

QUETTA VOICE

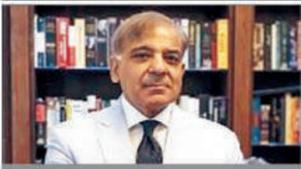
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Thursday 14
April, 2022

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Names of governors, bureaucrats in Shehbaz Sharif-led govt emerge



'Misunderstandings' with military must be resolved: Sheikh Rashid

Zahoor Agha resigns as Governor Balochistan

Syed Ali Shah

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Syed Zahoor Ahmed Agha resigned as the Governor of the province on Wednesday evening. The Governor has decided to step down as the constitutional head of the province, an official handout issued to the press said. The Governor has sent his resignation to the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi. "My services would be available for the country and nation", Mr. Agha said in a statement after tendering his resignation. Governor's resignation has come after the removal of former Prime Minister Imran Khan through a vote of no



confidence by the opposition parties. Imran Khan had appointed Zahoor Agha as Governor on July 7, 2021. Syed Zahoor Ahmed Agha was appointed as the Governor of Balochistan province on July 7, 2021. Former

premier Imran Khan had appointed Zahoor Agha as the Governor of Balochistan after the resignation of Justice (R) Amanullah Khan Yasenczai. Zahoor Agha is one of the hard-core workers of the former ruling party i.e. PTI. He has spent

more than 15 years as a worker at the party. This was one of the underlying reasons, which prompted the former premier to appoint him as the Governor of Balochistan. Dissidents within the party had opposed Agha's appointment. Although, some dissidents within the former ruling party had opposed his appointment as the Governor of Balochistan. Despite the opposition, the former premier had appointed Mr. Agha as the Governor of Balochistan on July 7, 2021. Governors of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have also tendered resignations from their posts. The two governors belonged to the former ruling PTI.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Energy sector.

LBs election in Balochistan on May 29, BHC dismisses petition about delay

Manan Mandokhail

As per schedule, local bodies' elections would be held on May 29th across Balochistan. The Balochistan High Court (BHC) dismissed a petition seeking a delay in holding the LBs elections in Balochistan. A division bench of the BHC comprising Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan and Mr. Justice Abdul Hameed Baloch dismissed the petition about the delay and directed the government to hold elections as per the schedule.



The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had given May 29th as the date for holding elections across Balochistan except for the Quetta and Lasbella districts because of some delimitations

issues. "There is no reason to postpone and delay the local bodies elections", Chief Justice Naem Akhtar Afghan said. He said local bodies' elections were imperative for the development and prosperity of the country and nation. The petitioner had pleaded that Balochistan was facing financial and administrative issues, therefore, the elections should be delayed. Especially, the budget was cited as one of the reasons behind delaying the elections. The bench ordered the ECP and government of Balochistan to make sure fair and transparent elections in Balochistan.

Names of governors, bureaucrats in Shehbaz Sharif-led govt emerge

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will once again persuade Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to join the cabinet as he has shortlisted names of bureaucrats and possible nominees of governors in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). According to sources privy to the backdoor discussion for the formation of the government after the ouster of Imran Khan, the prime minister will once again reach out to the PPP for inclusion in the federal cabinet. "His last two efforts to woo PPP have already remained futile," they said. Moreover, sources said that Fawad Hasan Fawad, the former principal secretary of Nawaz Sharif, will be made adviser to the prime minister while Azam Suleman, former chief secretary Punjab during PML-N tenure, could also get a key slot in the federal government. "Names of Akram Durrani and Waseem Akhtar have been proposed for governors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh respectively in the new setup," they said. The prime minister office has also shortlisted names of 25 bureaucrats who have worked under the PML-N leaderships in Punjab and Centre. The bureaucrats included BPS-22 officers Babar Hayat Tarrar, Yousuf Naseem Khokhar, Shaikat Ali, BPS-21 officers Nabeel Awan, Mohiuddin Wani, Imdad Ullah Bosal, Hamid Yaqoob, Rashid Langrial, Ali Murtaza, Abdullah Sunbul, and Nadeem Mehbub. The sources further shared that BPS-20 officers Ahsan Bhutta, Ahmad Cheema, Sajid Zafar, Mujahid Sher Dil and BPS-19 officers Umair Ahmed Syed, Irfan Nawaz have also been short-listed for the positions in the federal government. INP

PM Shehbaz orders to immediately control electricity outages

ISLAMABAD: Newly-elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has ordered the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to arrest power outages vowing he will not let gas and electricity crisis hit the country. Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday was chairing an emergency meeting on energy. The meeting discussed a strategy to control electricity loadshedding and provision of petroleum products. The country witnesses an acute upsurge in power outages during summers. The newly-elected premier directed the concerned ministries to take steps to immediately control loadshedding, besides finding reasons behind excessive power outages. He warned that he would not tolerate any laxity on the part of ministries in this regard. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Miftah Ismail, officials of petroleum and finance ministries participated in the meeting. Shehbaz vowed that he would not let country confront the gas and electricity crisis. He said the previous PTI government used to make tall claims that country was producing electricity in excess. If we have enough power, then why we are still facing loadshedding, he wondered. The premier also issued important instructions regarding petroleum products. INP

Court seeks arguments on acquittal pleas of PM Shehbaz, Hamza

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore Wednesday heard Ramadan Sugar Mills case against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz and sought arguments on the acquittal petitions of both of them on next hearing on April 28. Judge Sajid Ali Awan of Accountability Court No. 5 heard the case. Hamza Shehbaz appeared before the court and got his attendance marked. The court granted the same day exemption to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif from appearance before the court. Both Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz are nominated in the Ramadan Sugar Mills reference filed by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Shehbaz Sharif as former Punjab chief minister is accused of using state funds for the construction of a nullah and a bridge for Ramadan Sugar Mills. INP

'Misunderstandings' with military must be resolved: Sheikh Rashid

Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Wednesday condemned the recent criticism of the Pakistan Army — both on social media and the streets — and indirectly acknowledged that the PTI and its allies have "misunderstandings" with the military establishment which he said must be resolved. The military has come under criticism this week on social media forums, and Twitter trends against the armed forces and its leadership have seen intense activity. Slogans critical of the army were also chanted during country-wide protests staged on Sunday in support of former prime minister Imran Khan following his ouster from power over the weekend via a successful no-confidence motion. Since last Sunday, the top trending hashtags on Twitter were those

targeting the army, the judiciary and the new government, and on Tuesday the tweets using those hashtags soared to 4.3 million. Ahmed, the former interior minister, while responding to a reporter's question in Peshawar today, said: "No slogan should be raised against the army." Without naming any specific party, Ahmed said the PTI and allies should follow PML-N and Co's suit and mend ties with the military. "If those who curse [them] can make peace with them then we should also remove our misunderstandings and establish good relations with them (the army)," he said. Ahmed appeared to blame the PML-N for the anti-army trends on social media, saying that the army was being criticised through a "conspiracy." Web Desk

En masse resignations from PA not on the cards: Ch Pervaiz Elahi. LAHORE: Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi said on Wednesday that there was no plan to give resignations en masse in Punjab like what the PTI MNAs had done at Center. Talking to the media in Lahore, he said he was optimistic that he would win the election for the Punjab chief minister. Responding to a question about reported differences between 'estranged' member of the PTI, Abdul Aleem Khan, and his rival candidate for the seat of Punjab CM Hamza Shehbaz, he said this was not the result of his politics but these were his prayers which were now being answered. INP

PM Shehbaz Sharif visits Mazar-e-Quaid. KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reached the Mazar-e-Quaid on Wednesday. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and the cabinet members welcomed him at Faisal Airbase. He paid respect to the mausoleum of the Quaid-e-Azam and offered Fateha there. MQM leader Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui were also present. During his visit, he will chair a consultative meeting on the development projects. The prime minister will also visit the Sindh Chief Minister's House. INP

Governor Punjab, Usman Buzdar discuss political situation, election of new CM. LAHORE: Punjab Governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema and former chief minister of the province Usman Buzdar held meeting at Governor House Lahore on Wednesday and discussed the current political situation and the election of a new chief minister of Punjab. Talking on the occasion, Omar Sarfraz Cheema said that Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi is the party's nominee for Punjab Chief Minister. INP



KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offers Fateha at Mazar-e-Quaid.

The threatening memo will be shared with CJP, COAS: Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan on Wednesday said the alleged threatening memo which he claims points towards regime change in Pakistan on United States' behest - will be shared with Chairman Senate, Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chief of Army Staff. Talking to journalists, Imran Khan said fears he can be jailed for standing up to foreign conspiracy which led to his ouster through a no-confidence vote but is determined to fight "till the last ball". The PTI chief maintained that he will not let the conspiracy succeed and for this purpose, the alleged threatening memo - which he claims pointed towards regime change in Pakistan - will be shared with Chairman Senate, Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chief of Army Staff. Former Prime Minister Khan, speaking about the threatening letter he received, said the ruling government does not want it to be public. He said PTI leader Qasim Khan Suri gave the ruling regarding the no-confidence motion in view of the facts. Former PM Khan said the lawyers are preparing their case to get Supreme Court's verdict against Qasim Khan Suri's decision reviewed. Moreover, Imran Khan said Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Atta Bandial and Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa will be shown the threatening letter. He said neither he nor his party leaders will cause problems when it will come to the National Assembly sessions and he may as well attend the session. It may be recalled that the no-confidence motion filed by the united opposition in the National Assembly was successful after which Imran Khan did not remain the prime minister. In the National Assembly, 174 votes have been cast in favour of no-confidence. INP

PM Shehbaz meets coalition partners including MQM-P in day-long visit to Karachi

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Karachi on Wednesday where he met coalition allies of his government including the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P). Television footage showed Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah receiving the premier upon his arrival in the port city for a day-long visit. This is Shehbaz's first visit to the provincial capital of Sindh after he took oath as the prime minister on Monday. PML-N Information Secretary Marriyum Aurangzeb said in a tweet that the newly elected premier conducted a meeting on Karachi and the economy during his flight to the metropolis. According to Radio Pakistan, the prime minister was accompanied among others by MNAs

Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Maulana Asad Mehmood and Akram Durrani. Former finance minister and PML-N leader Miftah Ismail will also accompany him. Soon after his arrival, PM Shehbaz, along with the leaders of allied parties, paid his respects at Quaid's mausoleum. He also laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum and offered fateha. The purpose of the visit to the mausoleum is to reaffirm adherence to the principles laid down by the nation's founder regarding the country's progress and prosperity. The prime minister also held a meeting with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and later chaired a consultative meeting regarding Karachi's development projects. Web Desk

Over 1 million children studying in government schools across Balochistan

Saeed Yousaf

Secretary Secondary Education Balochistan, Abdul Rauf Baloch has said that over one million children were studying in government-run schools in the province. He revealed this while addressing the meeting of the 22nd local education group on Wednesday. The Secretary of Education stated that the department was committed to ensuring the implementation of the Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020-25. At the meeting, all relevant stakeholders of the Education department, development partners, and concerned authorities attended in a large number. Meeting reviews Balochistan Education Sector Plan 2020-25. The meeting reviewed the Education Sector Plan 2020-2025 its implementation and progress, promotion of non-formal education, progress and review of ASPIRE project, Education Support Program Phase 2 by UNICEF, ECW project by the BRSP and the Development Foundation, the selection of the Coordinating Agency by the Global Partnership for Education and other important initiatives related to the



ongoing education program in the province were discussed in detail. On the eve Secretary Secondary Education Abdul Rauf Baloch said that the government of Balochistan values the initiatives of all relevant stakeholders and development partners that are enduring their committed support in the promotion education sector. He emphasized that work on learning and access to education shall be taken in accord in the coming days. He further said that in connection with a single uniform national curriculum in the province, textbooks have been distributed across the province. Adding more he said adequate funds have been earmarked in collaboration with UNICEF to further enhance the skills of teachers in the province. Up-gradation of 200 primary schools to middle approved. Secretary Secondary Education said that there is a clear difference between middle school and primary school in the province, with one middle school out of 8 primary schools filling the gap as such Steps have been undertaken taken to make 33 primary schools middle and 66 middle schools high in the current financial year. While a plan for the financial year 2021-22 to take 200 primary schools to the middle school level has also been approved in PSDP.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

Balochistan also deserves a motorway Mr. Prime Minister

Pakistan Muslim League (N) is known for improving the communication system of the country by laying a net of motorways and highways. The newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is famous for his tireless efforts to make sure timely and quality completion of development projects. Undoubtedly, massive development in the past in the country's populous province of Punjab proves this.

Now when Shehbaz Sharif has taken over as the Chief Executive of the country. The people of Balochistan have pinned high hopes on the Prime Minister especially regarding improving the road network in the province, which covers almost half of the country in terms of area.

Former PM Nawaz Sharif linked Islamabad with Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, D I Khan, and Sukkur with motorways. Unfortunately, Balochistan was not on his radar to link it with the rest of the country through the construction of motorways. Despite the fact that the former PM had key nationalist allies in Balochistan. Even then, not a single motorway was constructed.

The outgoing Premier Imran Khan's era also ended without the construction of a single-kilometer motorway.

Road accidents have claimed thousands of precious human lives on all highways of Balochistan linking it with the rest of the country. Repeated announcements have been made regarding the construction of the Quetta-Karachi highway. Nevertheless, words are yet to match action in this regard.

Long distances, narrow roads and reckless driving are the underlying reasons behind increasing incidents of road accidents across Balochistan.

The newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif should go beyond words and meet one of the long-standing demands of the people of Balochistan. The province is faced with a host of issues. The ratio of unemployment and poverty is high in Balochistan as compared to other provinces of the country.

Improvement in the communication system/ construction of the motorway and linking Balochistan with the rest of the country via road network can help improve socio-economic conditions and bring an end to increasing traffic accidents in the province.

A success review of the PTI

By Bilal I Gilani

The PTI government led by Imran Khan completed its 3.5 years in power when the PM dissolved the assembly. The PTI coming to power in the center was the first instance a party other than the PPP or PML had come to power since 1971. In some sense, the PTI was able to break the two-party rule in the country.

The purpose of this article is to look at the successes of the previous government in an objective manner. I hope to write another article in which I can lay down the failures (of which there is no shortage as well). One objective of this twin series of articles is to set a tradition in the country of objective analysis of political governments. Our tradition unfortunately has been to sit in the warring camps and to only criticize the adversary and to praise one's own compatriots. This then is an attempt to do a bipartisan and objective review.

One of the biggest contributions in terms of narrative that one can attribute to the PTI government is its stress on pro-poor policymaking. Some instances of this can be found symbolically in the setting up of the panahgahs (shelters) for the poorest, providing food and shelter to the homeless in the country. This was the first initiative of its kind here. On a more action-oriented front, the Ehsaas programmes (and one must credit the PPP which initiated the BISP) and its expansion and use

during the Covid-19 pandemic through Ehsaas Cash transfer and in recent times through Ehsaas Roshan.

Another instance was the pro-poor stance taken by Imran Khan during Covid-19 when there was a very heavy push for stringent lockdowns. Pakistan was one of the few countries which never went for a complete lockdown. Even our neighbouring countries such as India went for it, leading to devastation for daily wage-earners. Sights of long queues of migrants walking miles in India after the lockdown were not to be seen in Pakistan, thanks to a pro-poor policymaking stance by the government.

There is no denial that many of these programmes were not able to solve the chronic poverty related issues in the country and there were many aspects that could have been done better but bringing the poor right at the center of the debate about how the Pakistani state should and should not do is something commendable and worth praise. Many of these initiatives were however more tokenism, a reminder that trickledown economics fails and has failed in the past to rescue the poor, so safety net provisions are needed.

Second, Pakistan's Covid vaccination programme was a success, with over 80 percent of the 12+ population vaccinated. This is a rare feat for any country - let alone a poor

one. The process of procuring, administering, and measuring success in the form of the NCOC and other institutions showed that when Pakistanis put their mind to it, we are far ahead than many other nations in the world.

Third, the government led by Imran Khan stressed on environmental issues through initiatives such as the Billion Tree Tsunami to help bring sustainability to the equation of development. Pakistan has seen development that has been at the cost of the environment such as large networks of inner-city roads after destroying vegetation or development of tourist sites at cost of the ecological footprints. The PTI government has with some success demonstrated the need to take the environment and development together, this is a long-term struggle and there is much that is still needed, but we have taken a meaningful step in the right direction.

The Billion Tree Tsunami programme also demonstrates that there is not necessarily a zero-sum relationship between environment and progress and to me this is a success especially in a developing country where livelihoods are also crucial and the battle between environment and livelihood becomes very real. Fourth, some of the economy's long-standing issues have been attempted to be corrected. Pakistan has a chronic problem with external liabilities, which centre on

Pakistan's inability to produce goods and services that can be sold outside. During the PTI government's period, after almost a decade of stagnation the country moved the needle from an average of \$2 billion monthly export to around \$2.5 billion average monthly export.

This was made possible by a less rigid stand on exchange rate but also by offering incentives to exporters including providing them with useful market intelligence to sell better in export markets. Similarly, this has come about by making the regulatory environment more conducive for startups. This year alone, Pakistan has received over \$500 million in investment in around 400 startups. There is a long way to go to fix the economy, but the trajectory seems to be correct.

Lastly, the PTI government highlighted the need for a government that invests in the people and in systems versus one that spends on brick-and-mortar projects. The PTI government stressed on improving the governance arrangements (civil service reforms were brought in), more responsible government (through initiatives like the Citizen's Portal), more transparent government (through ministers' annual appraisal). Some of these programmes have been successful, others have not. But on a narrative level, the debate has become deeper than the earlier approach that the

government continues to build roads and infrastructure and does not worry about or invest in the software and management systems to run these infrastructures.

There are some successes on the external front. For example, the exit of the US from Afghanistan in a relatively peaceful manner, the world coming back to Pakistan in the form of OIC countries' foreign ministers conference taking place in Pakistan, broadening Pakistan's foreign policy beyond India and the US.

I only wish the PTI had worked together with other stakeholders and treated them as partners not adversaries. A lot of energy was wasted in useless hostility with the opposition and undoing some of the good work done by previous governments (metro projects delayed just because the PTI government had no interest in those projects). The corruption narrative also was taken too far, pausing government machinery. Many of the successes I list are successes of Pakistan. These are and must not be viewed as successes that are partisan to a party. Taking an adversarial approach towards the successes of previous governments is a sure way of stagnating Pakistan. The PTI did that but I would very much hope the new governments will go beyond politics of vendetta and forge a positive relationship with the past to move Pakistan forward.

The political crisis

By Muhammad Abdul Basit

After much melodrama, Khan has left the Prime Minister's Office. They come, enjoy the moments, curse the critics, use power against the opposition, and finally go they must before their time.

The incoming one comes with a fallacy that they would be different - only to end up with the same fate that their predecessors go through - again and again; no lesson learnt, no shame felt. No prime minister has ever been able to complete the term in office. From 1947 to 1958, Pakistan saw seven prime ministers and eight cabinets.

Up until the 'same page' remained intact, Khan seemed to be different. There were hopes that he would alter the course of history and become the first prime minister to complete his term. But a supposedly democratic PM couldn't resist himself from dissolving the assemblies when his defeat became most probable. He went to the extreme, considered the constitution to be merely a piece of paper to be broken and thrown into the dust bin, not realizing that democracy has strengthened in Pakistan since 2008 - despite all odds. What he assumed would be a fatal blow to the opposition turned out to be just his unfortunate treacherous act against the constitution.

To secure his own position, he did everything he could. The trump card couldn't do any wonders. Blaming the opposition could not fill the empty bellies of a large population. Continuously invoking religion did not turn Pakistan into a Riyasat-e-Madinah. Narcissism and hero-worshipping could not keep inspiring the majority. Declaring critics as traitors could not scapegoat the government's inefficiencies. The mantra of neutrality rose up and the consequences were felt within a short period of time.

"All wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory", wrote Viet Thanh Nguyen, a Vietnamese American novelist. Khan made the political power tussle a crusade between right and wrong, a battle of Amar bil Maarof versus Nahi anil Munkar, a war between patriots who love a certain party and traitors who oppose it. Politics can be anything but binary thinking.

When the dust settles and memories are written of this political combat, Khan is likely to be seen as one who has, sadly, left a legacy of sheer incompetency, blatant lies, blame game and polluting the political culture with never-ending toxicity while using state resources to portray his positive self-

image. Nothing of which has worked, however. Doing so, Imran Khan has reinforced a dangerous precedent with a much higher magnitude. It is yet to see how the new government will use its power against the outgoing prime minister and his associates. After all, Khan's closest aides were birds who had flown from here and there for the time he was in power. Loyalties shouldn't be expected to remain for long, especially from those who remain a part of every government. The PTI is likely to disintegrate, but Khan's individual popularity will increase nonetheless in the aftermath.

Being a populist, Khan has played his cards well. He has tried to imitate Bhutto. In the United Nations Session, on the question of Kashmir on December 15, 1971, the then foreign minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto expressed his frustration over Great Britain and France on their constant vetoes, and said, "There is no such animal as a neutral animal. You take positions. In that respect we admire the Soviet Union; it took a position, a wrong position, but it took a position."

Prime Minister Imran Khan made a similar analogy, only in a different context and for a different entity. As

prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had sought an independent foreign policy, and effectively tried to mobilize the Muslim world that arguably enraged the United States in the wake of the Arab oil embargo. Now, Khan has tried to make himself seem like Bhutto, but without any rationale. This was being done not to achieve any foreign policy goals, rather to appease the domestic population by raising anti-US slogans.

Khan has called out the Western world for dictating to Pakistan and he has tried to portray himself as the only one who has the courage to say "Absolutely Not" and "Not Slaves" in its face. He has tried to shift the popular discourse in the country from inflation and economic woes to foreign interference. A letter of such magnitude, if true, should otherwise have moved national security with as much magnitude as the Balakot dogfight. Instead, it was waved as a trump card by the prime minister. Khan was building a narrative on anti-US emotions for his own benefit. And surprisingly that has worked well, at least to energize his supporters once again now.

Foreign policy affects the state, building it on popular narratives by any government to achieve its own goals

hurts the state in the longer run. Ironically, Khan forgot that, or he outright ignored the intensity of the matter. Foreign policy under Imran Khan was lately being devised not on rationale but to appease those voters that still had hopes from the PTI. The result is right in front of us. The self-applause, polished with beautiful words and propaganda, have made certain people assume the success of Pakistan in the international arena while the reality is otherwise.

Now that Khan is out, the challenges for the new government are great. First, domestic problems involving inflation, unemployment and poverty. Second, security matters regarding terrorism and radicalization. And finally, foreign policy matters will be difficult to manage. Additionally, all eyes would be on the upcoming general elections for which a new political tussle will start. It is yet to be seen whether the two mainstream parties, the PML-N and the PPP, will resort to the same ways their opponent the PTI used, or if they will show some maturity. If they start political victimization and use religion against Khan using state resources, like Khan himself did against the opposition, there may be unpleasant outcomes.

Tests for PM Shehbaz

By Abdul Sattar

The ouster of Imran Khan may have created a ripple of excitement

among the workers of the PMNL-N but if the party fails to deliver, this euphoria will soon turn into disappointment, prompting people to look for an alternative. The new government faces a myriad of challenges which need meticulous planning and efficient execution of such plans. A few cosmetic steps will not resolve the invertebrate problems the country has been facing for decades.

As Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif himself said, the economy is in a terrible shape, and the government needs to make hectic efforts to improve it. With over \$100 billion in debt, Pakistan faces deficits on all fronts - fiscal and current account. To tide over this, the country needs over \$14 billion a year, which means our debt could hit a whopping \$350 or 400 billion mark in the next two decades. Trade deficits are also affecting an economy that is grappling with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic which has not only wreaked havoc with millions of Pakistanis but poor people all over the world.

Amidst this mountain of challenges, it is positive that the government has taken a few steps to extend help and succor to people belonging to low-income

groups. The raise in salaries and pensions will go some way in mitigating people's economic hardships. The increase in the minimum wage is also very encouraging. Further, the decision to plan in consultation with the provincial governments to address the skyrocketing inflation has created a ray of hope that this government will come up with a package to alleviate economic hardships - but such a plan should be made as early as possible because the people want immediate relief so that they can be at some ease during Eid.

But it is not only challenges on the economic front that this government faces; a number of other challenges could also affect the performance of the Shehbaz-led dispensation. The most pressing is the legitimacy of the new government. The PTI has decided to resign en masse. If the decision is strictly followed, then it will leave more than 100 seats vacant in the National Assembly. If the party also decides to resign from the upper house and provincial assemblies then it could plunge the country into a new crisis, scuppering all chances of reforms that the chief of the PML-N hopes for.

Therefore, it is important to politically settle this issue. One of the ways to cool down political temperature lies in avoiding the politics of vindictive-

ness. Reportedly, the names of a few former ministers, advisers or special assistants have been placed on the Exit Control List, fueling speculations that the new government has a dogged determination to take on PTI supporters and leaders. This could create intense acrimony between the PTI and the incumbent government, forcing Khan loyalists to launch street protests and agitation. Such a situation would create political uncertainty, prompting investors to withhold their investments. The business class has lost billions of rupees over the last few weeks because of the uncertain situation created by the vote of no-confidence and the unpredictability of Imran Khan. If such a condition is allowed to persist, it could deal a severe blow to an economy that needs a modicum of certainty and assurance.

One of the ways to deal with the situation lies in reaching out to the opposition. There must be elements within the PTI that are not comfortable with the recalibration of Khan. Such elements should be engaged and a political dialogue be launched aimed at understanding the grievances of the opposition. The government has already announced that it would hold an in-camera briefing with military officials and the former Pakistani envoy to the US regarding the 'letter'.

The gathering storm

Zamir Akram

War clouds have once again gathered over Afghanistan. Even as American's longest war in its history has ended, the Afghan people are unlikely to enjoy the dividends of peace. In fact, a renewed civil war has already started between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The impact of such a conflict will not remain confined to Afghanistan but will engulf the entire region.

The Taliban have already made extensive territorial gains. They claim to now control 85 per cent of Afghanistan, especially the rural areas and the crucial highways, thereby encircling the major cities with fighting currently raging for the control of Herat, Kandahar and Lashkar Gah. The Taliban are also trying to rebrand themselves, projecting a more tolerant and responsible image in order to increase their domestic and international acceptability.

Rejecting Taliban claims, the Afghan government has asserted that its forces are regrouping to halt the Taliban advance and will retake lost territory. The government has also enlisted local Tajik, Hazara

and Uzbek militia to boost the capabilities of its troops while relying heavily on military support by Washington and New Delhi. In these circumstances, a protracted civil war is now the most likely outcome.

Prime Minister Imran Khan is correct in stating that the Americans made a mess in Afghanistan. Now they are leaving a mess behind. Instead of ensuring a peaceful transition, the Biden administration has rushed for the exits, abandoning Afghanistan to its fate. American "over the horizon" military operations in support of the Ghani government, such as recent air strikes against the Taliban, have encouraged Kabul to reject any compromise solution. The recent meetings in New Delhi between US Secretary of State Blinken and the Indian leadership indicate that India will also militarily assist the Afghan government. The Indian objective was clearly spelt out recently by former Indian Foreign Secretary Sham Seran that an Afghan civil war would be preferable to a Taliban government.

A more sinister aspect of such Indo-

US cooperation, underscored by the meeting between Secretary Blinken and Indian National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, is that Indian and Afghan intelligence agencies would feel encouraged to intensify support for terrorist groups like the TTP and Baloch separatists against Pakistan.

The Chechens, Uzbeks, Uighurs of the ETIM and ISIS will also gain greater freedom of action to increasingly target China, Russia and Iran.

In these circumstances, Afghanistan will not only face further devastation but will also be denied the benefits of its potential role as a hub for regional connectivity. Projects like TAPI and CASA-1000 will remain unimplemented. China's extension of its BRI into Afghanistan as well as its investments in the country would have to be put on hold. For Pakistan, the costs would be even higher - continued instability and security threats on its western and eastern borders, influx of Afghan refugees, and denial of access to the region. Since Afghan instability will have regional implications, the geopolitical interests of

Pakistan, China, Russia and Iran converge on the need for a peaceful transition in Afghanistan and avoidance of a renewed civil war. As such, all four countries have individually and collectively reached out to the Afghan parties. The Taliban have, in their engagement with these countries, stressed their willingness to accept a political solution, sought international recognition and promised to ensure that the Afghan territory is not used against any other country. In a significant development, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told the visiting Taliban leader, Mullah Bradar that the "Taliban... is a pivotal military and political force in the country and will play an important role in the process of peace, re-conciliation and reconstruction there." Similar endorsement for the Taliban has also been expressed by the Russians and Iranians. Efforts by this "Quartet", therefore, hold the most promising option to secure peace in Afghanistan. Intensified collective initiatives by them can still prevent a full scale civil war and lead to a peaceful

transition. While the Ghani government will prove to be a hurdle, it can still be given a safe and honourable exit under conditions that could be guaranteed by the "Quartet". More troublesome would be the spoiler's role by India which views its strategic interests against Pakistan and China being better served by continuing warfare in Afghanistan. But the Indians or the Americans will not deploy their forces in Afghanistan to protect Ghani, having learnt the lessons of history. Consequently, the Kabul government cannot survive for long and would be eventually forced to find a political solution. Pakistan's support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process is laudable. But given the high stakes involved and the obvious Indian interference in Afghanistan, there is need for a proactive Pakistan policy in collaboration with China, Russia and Iran to protect shared national interests. Such a collective approach needs to be based on the ground realities, in particular that the Taliban must play a key role in a future Afghan government.

Blissfully unaware

By Alfred De Zayas

'Fake news' and 'post-truth' are popular neologisms - but they have actually been part of the political landscape for a very long time. We have learned to live with fake news, fake history and bogus law. We swim in an ocean of lies and dis-information, but somehow manage to survive the economic and political sharks all around us.

What is far more worrisome is the phenomenon that there are 'real facts' that cry out for our attention, that demand urgent action, and that our politicians and media treat as non-existent or marginal, eg exorbitant military expenses, skewed national budgets, xenophobic war-mongering, structural violence, military aggression, unilateral coercive measures, financial blockades, the homologation of the media, manifestly unjust laws, the corruption of the 'rule of law' through legal scams and 'lawfare', the penetration of public institutions by intelligence services, the 'weaponization' of human rights, the imprisonment of whistleblowers like Julian Assange, unjust

taxation, tax havens, tax evasion, corporate bribery, economic exploitation, ecocide, extreme poverty, man-made famine, social exclusion, etc.

Now pause, take a breath and ask yourself why these facts are largely ignored or trivialized by politicians and media alike. Why are these 'inconvenient' facts shoved aside, as if they were only of marginal importance or as if they did not exist? Without a doubt these facts engender short-term, medium-term and long-term consequences, create or perpetuate imbalances and spread a vague, destabilizing sense of incoherence and cognitive dissonance.

'Facts without consequences' constitute a sui generis category of reality. These facts may be present and available in the internet and generally acknowledged - but only under the tacit condition that no genuine debate will be conducted and no concrete action will be taken thereon. It is worse than a conspiracy of silence. It is a conspiracy of irresponsibility.

There are also 'books without consequences', books without the urgent, imperative fol-

low-up. Whereas some trash books like Francis Fukuyama's 'The End of History and the Last Man' are given enormous attention, hugely relevant and challenging books by Noam Chomsky, John Mearsheimer, Stephen Kinzer, William Blum, Jeffrey Sachs, Nils Melzer, President Jimmy Carter are published by notable houses, but there is no follow-up. One would have expected that after the publication of Chomsky's 'Manufacturing Consent', Kinzer's 'Overthrow', Sachs' 'The End of Poverty', Melzer's 'The Trial of Julian Assange', Carter's 'Our Endangered Values', or Mearsheimer's 'The Great Delusion' not only polite academic debate and scholarly conferences would follow, but genuine democratic discussion would be conducted in town-halls, in the daily press, in the internet, throughout the spectrum of the media. Politically these and other necessary books were met by silence. They had the potential to advance international law and human rights, and that is precisely why they have been victims of 'benign neglect'.

Maryam Nawaz showers praise on Uncle PM for wasting no time

KARACHI: PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz has showered praise on her Uncle Prime Minister for wasting no time and kept working even during his brief flight to Karachi. In a tweet uploaded on Wednesday, Maryam Nawaz said "This is how it is done when the country is in pain and anxiety. Not a single moment is wasted because this time is the trust of the nation! Well done Shehbaz Sharif." Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif remained busy chairing a meeting about economic matters on his Karachi-bound flight on Wednesday. The prime minister arrived in Karachi on a one-day visit where he was received by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and members of his cabinet at Karachi Airport. Earlier on Tuesday, the prime minister had also summoned an urgent meeting of economic experts to discuss

the current financial challenges faced by the country. Chaired by PM Shehbaz, the meeting was attended by prominent economists who deliberated upon the ways and means to find a solution for financial stability. The prime minister was given a briefing on the data on the national balance sheet and fiscal deficits. Important decisions were taken in line with the recommendations of the experts. INP

PM's commitment to restoring the economy lauded

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's determination to rebuild the economy and country is highly laudable. PM's decision to turn his famous Punjab Speed ?? into Pakistan Speed is a very welcome step, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that PM's decisions have boosted the morale of the people and the business community which was under pressure for four years. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the Prime Minister wants to make Pakistan an investor's paradise to increase employment opportunities for which the business community will extend all possible cooperation to him. Talking to the business community, Mian

Zahid Hussain said that the Prime Minister would improve relations with the United States, Europe, China, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Turkey. The announcement of improving relations with India is also heartening as development becomes difficult in the presence of tensions. No country can stand on its own two feet with tensions on the border, he said, adding that the first priority of the Prime Minister should be to revive the IMF program so that the rupee can stabilize which is necessary to reduce inflation in the country. He said that due to inflation, at least six million people have been left unemployed and 20 million have been pushed below the poverty line in the last regime and their rehabilitation should also be given priority. After the resumption of the IMF program, it is necessary to reduce expenditure and increase revenue, while work on CPEC should be started at a faster pace to increase GDP,

to which the Prime Minister is committed. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the Prime Minister should announce the cabinet as soon as possible and the most qualified people should be given the ministry of finance and energy as the future of the country is in the hands of these two ministries. The Ministry of Energy and Petroleum should be kept under one person so that matters can move forward smoothly and ministers should not get involved in disputes between important ministries like the previous government. The fiscal deficit, which was estimated at Rs3420 billion, is approaching Rs5550 billion which is causing worries. Pakistan has the weakest economy in the region after Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka has officially gone bankrupt and if the previous government was allowed to work for a few more months Pakistan would have officially gone bankrupt, he said. INP



ISLAMABAD: People are swimming and bathing in Rawal Dam to get relief from hot weather in the city.

Army played an exemplary role in constitutional crisis: PEW

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Wednesday said Army played a very positive role during the recent political and constitutional crisis. Army saved the country from tremendous political instability for which the credit goes to General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The judiciary also took timely action and fulfilled the requirements of justice which saved the country from anarchy, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of PEW. During the crisis, some elements were pushing the country towards martial law but their conspiracy was foiled, he added. Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that Gen. Bajwa has always taken decisions in accordance with the national interests and in the way he tackled the recent crisis he proved his mettle.

The imping economy was being ruined by some frustrated politicians while branding hundreds of politicians as traitors made the country a laughing stock but this conspiracy was also foiled. Now defeated elements have started a campaign to discredit the army which can lead to civil war while the nation is looking toward the army to foil the conspiracies. Dr. Mughal said that the Army Chief was second to none in military diplomacy, he remedied the damage done by the previous government's rhetoric and further improved relations with various important countries. The services of the Army Chief to improve the economic situation are also part of history. He had detailed meetings with economists, prominent

investors, and noted business personalities. The role of General Bajwa in opening the Kartarpur corridor, and boosting the morale of the army is highly laudable. In the recent nerve-wracking political crisis, he handled the situation with utmost wisdom and patience and pulled the nation out of the problem allowing the masses and businessmen to take a sigh of relief. Now defeated elements have started a campaign to discredit the army which can lead to civil war while the nation is looking toward the army to foil the conspiracies. Dr. Mughal said that the Army Chief was second to none in military diplomacy, he remedied the damage done by the previous government's rhetoric and further improved relations with various important countries. INP

PTI changes date for Lahore public gathering

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has changed date for its public gathering in Lahore as the party previously planned to hold a power show in the city on March 23 against the ouster of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. According to sources privy to the development, the public gathering of the PTI will now be held on April 21 than 23. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has also rescheduled its public rally in Karachi which was scheduled to take place on April 17. This was announced by former governor Sindh Imran Ismail in a post shared on Twitter. As per the new schedule, PTI Chairman Imran Khan will address the public meeting in Karachi on April 16 (Saturday) instead of April 17. The PTI has launched a public campaign nationwide with Prime Minister Imran Khan scheduled to address public rallies in major cities of the country. The first public gathering will be held in Peshawar today. INP

Shahbaz Gill made Imran Khan's chief of staff

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Shahbaz Gill has been appointed as the chief of staff of the former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The notification of his appointment was issued on Wednesday. On the night between April 9 and April 10, 2022 when voting on the motion was taking place in the National Assembly, his name was placed on no-fly list only to be removed yesterday (Tuesday, April 12) on the order of the Islamabad High Court (IHC). INP

Free travel of school students on Lahore's metro train proposed

LAHORE: The Punjab authorities have been considering a proposal to provide free transport facility of Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) to the school children in Lahore, it was learnt on Wednesday. In the first phase, 200,000 children will be issued travel passes. The metro authorities sought the proposals and recommendations in this regard from the school administrations. The metro pass to students could be availed to go and come back from the school. Orange Line is an automated rapid transit line in Lahore being operated by the Punjab Mass Transit Authority. INP



NEW YORK: Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, during the member states briefing on the UN 2023 water conference, by permanent mission of Tajikistan and Netherlands.

IHC rules to abolish travel restrictions on PTI leaders

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) resumes hearing on Wednesday on the petition filed by Shahzad Akbar and Shahbaz Gill in which they wanted their names to be cleared from the no-fly list. According to details, IHC summoned Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) officials who explained that they had added the names of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders in the stop list on the recommendations of the Islamabad zone. The FIA officials further revealed that two inquiries have been initiated against Shahzad Akbar and Shahbaz Gill which are allegations of abuse of power and creation of assets in excess of income. The FIA personnel asked the Court to grant the agency two days to submit their complete report on the cases which

was rejected by the Chief Justice (CJ) of the Islamabad High Court. The Chief Justice stated that these cheap tricks have now been outdated and the government institutions are here to provide their services for the ease of the citizens, not to work for the governments for their revenge. The Chief Justice of IHC after these comments, barred the FIA officials from harassing the PTI leaders and the court ruled that the travel restrictions levied on Shahzad Akbar and Shahbaz Gill to be abolished. It merits mention here that earlier in a tweet Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Attaullah Tarar had claimed that names of former adviser to prime minister on interior and accountability Shahzad Akbar and former special assistant to prime minister on political communica-

tion Dr Shahbaz Gill have been added in No Fly List by the FIA. Talking to a private TV news channel, Attaullah Tarar said that there are corruption cases against six persons including Azam Khan and Gohar Nafees. There were also reports that these persons would flee the country and added that in the current situation, FIA cannot allow anyone to leave the country. The latest development came a day after the President PML-N Shehbaz Sharif, while taking the floor of the National Assembly after the passage of no confidence resolution against Imran Khan, had said that we will not take revenge or do injustice and expressed the commitment to take forward the country and make it a great nation whilst forgetting bitterness of the past. INP

Akbar Babar hopes ECP will reserve verdict in PTI foreign funding case this month

ISLAMABAD: Akbar S. Babar, petitioner in PTI foreign funding case, on Wednesday hoped that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would reserve its verdict in the case this month. Speaking to the media outside the ECP office in Islamabad following the case's hearing, he accused the party of trying to misguide the election commission. "PTI has dissociated itself from 11 of its bank accounts," he said, and alleged that large amounts of money were laundered which merited inquiry. Earlier, a three-member bench of the ECP, led by the chief election commissioner, heard PTI's counsel Anwar Mansoor's arguments in the case who said that even the Pakistanis holding dual nationalities were considered Pakistani citizens. Mansoor was of the opinion that the scrutiny committee had made a wrong interpretation of section 6 of PPO. "Truth of the matter is that there is no bar under the PPO on a political party to receive funds from abroad," he said, and added that the law on the basis of which the committee had compiled its report even did not exist. PTI's counsel also made it clear that the party had not received funds from any Indian citizen. He asserted that the party had disclosed all amounts it had received from abroad, and had never received even a penny from a 'prohibited' source. INP

Could a cannabis substance replace opioid pain relievers?

Islamabad: Researchers have known about the pain relieving potential of cannabis for decades, but they have had to wait until now to determine how the plant creates such effective substances. Their findings may help provide a solution to the opioid crisis. People can treat chronic pain using a number of different medications. However, doctors commonly prescribe opioids for pain that is constant. Opioids work by attaching themselves to nerve cell receptors in various parts of the body, blocking pain signals that are traveling to the brain. Although effective, the downside of opioids is the risk of addiction — especially when a person takes them for an extended period. More than 130 people in the United States die of an opioid overdose each day, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The problem is so severe that officials have labeled it as a public health crisis. "There's clearly a need to develop alternatives for relief of acute and chronic pain that go beyond opioids," says Prof. Tariq Akhtar, from the department of molecular and cellular biology at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada. According to Prof. Akhtar and other researchers at the university, cannabis could be the key. INP



HYDERABAD: PPP Adviser to chief minister Hyderabad Sagheer Ahmed Qureshi celebrating the victory of PML-N President Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif after being elected as new Prime Minister of Pakistan at makrani para.

Outstanding female pioneer active in CPEC-China Power Hub Generation

ISLAMABAD: Outstanding Pakistani female pioneer Rizwana Ghani has an active role in CPEC-China Power Hub Generation, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. "It is my great honor to arrange the first capesize vessel of coal to Pakistan. At that time, I had to take the boat to the main vessel by using the towing pulley, which was really an adventure but I finished it independently. By now, China Power Hub Generation (CPHGC) is the only enterprise in Pakistan to import coal via capesize vessel," Rizwana said proudly, "as one of the Pakistan's most successful power project with competitive promotion system and cultural harmony of Chinese and Pakistani employees, I feel like a duck to water here." Rizwana Ghani, a Senior Manager Fuel Procurement working at the 2x660 MW China Hub Coal Power Plant Project in Lasbela district, Balochistan. She has more than 14 years of industry experience with almost 6 years of experience with the current CPEC project. "In the beginning I was responsible for the insurance and compliance audit. The major achievement I made was the placement of project construction insurances to the top insurance companies of China, this was also the first experience in my career to interact with the developed insurance sector in China. Secondly, I successfully obtained the dispensation letter issued by the Ministry of Commerce, Government of Pakistan. It enabled our CPHGC project to place the insurances directly to international market throughout

the 30 years life of the project," the management talent noted in an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro. As a working woman, Rizwana also mentioned the challenges she faced, "during my early working days there were some difficulties. Being Pakistani women, the work scope is limited. Usually, women are not inducted to most technical field. But eventually, I gained confidence and skills in technical field like supply chain. Undoubtedly, our project team gave me an equal chance to compete with others." After successfully spending her role as an insurance manager, CPHGC gave her a chance to expand her occupational area. Rizwana. INP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer (Building) CW, Physical Planning & Housing Department District Sibi invites sealed percentage rates tenders based on Composite Schedule of Rates, 2018 Government of Balochistan amended up-to-date from interested contractors/firms for the mentioned below - Earnest Money 2% in shape of call deposit. Tender Fee 2000/- (in shape of green challan form deposited in head account C-02716) And Time limit Two years for each work.

No.	BIPRA Web-TSE No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost
1	TSE-21220450583	CONSTRUCTION OF 10-BADED ICE BRICK MASONRY AT DISTRICT SIBI	14,697 Million
2	TSE-21220450593	ESTABLISHMENT OF PATHOLOGY DEPARTMENT & BLOOD BANK (BRICK MASONRY) AT DISTRICT SIBI	11,611 Million
3	TSE-21220450673	ESTABLISHMENT OF RADIOLOGY DEPARTMENT (BRICK MASONRY) AT DISTRICT SIBI	12,002 Million
4	TSE-21220450743	CONSTRUCTION OF GYN&OB&S & PAEDIATRIC BLOCK (BRICK MASONRY) AT DISTRICT SIBI	18,621 Million

The Procurement shall be carried out in accordance with Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority Rules, 2014. Eligibility: The contractors must have registration with Tax authorities i.e. (NTN & Sales Tax department and BRA) (ii) valid registration with Pakistan Engineering Council in required Category (C4 & above) in relevant discipline i.e. CE01, CE10, (iii) Three years relevant work Experience (iv) Financial Capabilities / Turn-over of Last Two Year Method of Procurement: Single Stage, One Envelope Procedure Bid Security: The Bid must accompany bid security in the form of call deposit of amount specified above in the name of the undersigned from scheduled bank. Bidding / Tender Documents: Tender Documents: The bidding documents can be obtained from the office of the undersigned upon payment (non-refundable) bidding documents fee mentioned above through green challan (the NTN and bidding documents can also be downloaded from www.bccra.gov.pk under TSE No. given above against each schedule. ISSUANCE: The tender documents issued from the date of publication of this NIT upto 29/04/2022 at 11:00 AM during office hours. SUBMISSION: Last date for submission of documents from advertisement published in newspapers up to 29/04/2022 at 12:00 (PM). OPENING: The tenders will be opened on 29/04/2022 at 01:00 (PM). Place of Issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be Address: The Executive Engineer (Building), Physical planning & Housing Department, Jail Road District Sibi. TELEPHONE NO.-0833-9230085, 0333-7984433 E-Mail Address: Executiveengrbldgsibi74@gmail.com Fax No. 0833-9230020 BID VALIDITY PERIOD: Ninety (90 days) TERMS & CONDITIONS: Terms and conditions are mentioned (incorporated) in detail in bidding documents. A procuring agency may cancel the bidding process at any time prior to acceptance of bid/proposal, as per provision in BIPRA rule 2014.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BUILDING) CW, PPAH DEPARTMENT DISTRICT SIBI

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Could the use of stomach acid drugs raise the risk of allergies?

Islamabad: New research has linked the use of prescription drugs for stomach acid to a higher likelihood of developing allergies afterward. Due to the study's design, the results do not prove that gastric acid reducers — such as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) — actually cause allergies. In a Nature Communications paper about their work, however, the authors suggest that the findings "infer" an increased risk of allergy. The data for the study came from health insurance records that cover

around 8.2 million people living in Austria. This number represents 97% of the Austrian population. A team from the Medical University of Vienna (MedUni Vienna) in Austria used the epidemiological data to analyze the use of anti-allergy drugs following the use of prescription medications that reduce stomach acid. As the data came from insurance claims, the team did not analyze actual incidence of allergies, instead using patterns of prescription anti-allergy medications as stand-ins. The analysis showed

that following prescriptions for stomach acid inhibitors, the use of prescription anti-allergy drugs was higher compared with other types of drug. According to the findings, it appears that people who took stomach acid medications such as PPIs had a two-to-three times higher chance of later receiving prescriptions for anti-allergy drugs. Doctors prescribe PPIs to treat various gastric acid conditions, such as gastroesophageal reflux disease. This occurs when acid from the stomach flows backward into the esophagus, or the pipe

along which food travels. Estimates suggest that more than 15 million people received PPI medications in the United States in 2013. The researchers note that gastric acid is vital for food digestion. The acid contains enzymes that break down proteins before they undergo further processing. Gastric acid also protects the digestive system from infection by bacteria and other disease-causing agents. Reducing the production of gastric acid could increase opportunities for allergy-causing substances to enter the gut unchallenged. Such an

influx has the potential to trigger or worsen an allergy. Principal investigator Erika Jensen-Jarolim, of the Institute of Pathophysiology and Allergy Research at MedUni Vienna, cautions people not to use gastric acid inhibitors "any longer than necessary." "They prevent protein digestion, change the microbiome in the gastrointestinal tract, and increase the risk of allergic reactions," she adds. Prof. Saad Shakir, director of the Drug Safety Research Unit in the United Kingdom, describes the research as "hypothesis testing. Online

PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq calls for placing entire NAB staff on ECL

PML-N lawmaker and former speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Wednesday called for placing the entire staff of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) along with its chairman on the Exit Control List (ECL) for their alleged corruption during the PTI-led government.

Talking to the media in Islamabad, Sadiq

accused the accountability watchdog of turning a blind eye to the wrongdoings of the then PTI government and targeting their rivals.

Senior PML-N leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi had on Tuesday also voiced similar sentiments against the NAB and urged his party's newly elected government to dissolve the Bureau and hold its employees accountable.



At a press conference today, Sadiq said NAB was wrong to believe that it could go scot-free for all its "malpractices". "We were always sure of a nexus between Imran Khan and the NAB, and this connection proved true with time."

He also demanded that an investigation into the extravagant lifestyle and "living beyond means" of all

NAB officials should be conducted.

About resignations submitted by PTI lawmakers in the National Assembly, Sadiq alleged that the PTI did not intend to resign from assemblies and that "they are just creating a fake impression on the issue".

He explained that there was a proper procedure to submit a resignation, which included

appearing in person before the speaker. "Resignations are not given the way the PTI has submitted them. They deliberately avoided rules for the process."

To a question about the reservations of the MQM-P, the PML-N leader said the former was a part of the government and an agreement was already in place with them.



KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif received briefing while travelling to Karachi.

South Asia to see slower economic growth as war in Ukraine impedes recovery: World Bank

The World Bank on Wednesday said the South Asian region was now more vulnerable to risks from the volatile external environment due to the impacts of the Ukraine war and persistent economic challenges with slower growth.

In its twice-a-year regional update released on Wednesday, the World Bank said growth in South Asia, already uneven and fragile, would be slower than previously projected. While some countries experienced a solid rebound in GDP growth, it said Afghanistan faced a humanitarian crisis, Pakistan a political crisis and Sri Lanka a balance of payments crisis.

The latest 'South Asia Economic Focus Reshaping Norms: A New Way Forward' projected the region to grow by 6.6 per cent in 2022 and by 6.3pc in 2023. The 2022 forecast was revised downward by one percentage point compared to the January projection. The report said countries in South Asia were already grappling with rising commodity prices, supply bottlenecks, and vulnerabilities in financial sectors. The war in Ukraine would amplify these challenges, further contributing to inflation, increasing fiscal deficits, and deteriorating current account balances. "South Asia has faced multiple shocks in the past two years, including the scarring effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. High oil and food prices caused by the war in Ukraine will have a strong negative impact on peoples' real incomes," said Hartwig Schafer, World Bank Vice President for South Asia. The report said energy subsidies as a per cent of GDP were the highest in Pakistan and also the largest in the region, which meant that price increases in international markets potentially posed a tough fiscal challenge.

The war and its impact on fuel prices could push the region with the much-needed impetus to

reduce reliance on fuel imports and transition to a green, resilient and inclusive growth trajectory. The report recommended that countries steer away from inefficient fuel subsidies that tend to benefit wealthier households and deplete public resources.

It said South Asian countries should also move towards a greener economy by gradually introducing taxation that puts tariffs on products that cause environmental damage.

It added that South Asian economies were emerging from the deep Covid-19 recession, burdened by high inflation, rising current account deficits and deteriorated fiscal balances, which were exacerbated by the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Financial sectors in South Asia, already in relatively weakened positions before Covid-19, were effectively supported during the pandemic but were facing renewed challenges.

It noted that rising interest rates in advanced economies could lead to capital outflows, putting pressure on the currencies in countries grappling with high external indebtedness. This is of particular concern in countries with high levels of foreign currency-denominated debt, such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan and the Maldives.

Indicators of ability to pay, such as the ratio of public external debt service to exports and remittances, were the highest in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Another challenge the region faced was the disproportionate economic impact the pandemic had on women. The report included an in-depth analysis of gender disparities in the region and their link with deeply rooted social norms and recommended policies that would support women's access to economic opportunities, tackle discriminatory norms and improve gender outcomes for inclusive growth. Web Desk

Federal govt directs transfer of two officials

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday transferred two key Government officers from their respective posts and are ordered to report to the Establishment Division.

According to details, Additional Director General (DG) of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cyber Crime wing Babar Bakht Qureshi and Additional Secretary Food security Tahir Khurshid are both removed from office.

The orders of these transfers came just days after the new Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif came into power after ousting the former PM Imran Khan from office through a no-confidence motion. INP

PPP MPs' names excluded from police challan in Jokhio murder case

KARACHI: An important development has taken place in the Nazim Jokhio murder case as names of PPP MNA Jam Karim Jokhio, his brother MPA Jam Awaiz Jokhio and six others have been excluded from the case.

The investigation officer of the case, Siraj Lashari, submitted the challan to the anti-terrorism court. In the challan, Haider, Mairaj and Niaz have been nominated as accused in the case.

The judicial magistrate Malir had ordered to include anti-terrorism clauses in the case.

The family of Nazim Jokhio alleged that PPP MPA Jam Awaiz Gohram Jokhio and his men had allegedly tortured Nazim, aged 30, in Memon Goth area of Karachi to death in October 2021. The PPP leader was

fumed as Nazim tried to stop his foreign guests from hunting houbara bustards. When the foreign guests continued with their hunting, Nazim filmed them and uploaded the video on social media. After some days, Nazim was abducted and his tortured body was found in the farmhouse of MPA Jam Awaiz in Murad Goth, Malir in November 2021. There were bruises and abrasions on his body.

Police registered a murder case against PPP MPA Awaiz, his brother MNA Jam Karim and others. They detained Awaiz but Jam Karim left the country and flew to Dubai.

Police nominated detained MPA and four others as accused in their charge sheet and shown MNA Jam Karim as an absconding suspect in the case. INP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Ombudsman for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplace (FOSPAH) Kashmala Tariq addressing seminar. Chairman NADRA Muhammad Tariq Malik, also present.

Reviving economy a test for PM Shahbaz Sharif, says Shahid Rasheed

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Wednesday said the masses and business community are pinning high hopes on Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif. People are positive that PM Sharif has the will and ability to steer the country out of the current economic mess, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that disappointed people and dejected investors have breathed a sigh of relief as soon as Shahbaz Sharif became the Prime Minister. He said that Shahbaz Sharif will have to face serious challenges including economic and political crisis, inflation, resumption of the stalled IMF program, deteriorating relations with the Western powers, the shortage of water for agriculture and the resurgence of militancy in some parts of the country.

Reviving the broken economy will be the toughest task for him that will be a test of abilities in which he will remain successful, he hoped.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that PTI had done nothing but revengeful politics and damage the economic foundations of the country through wrong decisions. During the PTI government, a good number of the population was pushed below the poverty line and millions of businesses went bankrupt. Former PM Imran Khan should accept his defeat, have some mercy on the country, and stop fanning the flames of political instability in the interest of the country, he demanded. He said that the country would have gone bankrupt two years ago without billions of dollars in aid for the coronavirus outbreak, adding that as long as the volume of dollars coming into the country is less than the number of dollars going abroad, the rupee will continue to depreciate because exports and remittances are less than required. He said that SBP has raised interest rates to save the economy otherwise dollar would have jumped to Rs200 but the business community is criticizing. INP

AIT, business leaders congratulate Shehbaz Sharif for being sworn in as PM

LAHORE: The Anjuman-I-Tajran and business leaders Wednesday warmly greeted Shahbaz Sharif for assuming the office of democratically elected Prime Minister of Pakistan.

In a joint press statement issued here, "Founder" group senior member Meher Kashif Younis former senior Vice President Lahore chamber and President Anjuman-I-Tajran Lahore Shahid Nazir who is also member executive committee Lahore chamber said Shahbaz Sharif during his successful result oriented tenures as CM Punjab showed his mettle of good governance even in odd circumstances. He said rapid development in every sphere of life was vividly evident in the province which speaks of his crystal clear wisdom based vision. They said, "We business community expects that under the dynamic and sagacious leadership of Prime Minister, all out hectic efforts will be made on top priority to put the fractured economy on right track by restoring the confidence of foreign

and local investors", he added.

They hoped that urgent prudent economic policy decisions will be taken on war footings after taking all stakeholders into confidence to gear up agriculture, industrial, IT and construction sectors etc for igniting slow paced economic growth. He said major economic challenges cash-strapped Pakistan facing is rising graph of abject poverty, higher rate of unemployment, inherited external and domestic indebtedness coupled with widening trade deficit and laced with low investment. Meher Kashif said our economic growth is dependent on exports for fetching hard earned foreign exchange to finance ever increasing imports bill, service debt, stabilizing the currency frequent fluctuations and to do away with persistent problems of payments of deficit. Senior member of Founder group finally hoped that new leadership will address all chronic economic crisis confronting Pakistan by scaling down the inflation. INP

Chery's full of confidence in China-Pakistan automobile collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Chery Automobile Co., Ltd, completed the body shop trials for its Tiggo Series, which is the company's first body trial and assembly trial out in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday.

This means that Chery's first model will complete its SOP and be presented to consumers by the end of this month, after 3 months since the production started in January.

Like other Chinese brands that have invested in vehicle manufacturing factories in Pakistan, Chery is optimistic about Pakistan's advantages in developing auto industry. Felix Hu, country director of Chery Automobile in Pakistan, stated in an interview with Gwadar Pro that, "based on Pakistan's huge potential market size, supportive policies for attracting foreign automobile investors and opportunities brought by CPEC, we have landed Chery's first RHD (Right Hand Driving)

CKD project in Pakistan, which is a local manufacturing project with long-term development considerations."

Chery launched its new RHD strategy in 2019 and selected seven countries as key potential markets for RHD, including Pakistan. It has partnered with Ghandhara Nissan Ltd to invest Rs. 2.4 billion in Pakistan's production of Tiggo Series SUVs in January 2021.

Felix revealed that Chery is promoting the listing of the company in Pakistan next month. It will continue to focus on the Pakistani market and satisfy the local consumers. The company also plans to export from Pakistan to other RHD countries in the near future.

At present, Chery Automobile's products include saloon cars and SUVs. Choosing to manufacture SUV models in Pakistan is based on the fact that the global consumption trend is upgrading from cars to SUV. INP

Chronic depression: Form of CBT may fail after 2 years

Islamabad: New research compares the long term effect of two different forms of therapy for chronic depression and finds that the benefits of one approach, which experts developed specifically for this form of depression, fade 2 years after the treatment ends. According to estimates, 3-6% of people are likely to experience chronic depression at some point during their life. Unlike episodic depression, chronic depression — also known as persistent depressive disorder or dysthymia — is a condition that lasts for 2 years without interruption. However, it's not just the duration of the condition that separates chronic depression from episodic major depression. Chronic depression significantly interferes with day-to-day activities, raises the risk of suicide, and is more likely to occur alongside other psychiatric disorders. Chronic depression is also likely to be more severe and more difficult to treat than episodic

major depression.

In chronic depression, the chances of relapse are higher, so in addition to antidepressants, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two, people with chronic depression need a form of maintenance therapy to ensure that they stay in remission.

So far, the cognitive behavioral analysis system of psychotherapy (CBASP) has been the only type of therapy that experts have designed specifically for treating chronic depression, and several trials that compared it with antidepressants found the approach to be successful. But, how does CBASP fare in the long term? New research, appearing in the journal *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, investigates.

Elisabeth Schramm, from the department of psychiatry and psychotherapy at the University of Freiburg in Germany, is the lead author of the new study, which compares the benefits of CBASP with those of "supportive. INP

PCMEA felicitates Shahbaz Sharif on assuming PM's office

LAHORE: The Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) congratulated Shahbaz Sharif on assuming the office of Prime Minister and expressed the hope that the new government would take steps to address the daunting challenges facing the country, boost trade and economy especially stakeholders will be involved in the consultation process to promote exports.

Group leader of the Association Abdul Latif Malik, Senior Vice Chairman Ejaz-ur-Rehman, Senior Executive Member Ejaz-ur-Rehman, Usman Ashraf, Saeed Khan, Muhammad Akbar Malik in their joint statement said that the proposals submitted by all chambers across the country, including the Lahore Chamber, should be made part of the upcoming financial budget.

They said the country is currently facing problems such as

rising inflation, trade deficit, decline in many export sectors including handloom carpet industry and rising debt but we expect Shahbaz Sharif to address them with his foresight and overcome these crises after properly consulting with stakeholders.

The business leaders said that a sustainable economy requires a lot of time but for this it is necessary that we make progress without any delay starting from today and the government should take extraordinary decisions to develop the economy. They further hoped that the new Prime Minister and his economic team would continue their tireless efforts for the economic development and prosperity of the country and all stakeholders will be taken into confidence in formulating policies related to trade and economy so that the positive results of these policies can be seen. INP



KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visiting MQM-P markaz bahadabad.

Girl murdered by father, brother for refusing to marry old man

KARACHI: Another incident of brutal murder came to light in Karachi on Wednesday in which a woman was murdered by her own father and brother on her refusal to tie knot with an old man.

The accused after killing the girl said that she committed suicide to evade their arrest by the police. But the investigators solved the case on technical basis and arrested the father and son for murdering the girl.

According to SSP West Farrukh Raza, the Uzbekistani father, resident of Gulshan Mamar, betrothed his daughter to an old man against the will of his daughter who used to like another man.

During investigation, the accused confessed that girl's brother subjected her to torture for her refusal to get married to the man chosen by them. The infuriated brother strangled her with her Dupatta and killed her.

Then the father and son duo buried her body and spread the word among neighbours that the girl committed suicide because they refused to allow her to contract love marriage.

The SSP further said that father Shah Mir and son Bahauddin buried the body of the girl in Afghan Basti.

During investigation, when some doubts and uncertainties emerged, the police relied on technical basis to solve the case and was able to reach the culprits. INP

Heroin-filled capsules recovered from passenger's stomach

ISLAMABAD: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) Rawalpindi Wednesday arrested from the Islamabad International Airport a suspect who was concealing 78 capsules of heroin and four capsules of ice in his stomach.

According to the ANF spokesperson, the accused identified as Kashif Ahmed, a resident of Buner, was arrested when he was ready to board the PIA flight PK-187 to leave for Bahrain.

"A total of 644 grams of heroin and 35 grams of ice were recovered from the capsules," said the spokesperson.

"The accused was taken into custody during routine checking," he added.

"A case has been registered against him under Anti-Narcotics Act. Further investigation against him is underway," he stated. INP

Sherry Rehman says PTI's politics giving rise to hatred, chaos in country

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Vice President and Senator Sherry Rehman said Wednesday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) style of politics was giving rise to hatred and chaos in the country.

"The charged followers of Imran Khan are setting a very dangerous trend in the country, and the PTI leadership is responsible for that because the workers usually do on social media as well as in everyday life what their leadership asks them to do," she said.

"An anti-American narrative is being developed to avoid questions about performance. People are fed up with your narratives, for they know that your new narrative is no different from your past attempts to gain votes," she said to the PTI leadership.

She stated that the PTI's narrative against corruption was also a lie, adding that before the PTI government, Pakistan was ranked 117th in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI). "But, it was ranked 140th in 2021 in the CPI due to the PTI government." The PPP leader said that the narrative of corruption and accountability had been exposed, and therefore, the PTI was looking for a new narrative in "threat letter. INP

Sarwar Foundation starts distributing Ramadan rations among Imams, staff of mosques

LAHORE: Sarwar Foundation in collaboration with Muslim Aid has started distributing Ramadan rations to Imams and other staff of mosques in different districts of Punjab. In the first phase, rations are being distributed in 5,000 mosques, while the supply of rations will be extended to more areas in the coming days. INP