ali Shah

The Ukraine crisis has taken the world by surprise and set bells ringing everywhere. Around the world, countries are beginning to feel the pinch of increased prices of petroleum and other commodities. However, most people are still unaware of the dynamics of the crisis because the news cycle is devoid of the historical perspective. The current events, particularly conflicts, are always rooted in history and must be analysed from that perspective.

It appears that Ukraine has remained under Russian protection in different forms for a long time. During the 9th century, Kyiv was a part of the East Slavic state, Kyyvan Rus - it was here that the states of Ukraine and Russia emerged in the 13th century. Russia acted as NATO against Mongols' invasions and later Tartars' incursions. By the 17th century, antagonised with persecutions of the Catholic Church, Poland, and the areas considered Orthodox, the Russian Tsar in the 1654 Treaty of Pereiaslav.

European countries entered into 1955. However, under Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of Glasnost, Warsaw Pact was scrapped.

In this context, Russia was told that NATO would be wound up. However, the countries of Eastern Europe that were former members of the Warsaw Pact were made members of NATO. At present, the Ukraine is a part of NATO and arm it with nuclear weapons. Given that the world is divided into four post-war occupation zones, which would be controlled by American, British, French and Soviet military forces. To ease Soviet fears of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was laid down in 1949. It was aimed towards collective security to curtail the expansion of Soviet influence in Europe.

In response to this, the Treaty of Friendship and Mutual Assistance was also known as the Warsaw Pact, which was a strategic alliance between Eastern European powers should no longer colonise the Eastern

regardless of their impacts. Rather than running the affairs and utilising the intellect and bounties in a just and sustainable manner, the world has become embroiled with nature's resources at the cost of destruction of other forms of life and of natural ecosystem. The recently released UN IPCC's scarring and bleak assessment report on the anthropogenic destruction of global climate is but a single instance of mankind's high-handedness against their surrounding environment. Even when it spares his fellow beings.

A few in the world hold majority of the world's wealth. The result: millions of people are currently consumed by poverty, hunger and disease. The rich-poor divide widens as time passes by. Global poverty and wide-scale inequality are the result. Laws are made and broken for and by the rich, while the poor remain entangled in them. Merciless programs are a part of the world's being preyed and consumed by capitalist predators. The tyranny against the poor is becoming weak, and the atrocities of rulers over their subjects have surged to its highest point. The growing scourge of terrorism and extremism, rising populism and demagoguery, and fascist political leadership is the new normal. Mass education, boarding, black-marketing, organised crimes, cheating, lying, manipulating, exploiting, hate all

become common traits of our culture. There is an ever-growing trend of flattery and hypocrisy, while every-thing is done to secure an unfair material success. Morally, ethics, empathy and compassion are all considered as outdated notions. One might wonder how is NASA even thinking about climate assessment report on the anthropogenic destruction of global climate is but a single instance of mankind's high-handedness against their surrounding environment. Even when it spares his fellow beings.

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Capacity building vital for medical professionals to become good administrator: Dean IPH

LAHORE: Dean, Institute of Public Health (IPH), Prof. Dr. Zarfishan Tahir has said that capacity building, updating knowledge and improving education is inevitable for the medical professionals to become a good administrator in a hospital or an outstanding medical teacher in a medical college. She further said that seeking knowledge and updating training and skills is a regular feature for a professional. These views were expressed by her while addressing inaugural session of MPH and MPhil diploma classes at the Institute of Public Health (IPH), at Birdwood Road, and a good medical teacher for a medical institution. She stressed the view that IPH is striving hard to prepare well trained and highly qualified human resource for which a number of degree and diploma courses for the doctors as well as allied health professionals, technicians are being offered at the institute. The Dean IPH said that during the last few years, the Government of Pakistan has announced the introduction of a new course of MPH. While welcoming the newly inducted students, Prof. Dr. Zarfishan Tahir urged that doctors should fully concentrate on their studies and improving professional skills so that they emerge as a successful administrator.

Govt measures to reduce current account deficit bear fruit

ISLAMABAD: The measures taken by the federal government and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to reduce the current account deficit (CAD) are bearing fruit, WealthPK reported. According to an official document, implementation of several steps to improve the trade balance and reduce the current account deficit is yielding positive results. The SBP imposed 100% cash margin restriction (CMR) of various items to discourage imports and support the balance of payments. The central bank also revised prudential regulations for currency financing and prohibited financing for imported vehicles. In order to encourage import substitution, initiatives such as mobile phones, local assembly production of local smart televisions and new investments in production in ceramic and tiles industry have been taken. These policy measures and reforms have attracted producers to expand their plants as well as to attract foreign investors to commence production in Pakistan. Attempts have been made to boost olive production. Olive plantation is being promoted and production of packaged milk has been increased owing to better crop outlook, import of sugar, wheat and cotton will witness a massive slowdown during the second half of the current fiscal year (FY22). This will further reduce the import and in turn the current account deficit. The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet has also approved certain rationalization measures, which will be implemented from FY2022. These include: increase in excise duty on imports of vehicles such as imposition of 10% regulatory duty (RD) on import of electric vehicles (EVs) in completely built units (CBU) condition, excluding commercial use, increase of regulatory duty (RD) from 15% to 50% on import of all types of hybrid vehicles in CBU condition, exceeding 1500cc but not exceeding 1800cc, and increase of RD from 15% to 50% on import of vehicles having more than 1000cc displacement engine (conventional engines) in CBU condition exceeding 1800cc but not exceeding 1800cc, says the document. The Ministry of Finance expects that Pakistan's import bill will contract with stabilization in commodity prices in the international market, which will in turn reduce the current account deficit. Market-based exchange rate policy or rupee devaluation against the US dollar would discourage imports in the coming months, WealthPK reported. Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced a zero-tax rate for freelancers in the IT sector at the launch of the National e-Hijaz Portal. The prime minister also announced various other incentives to attract investment in information technology enabled services (ITES) sector, freelancers and startups. Muhammad Imran, an IT expert and digital marketer, who works as a virtual assistant with an international company in Pakistan, said while talking to WealthPK that zero tax policy for freelancers is a big decision to boost the sector. He said it will be a major source to add a huge amount in foreign reserves. He added that freelancing industry works effortlessly, conveniently and with low overheads. He said a freelancer just needs a laptop and internet provision which is not so much costly, while other industries need to invest in a large amount of logistic and labor work. Imran said the government should fix a swift and appropriate process of documentation for registration of freelancers. Another senior freelancing trainer Hisham Sarwar told WealthPK that previously the 1 or 2 percent tax on IT sector boost the confidence of new freelancers. He said freelancers earning in thousands or in millions paid the tax with same ratio.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister GB Muhammad Khalid Khurshid Khan and others ministers in a meeting with Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at his Office.

Pakistan IT sector freelancers hail tax exemption

ISLAMABAD: Freelancers in the information technology (IT) sector have welcomed the announcement of tax exemption by the Government of Pakistan which will boost their confidence to work in a more efficient way and contribute positively to the economy, WealthPK reported. Prime Minister Imran Khan has announced a zero-tax rate for freelancers in the IT sector at the launch of the National e-Hijaz Portal. The prime minister also announced various other incentives to attract investment in information technology enabled services (ITES) sector, freelancers and startups. Muhammad Imran, an IT expert and digital marketer, who works as a virtual assistant with an international company in Pakistan, said while talking to WealthPK that zero tax policy for freelancers is a big decision to boost the sector. He said it will be a major source to add a huge amount in foreign reserves. He added that freelancing industry works effortlessly, conveniently and with low overheads. He said a freelancer just needs a laptop and internet provision which is not so much costly, while other industries need to invest in a large amount of logistic and labor work. Imran said the government should fix a swift and appropriate process of documentation for registration of freelancers. Another senior freelancing trainer Hisham Sarwar told WealthPK that previously the 1 or 2 percent tax on IT sector boost the confidence of new freelancers. He said freelancers earning in thousands or in millions paid the tax with same ratio.

PTI gov took strict decisions to escape artificial economic stability: SACM Hasaan

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Punjab for Information and Spokesperson to the Punjab Government Hasaan Khawar has said that the incumbent government had to take difficult decisions to escape the artificial bubble of economic stability created by the previous regime. He was addressing a seminar on the topic of "Economic Information" here at Government College University (GCU) on Wednesday. Speaking on this occasion, Hasaan Khawar said that exposing the corruption and scandals of powerful mafias is a great jihad and our media fraternity has time and again proved its mettle and shown extraordinary resilience in the face of this challenging task. He further maintained that the media paves the way for a society to follow. He added the students to practice responsible journalism and cherish the national interest while discharging their professional responsibilities with utmost professionalism. The SACM said that students as media workers should not allow the cracks in the society to grow and should always present the positive and healthy picture during their professional responsibilities, all the while prioritizing interest of the nation. He also advised the students not to be a part of fake news and stressed on the need for responsible journalism that spread of misinformation provides an opportunity for anti-state elements to use it as a tool and shield to hospital where he succumbed to his wounds. The deceased was father of renowned contractor, Rediff Shanan, distinguished lawyer and member of District Bar Association, Dara Waseem Rehman Advocate at Large Baloo and Asim Nazeer. Several prayers of the deceased offered at Jamia Eidun Kalan was attended by a large number of political and social personalities, government officials, contractors, lawyers, elders of the area besides relatives after which he was laid to rest at ancestral graveyard. INP

Punjab developing registry of patients suffering from genetic disorders: Minister

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid has said that Punjab is developing a provincial registry of people facing genetic disorders and then devise strategy to control these diseases. She stated this while chairing an important meeting of the Punjab Genetic Task Force at Punjab Thalassemia and Genetic Disorders Prevention and Research Institute here on Wednesday. The meeting of the Task Force was chaired by Vice-Chancellor Fatima Binah Medical University Prof. Dr. Amir Zaman Yasmin and others. The Punjab Health Minister said that registry of patients suffering from genetic disorders will make it much easier to control these diseases. New courses on genetic disorders will be started which will include subjects of Genetic Counseling, Pediatric and Fetal Medicine, she added. Dr. Yasmin said an international conference on genetic disorders will be held in November. The International Conference will be hosted by Fatima Jinnah Medical University and in May, with support of domestic and foreign experts, pre-conference workshops will be held. An effective awareness campaign will be launched to spread awareness about hereditary diseases in the society. INP

Renowned educationist of DI Khan killed in road mishap

DI KHAN: Renowned educationist and former Principal of Degree College, Prof. Mehbub Elahi was killed in a road accident here on Wednesday. According to details, renowned educationist and former Principal Govt. Degree College, No 01 Dera, Prof. Mehbub Elahi was critically injured in an accident and shifted to hospital where he succumbed to his wounds. The deceased was father of renowned contractor, Rediff Shanan, distinguished lawyer and member of District Bar Association, Dara Waseem Rehman Advocate at Large Baloo and Asim Nazeer. Several prayers of the deceased offered at Jamia Eidun Kalan was attended by a large number of political and social personalities, government officials, contractors, lawyers, elders of the area besides relatives after which he was laid to rest at ancestral graveyard. INP



ISLAMABAD: A Senator's delegation of Blochistan Awami Party in a meeting with Chief Minister GB Muhammad Khalid Khurshid Khan at GB House.

Whiten Black Money: Tax amnesty creates imbalance in society: President PBF

LAHORE: President of Pakistan Business Forum (PBF), Mian Usman Zulfikar said tax amnesty creates imbalance in the society termed a short move for economy, called a call of the people whose are companies specific and individuals were the main beneficiaries. Similarly a possible adverse reaction from the Finance Minister, Taxation and FBR (FTF) and IMF remains a concern. The IMF has barred Pakistan from giving a tax amnesty scheme during the currency of the IMF programme after the PTI government gave a tax amnesty scheme in May 2019 to allow people to declare their ill-gotten and black money. Then again, the PTI gave second tax amnesty scheme to the construction sector in April 2020. But the second amnesty has been given with the IMF's consent under the guise of providing relief to the people from the adverse Covid-19 impact. It may also recalled here as per amnesty (INP) and annuities, explosive mining, cigars, aerated beverages, flour, maida, vegetable ghee and other items. The tax amnesty tends will be much broader for the country. He also called for a law that would be companies specific and individuals were the main beneficiaries. Similarly a possible adverse reaction from the Finance Minister, Taxation and FBR (FTF) and IMF remains a concern. The IMF has barred Pakistan from giving a tax amnesty scheme during the currency of the IMF programme after the PTI government gave a tax amnesty scheme in May 2019 to allow people to declare their ill-gotten and black money. Then again, the PTI gave second tax amnesty scheme to the construction sector in April 2020. But the second amnesty has been given with the IMF's consent under the guise of providing relief to the people from the adverse Covid-19 impact. It may also recalled here as per amnesty (INP) and annuities, explosive mining, cigars, aerated beverages, flour, maida, vegetable ghee and other items. The tax amnesty tends will be much broader for the country. He also called for a law that would be companies specific and individuals were the main beneficiaries. Similarly a possible adverse reaction from the Finance Minister, Taxation and FBR (FTF) and IMF remains a concern. The IMF has barred Pakistan from giving a tax amnesty scheme during the currency of the IMF programme after the PTI government gave a tax amnesty scheme in May 2019 to allow people to declare their ill-gotten and black money. Then again, the PTI gave second tax amnesty scheme to the construction sector in April 2020. But the second amnesty has been given with the IMF's consent under the guise of providing relief to the people from the adverse Covid-19 impact. It may also recalled here as per amnesty (INP)

Latest technology, devices can help improve standard of investigation: Nadeem Sarwar

LAHORE: Secretary Prosecution Nadeem Sarwar has said that latest scientific technologies and usage of modern devices and gadgetry can help to promote the standard of investigation. He stated this while presiding over a meeting of service working group (containing representatives from Punjab Police) here on Wednesday. Additional Director General Punjab Khurram Khan, Chief Operating Officer Punjab, Sindh, Chitral, Gilgit, Balochistan, Additional Director Punjab Forensic Science Laboratory Dr. Anjad, Additional Secretary Administration, Additional Secretary Prosecution Farid Ahmed, Director Appeal's Asmatullah Khan, Barrister Sara Dilal and Advocate Ayesha Sarwar attended the meeting. During the meeting, Secretary Prosecution said that in order to improve the quality of the investigation work should be separated from the operational wing so that investigation officer could perform their duties in a better manner and no investigation officers should be assigned 60 cases in a year. He said that the latest investigation techniques and usage of modern technology and devices could pave the way to set a high standard of investigation. Imran Khan, Minister of Investigation officers and provision of human resources with the best gadgetry was essential for qualitative investigation officers, he maintained. INP

Capital Police become pioneer to provide facilities to public under one roof

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Police have become pioneer force in providing state-of-the-art facilities to public under one roof round the clock which is being appreciated widely by the public. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, Islamabad Police have laid in providing multiple services to people and a modern facilitation center at sector 16-I in functioning since last week. The center remains open for the whole week and is serving round the clock. It provides various services to people including, vehicle and traffic. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younus, this center has been made functional while women are being provided police related services on priority. An entire floor of the Police Facilitation Center has also been allocated for women. The public is availing 24 services including, Character Certificate, General Police Verification, Tenant Registration, Missing/Lost Report, Voter Registration, Voluntary Registration, Copy of FIR, and Vehicle Verification at any time of the day from their vehicle. Police said that all of the already provided services is available to the citizens round the clock and they are also able to avail new services including, renewal of driving license through the drive-through facility INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture, Shafiq Mehmood presents a souvenir to Uzbek Culture Minister Nazarbekov at National Heritage Museum Lok Virsa.

Great potential to promote Pak-UK bilateral trade: Lord Mayor Birmingham

ISLAMABAD: Lord Mayor of Birmingham Councilor Muhammad Afzal said that Pakistan and UK have great potential to promote bilateral trade and the Pakistani private sector should step up efforts to capitalize on this unrealized potential for achieving beneficial outcomes. This was stated by him while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad. Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI) on Wednesday. He was also accompanied by former Chairman National Industry & Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal. Lord Mayor of Birmingham said that after Brexit, the UK was interested in promoting trade relations with various countries including Pakistan. He said that Birmingham was the 2nd largest city of the UK with a GDP equal to that of Portugal, which showed its economic potential for Pakistan. He said that a strong Pakistani community of around 0.3 million people is living in Birmingham who could play a role in strengthening Pak-UK trade relations. He said that construction was the booming industry in Birmingham which offered good scope of cooperation to Pakistan. He assured that he would encourage close cooperation of CCI with Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) for improving business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. Former Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal said that Pakistan's IT sector as the potential to enhance IT exports from US\$ 100 to 200 billion, which should be realized to improve the financial and economic sovereignty of the country. He stressed that the business community should develop its strong internal systems for sustainable growth instead of looking towards the public sector. He also shared his experiences of developing financial models to support CPEC and develop FWO into a strong business entity. Speaking at the occasion, President (Gen) Muhammad Shaukat Rehman appreciated the services of Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Councilor Muhammad Afzal for strengthening Pakistan community and Pakistan. He said that Pakistan offered great opportunities to foreign investors in CPEC and in many other sectors of its economy and emphasized that the Lord Mayor of Birmingham should encourage investors from the UK to explore JVs and investment in Pakistan. He also lauded the services of Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal for strengthening NDMA and said that CCI would like to take benefit from his experiences for promoting SMEs. Former Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal said that Pakistan and UK have great potential to promote bilateral trade and the Pakistani private sector should step up efforts to capitalize on this unrealized potential for achieving beneficial outcomes. This was stated by him while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad. Chamber of Commerce & Industry (CCI) on Wednesday. He was also accompanied by former Chairman National Industry & Management Authority (NDMA) Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal. Lord Mayor of Birmingham said that after Brexit, the UK was interested in promoting trade relations with various countries including Pakistan. He said that Birmingham was the 2nd largest city of the UK with a GDP equal to that of Portugal, which showed its economic potential for Pakistan. He said that a strong Pakistani community of around 0.3 million people is living in Birmingham who could play a role in strengthening Pak-UK trade relations. He said that construction was the booming industry in Birmingham which offered good scope of cooperation to Pakistan. He assured that he would encourage close cooperation of CCI with Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce (GBCC) for improving business linkages between the private sectors of both countries. Former Chairman NDMA, Lt. Gen (Retd) Muhammad Afzal said that

Govt plans to complete privatisation of HBFC by end of 2022

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan plans to complete the privatisation of the Housing Building Finance Corporation Limited (HBFC) by the end of 2022, and currently the parliamentary committee on privatisation is discussing the process. WealthPK reported on Wednesday. The HBFC, previously known as House Building Finance Corporation, is a state-owned entity which is struggling to grow its earnings per share consistently despite boasting a customer-friendly model and products for a wide spectrum of consumers in the housing finance market. "Unit 2017, the government was a majority shareholder in the majority of the shares. The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) owned the remaining 37.5% shares. Due to the institution's poor performance, liquidity had to be injected into the business through the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) plus merger up by the HBFC to the central bank, raising \$16 billion. The government then decided to convert the debt obligation into equity for the State Bank, increasing the SBP's ownership from 37.5% to 45% during 2014 and 2017. "We run a couple of reports to check a person's credit history" explained the official. The SBP has reported that which allows us to check the credit history of a person," he added, explaining the mechanism for checking a potential borrower's credit worthiness. In 2016, the World Bank issued a report titled "Expanding Housing Finance to the Underserved in South Asia" which called for overhauling of the report referred to HBFC as the "slowest in loan administration" compared to private and foreign banks operating here in Pakistan. The Privatisation Commission has appointed MCB Bank as the Elixir Securities Pakistan, EY, Ford Rhodes and Andersen Co as members of the Financial Advisory Consortium for the transaction. Acquisition terms for privatisation include the State Bank of Pakistan to operate as a development finance institution with the State Bank of Pakistan available for deployment to be utilised for diversifying the portfolio by the new owner. INP



ISLAMABAD: Makhdoom Khurro Bakhtyar, Federal Minister for Industries and Production and Farrukh Habib, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting are addressing a joint press conference.

BAP senators meet GB CM over senate bill for provincial status

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) senators called on Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan to discuss a bill with regard to interim province status to Gilgit region on Wednesday.

Senators Kauda Babar, Ahmad Khan, Naseebullah Bizo and Prince Umar had submitted a bill in the Senate Secretariat on Monday for elevation of the Gilgit-Baltistan region into an interim province of the country.

The delegation headed by Senator Kauda Babar met Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Khalid Khurshid at GB House here and discussed the progress of the bill in the parliamentary committee.

GB chief minister and the senators delegation agreed over unanimous legislation for the provincial status to GB region.

Senator Kauda Babar said that the political process to make the GB region an province has begun. "We are pleased that the representatives of Balochistan have given voice to the aspirations of Gilgit-Baltistan," he said.

"The proposals from GB will be welcomed for addition in the legislative bill," he added.

The bill submitted by BAP senators, proposed amendment to Article 1 of the Constitution to create a new interim province.

GB region administered by the federal government, formerly Northern Areas, the region, was renamed as Gilgit-Baltistan in 2009 and granted limited autonomy.

The Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly has also passed a resolution for the provincial status to the region INP

Custody of non custom paid vehicle can not be handed over to its real owner on superdari without completion of investigation: LHC

LAHORE: Lahore High Court (LHC) has remarked custody of Non custom paid vehicle can not be handed over to its real owner on superdari without completing investigation.

The custody of non custom paid vehicle can be handed over to its real owner following the completion of the investigation.

The court issued the written decision setting the new legal norms in connection with superdari of non custom paid vehicle through superdari process from the court of additional sessions judge.

The case came up for hearing before a single bench of LHC presided over by justice Anjsh Rafiq here Wednesday.

The court nullified the Sessions court decision for handing over custody of the non custom paid vehicle to the citizen on superdari without completion of investigation. The court remarked special judges and

magistrate are not authorized to hand over custody of non custom paid vehicles to citizen on immediate superdari without completing the investigation.

The decision said the petitioner is employee of border military police. The vehicle of the citizen was stopped on police barricade during a duty. The customs authorities were informed about the action taken against the vehicle. Customs authorities have initiated no proceedings so far. On the other hand the citizen got the vehicle through superdari process from the court of additional sessions judge.

The petitioner challenged the decision of additional sessions judge in high court. The court performed his duty honestly. He informed the local police and customs authorities about the vehicle. Additional sessions judge ordered to return the vehicle contrary to the facts. INP



QUETTA: A man wear traditional dress takes interest in stall to mark 'Baloch Culture Day' organized by First Step school.

Secretary P&SHD reviews performance report about RED vaccination campaign

LAHORE: Secretary Primary & Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), Inam Sanaullah Baloch while chairing an important meeting in his office on Wednesday reviewed the statistics and managerial matters during Reach Every Door (RED) vaccination campaign which lasted from February 01, till March 02, 2022.

Secretary P&SHD instructed all CEOs to improve the vaccination drive. The meeting was attended by Special Secretary, Saida Steed, Dr. Naeem Majid, Director EPI Dr. Nuzhat, Dr. Muddassar, CEO Lahore Dr. Faisal and CEOs of other districts through video link.

Talking about performance of CEOs in their districts, Inam Sanaullah Baloch said, "Pakistan, Faisalabad, Layyah and other underperforming districts should immediately improve their performance. We are observing vaccination status of all districts on a daily basis. And I appreciate all those who performed well during this drive despite difficult circumstances. This is also a last warning to the CEOs who didn't perform well. All CEOs, DPOs and vaccinators should work as a team. Along with COVID vaccination, Polio vaccination is our priority as well."

While talking about the staff participated in RED vaccination campaign, the Secretary P&SHD added, "Vaccinators working in the RED campaign will be awarded honorariums. Now that we are so close to our destination, officers should set higher morale high. Achieving vaccination goals is the key to eradicating the corona epidemic. Timely vaccination of all segments is the only way to ensure uninterrupted activities in educational institutions. Vaccination records of all private and public hospitals are being monitored regularly. All persons over the age of 18 years and 6 months must also get booster dose along with routine vaccination. INP

OPC Punjab rendering extraordinary services to overseas Pakistanis: Imtiaz Ahmed

LAHORE: Greater Magistrate Imtiaz Ahmed has said that the Overseas Pakistanis Commission Punjab is rendering exceptional services for expats. The reputation of OPC Punjab's services has reached Pakistanis living abroad, which has boosted their confidence.

These views were expressed by him while taking a briefing regarding the working of the OPC Punjab here on Wednesday. The meeting was also attended by Director General OPC Ishaqullah Khan, Special Officer Punjab, Director In-charge Niaz, Director Admin Hanver Mujib, Director Revenue M. Ramey, Deputy Directors and Dealing Officers.

The Director General OPC has given the detailed briefing regarding performance of OPC Punjab and resolution of the problem of overseas Pakistanis. The Director General OPC told the meeting that OPC Punjab has retrieved properties worth of Rs. 44 billion from the illegal occupants and handed over it to real owners during a span of the three years. Ishaqullah Khan said that the properties of Rs. while 15000 thousand complaints of overseas Pakistanis have also been resolved in a short span of only three and a half months. He further said that in the light of vision of Prime Minister Inam Khan and on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab, special front desks have been set up under one roof for the solution of the various problems of overseas Pakistanis. At this Magistrate Imtiaz Ahmed said that OPC Punjab has been rendering extraordinary services to the migrants. He hoped that the institution would grow further. He said that in the light of the mechanism of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) INP

First-ever livestock policy to increase halal meat exports

ISLAMABAD: The government has drafted its first-ever policy for the development of livestock industry in the country and it aims to increase halal meat exports, according to Gwydar Pro.

Pakistan annually exports halal meat and products worth more than Rs. 53 billion. The policy aims to increase the exports of halal meat, milk, butter and other livestock products.

According to the proposed draft policy, Pakistan has the potential to become a world leader in the livestock sector in the next ten years.

Food security, poverty reduction, and increase in national income are also among the key targets of the policy. The share of agriculture in the country's gross domestic product is 11.6 percent, but the livestock sector has been inconsistent in the past.

However, the incumbent government drafted the first livestock policy for food security, poverty reduction, and increase in national income, intending to double digit growth in the livestock sector by 2025 with the help of the private sector.

According to the policy document, the employment of more than 8 million farmers in Pakistan is related to livestock, and the annual growth of this sector is only 4 percent.

In addition, modern organic livestock farming is planned to boost the number of farm animals, which currently lie at 120 million, and legislation will also be enacted to establish Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health Authority.

Emphasis has been placed on allocating more funds for research on food safety, and modern laboratory systems.

The policy has also proposed the establishment of model meat production farms. It is proposed to give priority to trade in live animals and livestock products.

Commerce Adviser, Abdul Razaq Dawood, said that after reviewing the proposed policy, an implementation strategy will be prepared.

Being a country that has a largely rural and agriculture-based industry, animal husbandry plays an important role in the economy of Pakistan and is a major source of livelihood for many people. It is estimated that there are between 30 and 35 million people in Pakistan's current labor force who are engaged in live stocks. While the agricultural practice is prevalent throughout the entire country, it is more common in the fertile provinces of Punjab and Sindh, which are traditionally the main areas of agriculture and farm animal production.

In 2020, the livestock industry contributed 6.6% to overall agriculture and 11.7% to the GDP. Food security, poverty reduction, and increase in national income are also among the key targets of the policy. The share of agriculture in the country is 50.7 percent, and economic growth is 11.6 percent, but the livestock sector has been inconsistent in the past.

However, the incumbent government drafted the first livestock policy for food security, poverty reduction, and increase in national income, intending to double digit growth in the livestock sector by 2025 with the help of the private sector.

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SC bins review petition on appointment of PM's special assistants, advisers

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition seeking review of its verdict that rejected an appeal against the appointment of Prime Minister Inam Khan's special assistants and advisers.

A three-member bench of apex court headed by Justice Jazalil Ali dismissed the review petition filed by Advocate Munir Awan.

The court observed that the petitioner couldn't point out any new grounds in the appeal filed on December 18, 2020, the apex court had upheld the Islamabad High Court's decision on the appointment of the PM's special assistants and advisers and dismissed the appeal.

The then chief justice Gulzar

CM inaugurates Spring Festival 2022 at Jilani Park, visits Art & Craft Village

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar Wednesday inaugurated Spring Festival 2022 at Jilani Park and also visited the Art and Craft Village. He inspected various stalls being displayed over there and also inspected traditional food stalls.

The chief minister expressed his deep interest in handicrafts stalls and was presented with handicrafts souvenirs on behalf of artists, Balochi, Sindh, Saraiki and other cultural stalls are also a source of great interest for the visitors in the Art and Craft Village.

Speaking on the occasion, Usman Buzdar remarked that Spring Festival has become a platform for showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Punjab. Spring Festival gives a special place to the artists and entrepreneurs, and everyone and such supportive activities provide healthy recreation. He added, He underscored that the PTI government has been promoting tourism, culture and sports across the country. He disclosed that Spring Festival will continue till 31st March and many programmes INP

Narcotics smuggling through ambulance foiled, two held in Manshara

MANSHARA: The police foiled a bid to smuggle drugs through ambulance and arrested two drug peddlers besides seizing 50 kilograms of narcotics here on Wednesday.

According to details, the City Police during police campaign security intercepted a suspected ambulance carrying drugs down from Luchmani Hill Post at Balokot Road on Wednesday.

Two people present in the ambulance failed to satisfy the police and during search of vehicle 44 kilograms high quality hashish and five kilograms of heroin were recovered. Two drug peddlers including Mera Jan, s/o Khayy, Jan and Qureshi, Rehman s/o Mera Jan, residing from College Town and Road Kohat were arrested.

The police placed the two individuals in custody and recovered narcotics and after registering a case against the detainees an investigation INP

Sino-Pak cooperation in healthcare deepening brotherhood

BEIJING: China and Pakistan's cooperation in healthcare and medicines will deepen the traditional friendship between the two nations, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

The report says, the Consulate General of China in Lahore, entrusted by China Charity Federation, donated 2,000 Kits of Love to children at the SOS Children's Village in Lahore on December 25, 2021, which included medical surgical masks, wet tissue, COVID-19 disinfectant, and other necessities for them to fight against COVID-19. This donation is coordinated jointly by Chinese Medical Association (CMA) and Pakistan Medical Association (PMA). Besides this donation, CMA and PMA, as the organizer and builder of the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor (CPMC), have been promoting its construction.

They have organized about six conferences and forum in the past six years, including the 1st and 2nd Pakistan Medical Conference, 1st Pakistan Liver Disease Conference, Pakistan Ophthalmology Forum and online symposium of sharing China's experience on prevention and control of COVID-19.

CMA told China Economic Net that when the COVID-19 epidemic broke out in China, PMA was the first to place to show their sincere care and concern. Later when Pakistan was hit by the pandemic, CMA has tried to assist donating masks and anti-pandemic materials to Pakistan.

These activities have boosted the development and progress of medical research and diagnosis and treatment techniques. They have also enhanced the people-to-people exchanges and the traditional friendship between China and Pakistan INP

CM's Coordinator leads anti-Child Beggary operation, 36 taken into protective custody

LAHORE: Special Coordinator to Chief Minister and Chairperson Child Protection Bureau, Sarfraz Ahmad headed rescue operation against Child Beggary in different areas of Lahore to curb the menace of child beggary from Lahore.

As many as 36 Child Beggars were taken into protective custody from different hotspots of Lahore i.e. Gilberg Main Market, Campus Bridge, Johar Town, Barkat Market, Akbar Chowk, Defence Chowk, Bhutta Chowk, Karim Block Market and MM Alam Road. Talking to the media on the occasion, Sarfraz Ahmad headed the Child Protection Bureau has launched a massive anti-child beggary campaign in Lahore and rescue operations are being conducted on daily basis. During the last two months more than 763 child beggars have been taken into custody, she added. She further added that she is monitoring this rescue campaign by herself and just in one year 7290 child beggars have been taken into custody. Due to this operation, there is a visible decrease in child beggars in Lahore. She further added that team of the Bureau are conducting rescue operations against child beggary from 09:00am to 6:00pm daily.

The Bureau is providing education, health and boarding and lodging facilities to rescued child beggars for their rehabilitation. These rescue operations are being conducted in all functional districts of the Child Protection Bureau, she added. Child Protection Bureau is lodging FIRs against the people, mafia or parents who deploy children for begging. General public can report child beggary on the Help Line 112 of the Child Protection Bureau. She further added that team of the Bureau are conducting rescue operations against child beggary from 09:00am to 6:00pm daily. The Bureau is providing education, health and boarding and lodging facilities to rescued child beggars for their rehabilitation. These rescue operations are being conducted in all functional districts of the Child Protection INP

Hindutva forces sparking anti-Muslim sentiment in Modi's India to gain votes

ISLAMABAD: Anti-Muslims hatred has touched new heights in Modi's India and extremist Rashtriyta Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) inspired Hindutva forces want to obliterate Muslims from India.

Unprovoked attacks on Muslims by Hindu extremists have become rampant in India and BJP and its affiliates are making hateful remarks against Muslims to gain Hindu votes in elections, said a report released, today, by Kashmir Media Service.

The report said Modi is asking Hindu extremist to carry out genocide of Muslims and after Hindwa genocidal call, now a Hindu woman has called for massacre of Muslims. "Hostility against Muslims is ingrained in BJP and RSS followers. Woman leader of Akhil Bharatiya Vidvathi Parishad (ABVP) the student organization of RSS, has expressed her desire to kill 60,000 persons supporting Hindu's," it said.

The report said the Human Rights Watch in 2022 report noted that Hindu mobs beat up Muslims with impunity. Muslims are being stopped to offer prayers and lynched over transporting cattle, it said, adding that the space for Indian Muslims is squeezing as part of a deliberate design involving constitutional amendments.

The report said Modi is working to downgrade Muslims as 2nd class citizens even worse than Dalits. It pointed out that in Modi's India Muslims are being forced to renounce their faith and convert to Hinduism INP

Indian team fails to allay Pakistan's concerns on water issues

ISLAMABAD: During the final round of the second day of Pakistan-India water talks on Wednesday, Islamabad raised objections over its eastern neighbor's water aggression ruling why it was denying providing the flood data that might lower the risk of loss of life.

The Pakistani water experts asked the Indian side would be responsible for the loss of lives due to floods when India did not provide the flood data to India on not sharing the statistics regarding water flow in the rivers.

The Pakistani team also put forward its objections over a controversial Kuru power project and Pakal Thal (1000MW) project on River Chenab.

The Indian side could not satisfy their Pakistani counterparts.

However, the Indian side assured Pakistan of a visit to the sites of controversial projects in India.

The Pakistan team is being led by Indus Water Commissioner Mehr Ali Shah while the Indian team is being headed by Indian Water Commissioner PK Saxena.

The Indian delegation will stay in Islamabad till March 4 INP

CM Buzdar announces Rs2.5b for 28 nursing colleges, special quote for backward areas

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar while paying tribute to the yeoman service rendered by the nursing community has announced to give Rs.2.5 billion to 28 nursing colleges along with a special quote for backward areas in the nursing institutions.

While addressing the modern nursing convention-2022, at 90-SQA, on Wednesday, he said that steps were being taken for the welfare of the nursing community. He also gave a special quote for backward areas in nursing colleges principals of different districts.

However, the Indian side assured Pakistan of a visit to the sites of controversial projects in India.

The Pakistan team is being led by Indus Water Commissioner Mehr Ali Shah while the Indian team is being headed by Indian Water Commissioner PK Saxena.

The Indian delegation will stay in Islamabad till March 4 INP

He added that the government has allocated Rs.2.5 billion for 28 nursing colleges, with a special quote for backward areas. He said that the government has also approved the affiliation of 28 nursing colleges with concerned medical universities, he said and appreciated the doctors and nurses who have rendered invaluable services during the corona pandemic INP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan Babur Usmanov called on the National Security Advisor Dr. Moeed Yusuf.



SANGHAR: Vice Chairman PTI and Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressed public gathering while leading "Sindh Haqooq March" at Sanghar.