

QUETTA VOICE

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President for adopting IT tools by youth for accelerated development



Petrol per liter now at Rs.233 and diesel 263 in Pakistan

PM nominates Quetta heroic driver Faisal for medal of courage

Dawood Ahmed
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif invited Quetta's heroic driver Muhammad Faisal Baloch to the PM Secretariat in recognition of his bravery. The Premier nominated Muhammad Faisal for the medal of courage award. Faisal had put his life at peril by driving a burning oil tanker to save precious human lives and a petrol pump on Quetta's Qambrani Road. This daily had



given the breaking news and first inter-

view of driver Faisal. Prime Minister secretariat's head of strategy reforms Salman Sufi had contacted this daily and sought details about Faisal. Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Qudus Bizenjo has already announced Rs. 5 lakh for driver Faisal. Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa had also appreciated the heroic driver and Brigadier 12 Corps had awarded an appreciating shield and cash prize to Muhammad Faisal.

NP delegation meets Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

Dawood Ahmed
ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the National Party (NP) called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday at the PM Secretariat. Former Chief Minister Balochistan and Chief of NP Dr. Malik Baloch led the delegation. Senator Mir Tahir Bizenjo, Senator Akram Dashti, Kabir Muhammad Shahi and others were also present on the occasion.



The delegation discussed issues relating to Balochistan with Prime Minister. The NP delegation conveyed its serious concern over the use of police force against the family members of Baloch missing persons in Karachi, a statement issued by the party said. The Premier assured addressing the grievances of families of Baloch missing persons and political workers, the statement concluded.

Shaheen Afridi meets former PM Imran Khan

Dawood Ahmed
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi on Wednesday met with former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan here in Islamabad. The Pakistan pace sensation Afridi met with PTI chief Khan at the latter's Bani Gala residence. During the meeting, matters related to cricket and promotion of sports in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) were discussed. The PTI chief also lauded the performance of national team in ODI series against the West Indies. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan also attended the meeting.

On the other hand, Pakistan's ace pacer bowler, Shaheen Afridi has moved up to the fourth spot in the latest ICC bowler rankings. New Zealand pacer, Kyle Jamieson moved down from the third spot to the sixth spot which has resulted in Jasprit Bumrah, Shaheen Afridi and Kagiso Rabada climbing one spot. INP

BUDGET 2022-23: Karachi to get more diesel-hybrid buses

KARACHI: The Sindh government has earmarked Rs4 billion in the next financial year budget 2022-23 for procuring more buses to be run in Karachi under its Sindh Peoples Intra-district Bus Project. In his budget speech at the Sindh Assembly, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that during outgoing financial year 2021-22, the Sindh government had spent Rs6.4bn for procurement of 250 buses. "For next financial year, Rs4 billion has been earmarked for the same purpose," he said. "The Peoples Bus Service will have 250 buses to be operated on seven routes of Karachi and one route of Larkana," he said, adding that consultations were under way with China and Turkey for addition of more fleets. Murad went on to say that the transport department is also establishing modern terminals at Karachi, Thatta and Badin in the first phase. It is pertinent to mention here that Sindh govt recently procured 140 buses for Karachi under its Peoples Bus Service project. The buses will run on seven different routes of the port city from next week. After the test run on first route, which covers 29.5-km area from Model Colony to Tower, the same exercise. INP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a review meeting at Rashakai SEZ.

QESCO facing 1000 MW shortfall in Balochistan: Engineer Karim Jamali

Manan Mandokhail
Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO), Engineer Karim Jamali on Wednesday said that Balochistan was facing a shortfall of around 1,000 mega watt. Talking to Quetta Voice in an exclusive interview, Mr. Jamali said the company was forced to conduct forced load shedding because of the increasing shortfall in the province. QESCO Chief's comments have come after protests against unannounced and prolonged load shedding in Quetta and other parts of Balochistan. "We are trying hard to meet growing demands of the consumers," he said. QESCO's outstanding over Rs.4 trillion in Balochistan. Mr. Jamali revealed that outstanding of QESCO against consumers in Balochistan was over Rs.



4 trillion. "Most of the consumers don't pay bills", he claimed. The QESCO Chief thus asserted that the company was providing power supply to the consumers who pay their bills timely. "We are conducting daily 200 mega watt forced load shedding", he stated. He claimed that the company was trying hard to bring an end to unannounced load shedding in Balochistan to address the grievances of the masses. "We are conducting daily 200 mega watt forced load shedding", he stated. He how-

ever explained that the issue of forced load shedding can be ended if the federal government provided extra 800 mega watt in Balochistan. 712 feedars operating in Balochistan. He mentioned that there were a total of 712 feedars in Balochistan. When asked about the grievances of the masses, he informed that QESCO has established control room to timely respond to the peoples complaints. Although, the consumers complain that the control room is not fully functional and they don't get any response from QESCO. Mr. Jamali mentioned that QESCO has established social media groups to easily interact with concerned officials regarding load shedding and bills issues. He however urged the people to cooperate with the company to bring an end to power theft in Balochistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Of Kazakhstan Yezhan Kistafin called on Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ehsan Ur Rehman Mazari.

President for adopting IT tools by youth for accelerated development

GILGIT: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday urged the need to accelerate the pace of adopting emerging Information Technology tools for rapid socio-economic development of the country. Addressing the 10th convocation ceremony of the Karakoram International University (KIU), the president said by focusing on the human resource development of youth and equipping them with marketable skills, Pakistan could achieve fast-paced socio-economic growth within a short span of time. The president underlined the need to financially empower women by including them in the mainstream economy and providing them jobs in different professions. He also urged the female graduates to remain part of the workforce as the State and society had made a huge investments in their education. Dr Alvi said the latest information technology tools had enabled women to undertake part-time jobs and offer their services online from their homes. He said business loans on easy terms and conditions had made finances available for women entrepreneurs, however, he stressed the need to increase the number of such loans. The president highlighted that during the 80s and 90s, Pakistan exported its best human resource abroad which depleted the country of qualified and highly skilled human resources. He said that conducive conditions to retain skilled human resources in the country must be created to ensure fast-track progress and development. The president urged the youth to combine their knowledge and skills with high moral values and ethical standards for a productive professional life. He said it was the added responsibility of educated sections of society to bring the uneducated and unskilled population into the mainstream by providing them with knowledge and skills. INP

Father kills prayer leader for slapping his son in Killa Abdullah district

Sardar Muhammad Khondai
CHAMAN: An enraged father opened fire and killed a prayer leader for slapping his son in Balochistan's district Killa Abdullah. The prayer leader identified as Maulavi Niamatullah had slapped the minor boy for not remembering the lesson, a senior administration officer Abdul Razzaq said. The incident happened in the Killi Penakai area of district Killa Abdullah near the Pak-Afghan border. The minor boy returned home while weeping. The enraged father and grandfather went to the Masjid and killed the prayer leader on the spot. Mr. Razzaq informed that the grandfather, Torak Khan and the father Khalil Khan had murdered the prayer leader. "The prayer leader received three bullets", he mentioned. "The prayer leader had slapped the minor boy for not remembering the lesson". Both the accused Torak Khan and Khalil Khan fled from the spot. Levies reached the spot as an investigation into the incident went under-



way. A case was also registered against both the accused in connection with the murder of the prayer leader. The prayer leader's dead body was shifted to district headquarters hospital Chaman. The victim belonged to the Zhoob district of Balochistan. The family members of the prayer leader reached Chaman and levies registered a case against both the accused on their application. The dead body of the prayer leader was then shifted to Zhoob for burial. The prayer leader was teaching religious education to the children for last more than a decade.

Petrol per liter now at Rs.233 and diesel 263 in Pakistan

News Desk
The federal government has increased the prices of petroleum products on Wednesday night. Addressing a news conference, federal finance minister, Miftah Ismail announced that the new petrol prices have been fixed because of an increase in the international market in the prices. As per the new prices, per petrol liter would be available at Rs. 233 and per liter diesel at Rs. 263. This government has increased the prices because of an increase in petroleum products on the international level. "We would try to give relief to the masses", Miftah Ismail said.

Pakistani rupee continues slide against US dollar

KARACHI: The rupee continued its downward trend against the US dollar in the interbank market as the greenback gained Rs1.21 during early trading. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the greenback appreciated Rs1.21 and climbed to Rs206.37 during intraday trading. In the open market, the US dollar is being sold between Rs 207 and Rs 208, said forex dealers. The greenback appreciated Rs1.35 and closed at Rs205.16 the other day, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). According to experts, the local currency is losing streak against the greenback owing to a delay. INP

Govt duty-bound to ensure journalists' protection: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Wednesday observed that the government was duty bound to ensure protection of journalists so that they could perform their professional duties without any fear. He made this observation after

journalists walked out of the press gallery of National Assembly in protesting of different incidents including target killing of brother of a journalist in Layyah and the purse snatching incident in Chak Shahzad locality in which a female reporter had been deprived of her belongings. INP

'I did not issue political statements,' DG ISPR says on NSC comments

Director-General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Ifikhar said Wednesday he "did not issue political statements" when he commented on the outcomes of the National Security Committee (NSC) meeting which reviewed the alleged "threat letter" from the United States. The DG ISPR, during an interview with a private television channel a day earlier, had said the military leadership was present during the NSC meeting and the participants were briefed. "They were briefed that there was no conspiracy or evidence of any kind [against the then government], nothing like that happened. Participants were told in detail that there was no evidence of any conspiracy," the DG ISPR had said. But responding to the military's spokesperson earlier in the day, PTI General-Secretary Asad Umar said during a press conference that he believes that "it would be better for the army and the country if the ISPR director-general doesn't find it necessary to interpret political affairs again and again." In response, DG ISPR, while talking to another private television channel today, said he did not make any "political statements", rather it was a clarification, on behalf of the services chiefs of the Pakistan armed forces. "I am the spokesperson of the services chiefs, if someone speaks something about the services chiefs, then I will have to clarify it — there is nothing political about this," he said. The DG ISPR said he, in the previous interview, responded to the claims of ex-interior minister Sheikh Rasheed that "none of the services chiefs in



the NSC meeting said that there was a conspiracy". "He was in a way trying to convey that he was speaking on their behalf," the DG ISPR said, stating that he was the spokesperson of the services chiefs. The NSC, convened to review the alleged threat letter, ruled out a foreign conspiracy behind the ouster of the PTI-led government in a setback to ex-prime minister Imran Khan's narrative of a "regime change conspiracy". In today's interview, the DG ISPR also said the services chiefs had provided detailed input to the meeting and they had presented information based on intelligence reports, not mere speculation or opinion. "This cannot be considered as someone's opinion, it was a proper briefing based on intelligence reports," Maj Gen Ifikhar said. On the demands of the formation of a judicial commission to probe the matter, the DG ISPR said the military was ready to support the investigation in any way possible. "By all means, judicial commission or whatever forum the government of the day decides [...] the institution will provide complete assistance," the military's spokesperson said. The DG ISPR, in response to a question, said it was not for the military to decide which functions should people perform. PTI's general secretary, in his presser earlier today, had demanded the formation of a judicial commission on the "foreign conspiracy" allegedly carried out to topple the previous government. Web Desk

QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

LBs results Balochistan: independents won thumping majority

Independents' overwhelming majority in the recently held local bodies elections in Balochistan put a question mark over the performance of political parties. In a major shift, so far, independents have won 1882 seats of councilors across Balochistan.

Around a dozen political parties have won less than, the independents' seats as per the unofficial and unconfirmed results of over 3,000 seats. Over 17,000 candidates were contesting for 4,556 councilors' seats in 32 districts of Balochistan.

Independents' victory gives more questions than answers. Despite being in politics for decades, why have the political parties failed to reach out to the masses at the grassroots level? LBs polls portray a true political picture of Balochistan since no serious allegations of elections fraud were reported and no major untoward incident took a place. In the past, elections in Balochistan were always marred by major terror attacks against candidates and voters.

Also, read this: LBs polls Balochistan: Independents secure more seats than 10 political parties

Almost all political parties accepted the results and declared victories in their respective strongholds. When we speak about independents, it means we speak about individuals and personalities. When individuals and personalities penetrate among the masses and address their issues, then, the majority of the people set aside political ideologies. This is a bitter reality in today's politics. Some may not agree with this.

Look at the victory of Maulana Hidayat ur Rehman's Gwadar Right Movement, which swept elections in Gwadar confronting the four-parties alliance including the Balochistan National Party (Mengal), National Party (NP), Jamiat ul Ulema e Islam (JUI) and Pakistan National Party (PNP).

Indeed, no death of political workers who ignore perks and privileges and to their respective political parties' ideological lines. Although, recent poll results show, that the number of such political workers was less.

The political parties have to revisit and review their strategy in this regard.

Above all, the elections were peaceful except few violent acts among rival political groups in Chaghi, Noshki, Dera Murad Jamal, and Chaman. By and large, the government and masses succeeded in holding peaceful elections.

Continuity of the system will improve the system further. Now it is about time to grant all constitutional, administrative and financial powers to the local governments so that they could serve the country and nation in a better way.

Struggles of the worker

By Marcus Day

Millions of workers in the US and around the world are being pushed to the brink by the staggering impact of rising prices for essential goods and services. "We can't continue to live like this" is the sentiment gripping ever-growing numbers of people.

Inflation in the US surged 8.6 per cent year over year in May, surpassing economists' estimates. This was the fastest increase in consumer prices since 1981, more than 40 years ago.

Gasoline prices surged the most, rising 48.7 per cent from last year, up 7.8 per cent in just one month. A gallon of gasoline cost a record average of \$5.01 as of Sunday. In many of the country's most populous metro areas, the price is significantly higher, averaging nearly \$6.50 in Los Angeles, close to \$6.00 in the Chicago region and approximately \$5.60 in Phoenix, Arizona.

A substantial portion of workers' paychecks is being eaten up simply to pay to get to work. In the US, it is not uncommon for workers to commute 50 miles or more roundtrip, refueling multiple times a week. One day's work on a \$15 an hour wage will now not even cover filling up a tank of gas in many trucks and larger vehicles, the cost of which can easily exceed \$100.

Beyond fuel, surging costs for many goods and

services are making life more and more impossible. Families are spending an additional \$460 per month for essentials, according to a recent Moody's Analytics report.

Food prices rose 10.1 per cent overall in May. Prices for meats, poultry, fish and eggs increased 14.2 per cent; dairy products 11.8 per cent; and fruits and vegetables 8.2 per cent. A gallon of milk is now averaging \$4.33, and the price of a dozen eggs hit \$2.86, up more than \$1 from a year ago, according to data from the Federal Reserve of St. Louis.

Even as rising food prices mean that more people will be choosing which meal they will have to skip today, the Democrats and Republicans are planning to throw millions of children into even greater hunger. Congress deliberately failed to renew an extension of COVID-related free school lunch programs in its last spending bill, meaning that an estimated 10 million children will no longer receive free meals after the end of the month.

Meanwhile, the housing affordability crisis is worsening. Average rents increased 15.2 per cent compared to a year ago, according to real estate company Redfin. The median monthly rent being asked for apartments hit a record \$2,002 in May, the

firm said.

Home ownership, out of reach for many before, is now completely inaccessible for large portions of the population for the foreseeable future. The median listing price for a home hit \$447,000 in May, an increase of 17.6 per cent from 2021, while average home loan rates are hitting their highest levels in more than a decade.

With rising prices, workers are making less in real terms than they did a year ago, falling further and further behind. Real wages fell 3 per cent between May 2021 and May 2022, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Friday.

The pro-corporate trade unions bear central responsibility for this brutal retrogression, having pushed workers into contracts that lock in raises of just 2-4 per cent, far below inflation, while often raising out-of-pocket health care costs. The average wage hikes for unionized workers (3.5 per cent) were actually less than for non-union workers (4.9 per cent) over the last year, according to the latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Inflation has become the focal point of workers' anger. However, rising prices and falling wages are among a whole series of social grievances building up in the working class. There are the

degrading sweatshop conditions, overwork, understaffing, six or seven-day workweeks, the ongoing pandemic and deadly working conditions. Then there are the manifestations of the capitalist breakdown more broadly, such as recent shortages of everything from baby formula to tampons. All these issues and more, directly and indirectly, are driving workers into struggle.

Significant battles by workers have already emerged this year, from the ongoing six-week-long strike by CNH farm and heavy equipment workers, to the earlier walkouts by Chevron oil workers in California, strikes by nurses in California and New Jersey, teachers in Minneapolis and Sacramento, as well as opposition among Arconic aluminum workers, Kroger grocery store workers and many others.

New sections of workers are set to enter into battle in the coming weeks and months. More than 12,000 Minneapolis and St. Paul nurses are currently working without a contract, and contracts are set to expire for 20,000 West Coast port workers, 50,000 construction workers in Southern California, 5,000 University of Michigan Hospital nurses and tens of thousands of teachers in Los Angeles and New York City. Three thousand car haul truck drivers, who

have already overwhelmingly voted to strike, will learn the details Thursday of the concessionary contract the Teamsters agreed to.

The development of the class struggle is an international process extending far beyond the borders of the US. Rising fuel prices triggered strikes by truck drivers in South Korea last week. In the UK, 50,000 rail workers are set to strike later this month, in the largest series of rail strikes since the late 1980s. And in Sri Lanka, out-of-control inflation and shortages of basic goods have provoked mass anti-government demonstrations and a series of one-day general strikes this year. In every case, however, workers are coming into headlong conflict with the unions that claim to represent them. At the same time, the corporate and political establishment, in particular the Biden administration, is relying ever more heavily on the trade union bureaucracies to enforce "labor discipline," i.e., the suppression or isolation of strikes and other forms of worker opposition. The ruling class is well aware of the explosive implications of its policies. "If people can't feed their children and their families, then the politics unsettles," David Beasley, head of the United Nations World Food Programme,

A change for the worse

By Hussain H Zaidi

Prior to the exit of Imran Khan, in 1989 a no-trust motion was voted upon against the then prime minister Benazir Bhutto. The contrasting manners in which the ruling party of the day reacted to the no-trust motion on each occasion is a grim pointer to the direction in which our politics has moved since 1989 - by all accounts, a turn for the worse.

In a parliamentary democracy, the executive is the creation of parliament. Being the chief executive, the prime minister must enjoy the confidence of the majority of the popularly-elected legislature - in our case the National Assembly. That is the reason one of the first agenda items after the election of the presiding officers in a newly elected parliament is to ascertain who enjoys the confidence of the majority of the members.

In some countries, as in India, the prime minister is appointed by the president. After his/her appointment, the prime minister is bound to seek a vote of confidence from the popular chamber within the stipulated period. In case he fails to do so, he has to call it quits. In India, in 1996, Atal Bihari Vajpayee stepped down as premier only a fortnight after being sworn in having failed to win the vote of confidence from the Lok Sabha.

Taking due cognizance of this fundamental convention of parliamentary

form of government, Article 91 (3) of the constitution of Pakistan states: "After the election of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, the National Assembly shall, to the exclusion of any other business, proceed to elect without debate one of its Muslim members to be the Prime Minister." Clause (4) of the same article adds: "The Prime Minister shall be elected by the votes of the majority of the total membership of the National Assembly."

Logically, if the National Assembly by a majority can elect a member as prime minister, it can also vote them out. Hence, Article 95 of the constitution stipulates that if a motion of no-confidence is passed by a majority of the total membership of the National Assembly, the prime minister shall cease to hold office. Thus the popularly elected assembly's power to vote out the prime minister is an essential, non-negotiable feature of parliamentary democracy.

Coming back to Pakistan, in a power struggle, prime ministers have generally been whumped by powerful presidents. However, prior to April 10, 2022 no prime minister had ever been voted out on the floor of the house. The only prime minister who had come close to being voted out was Benazir Bhutto.

The election of the charismatic Benazir Bhutto in 1988 marked the eclipse of a long,

dark era of despotism, against which she had spearheaded a popular movement. Though it had emerged as the single largest party in the national elections, her party, the PPP, fell short of a clear majority and could form the government only with the help of smaller/regional parties and independents, and having reached a power-sharing deal with the then president and other powerful stakeholders. However, all along the weak coalition hung by a thread.

Things came to a head in 1989 when the opposition tabled a non-confidence motion against Benazir Bhutto. In view of the thin majority of the ruling coalition in the National Assembly, the outcome of the motion was anybody's guess. That said, Benazir Bhutto dealt with the opposition's move with all grace and dignity befitting a democratically elected leader. At no point did she term the motion an international conspiracy, although being a leader of international stature, she could have contrived a conspiracy theory without much ado. Her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, it may be mentioned, is widely believed to have been a victim of such a conspiracy.

Nor did she, or any other leader from her party, use abusive language against her opponents, much less accuse them of being morally bankrupt or traitors. She did strongly criticize the

opposition for what she called their undemocratic tactics and allegedly trying to purchase loyalties of her parliamentarians. In return, she took the flak for having allegedly resorted to similar tactics. At that time, the constitution didn't embody provisions against floor-crossing by the legislators and so they were absolutely free to move from one party to another.

It is widely believed that the strings of the opposition, which was led by the then Punjab chief minister and future prime minister Nawaz Sharif, were pulled by the then president Ghulam Ishaq Khan (GIK). But Benazir Bhutto didn't point an accusing finger at state institutions. Nor did she threaten the members of her party who were suspected of defecting, or their families, of dire consequences. To top it all, despite being a hugely popular leader, she didn't seek to defeat the no-confidence motion through a show of strength on the streets. Being a leader who was well-steeped in democratic conventions, she knew well that, far from being an aberration, a non-trust motion was an integral part of the parliamentary form of government.

Equally graceful was the role of the then speaker of the National Assembly and veteran politician, Malik Meraj Khalid, who had already won accolades for conducting the business of

the house in a completely impartial way, as he was supposed to do as per the spirit of his high office. At no point during the whole episode did he demonstrate that he was taking sides. Instead, he went by the book and allowed the no-trust motion to take its logical course. The highest court of the land didn't have to intervene to ensure that the motion was put to vote.

The no-trust motion was defeated by only 12 votes and Prime Minister Bhutto survived. But the cards had already been stacked against her. In a few months, she was sacked by president GIK, by invoking the now-defunct Article 58 (2-b) of the constitution. In a game of fluctuating fortunes, three years later she was back in the saddle having sunk her differences with the same GIK. Politicians can always have more than one bite on the cherry; so political battles may not be taken as a matter of life and death.

The logical question which the events preceding the exit of Imran Khan has given rise to is this: why has politics become such a squalid affair in Pakistan? Certainly, the advent of the 24/7 TV channels and the presence of a ubiquitous social media provide sufficient ammunition to politicians and their supporters to heap slur on their opponents to their heart's content. But the media, mainstream or social, isn't the prime culprit.

Restoring trust

By Jose Gomes Temporao

Last week, Los Angeles hosted the Summit of the Americas amid a thorny period between the governments of the region. While long-running tensions over which countries were invited to attend risked overshadowing the event, the summit was a unique opportunity for Latin American leaders to come together and for President Joe Biden to mend relations with them.

The crisis induced by the Covid-19 pandemic has devastated Latin America. We as a region have not been able to measure, understand and prevent the loss of human life, but it is estimated that Latin America has one of the highest mortality rates in the world. By putting the impact of the pandemic front and centre our governments can exercise the leadership our citizens need today in a region that is already the most unequal in the world.

Comprised of mostly middle-income countries, Latin America's governments have found themselves truly caught in the middle. They do not have resources comparable to those mobilised by wealthy countries in response to the pandemic. But neither can they benefit from international support programmes often targeted only at low and lower-

middle-income countries. As pharmaceutical companies have prioritised selling doses where they can secure the highest profits and without a shared approach to advance the interests of the region as a whole, accessing Covid-19 vaccines has been an uphill struggle for the continent. As a result, more than 200 million people remain unvaccinated across the region.

A combination of large urban populations, heavy chronic disease burdens, weak health systems, and a seriously unequal global vaccine rollout has led some experts to warn that Latin America could be the most vulnerable region in the world to the emergence of a new variant. This is not just a Latin American problem, but a problem for everyone.

With nearly all Latin American governments supporting exemption from intellectual property rules on Covid-19 vaccines, tests and treatments; and considering that some countries in the region have the capacity to manufacture vaccines and modern treatments - US government support for easing patent protection for vaccines, antiviral treatments and life-saving tests could be a game-changer.

The delayed World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, currently bogged down

with proposals that are actually worse than the status quo when it comes to access to medicine, have led countries to seek their own solutions. Countries like Brazil proposed a bill to bypass intellectual property rules, but those efforts to have stalled. Over two years since the appearance of the coronavirus, there is a fear of repeating the same mistakes of the past. We are not cooperating as a region, we are letting the profits of US companies take control.

The behaviour of US pharmaceutical giants has not earned goodwill in the region. Sweeping demands were made of governments and aid programmes in return for supplying desperately needed materials.

Now that lifesaving oral antiviral treatments for COVID-19 have been developed, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that the world is repeating the mistakes made in the first stages of the pandemic. Rich countries are quickly buying the world's initial supply of these treatments, while low- and middle-income nations are unlikely to see any before 2023. Contracts remain shrouded in secrecy. Unicef allegedly had to agree to not disclose how much it had paid Pfizer to access doses of anti-viral treatment Paxlovid. And the company has been publicly condemned.

Mad, bad and dangerous to know

By Dr Naazir Mahmood

When Lady Caroline Lamb described Lord Byron - one of the greatest English poets - as "mad, bad, and dangerous to know", she was of course sharing her personal impressions of Byron.

This expression comes to mind when you look at today's Pakistan and find an entire breed of people who seem to be 'mad, bad, and dangerous to know'. For ease of conversation, let's call them MBD here. There are multiple factors that have contributed to the emergence of this phenomenon among some Pakistanis living at home or abroad. They have made plenty of observers seem clueless about what shape this anomaly would take next. They let rip at the slightest provocation - or even without it. Mostly they are instigated by their leaders who are equally clueless and ready to let rip. What they did in Madina on April 28 is just one example of their uncontrollable behaviour that they have become prone to display.

MBD is not a new phenomenon; we have seen such cases both nationally and internationally. The trick of their leaders is to make such behaviour appear perfectly normal. Some commentators have made comparisons with fascist and Nazi tendencies in Italy and Germany in the first half of the 20th century. We may also recall the Altaf-Hussain times in Karachi, when he unleashed a reign of terror on all who disagreed with him or dared to raise a voice of dissent.

The prime span of fascism and Nazism was

nearly 25 years, after which their steam was snuffed out. Nearly all followers of these ideologies were mad, bad, and dangerous to know. They wreaked havoc within their homelands and on their own people, and they would have continued with their destructive behaviour for decades to come. Even after an end to their violent extremism, their remnants are still around and reemerge here and there with their fossilized thinking patterns and a potential to erupt any moment.

Specific to Pakistan, this intolerance was pioneered by the state itself. A curious and dispassionate reading of history makes facts clear, which Pakistan Studies textbooks tend to hide. Though it will be a slight exaggeration to blame everything on the state, there is ample evidence that state policies and practices cultivate - to a great extent - ideas of self-righteousness and narcissism among common citizens, through education and propaganda. The state loves to nurture birds that fly blind, and this light leads them to mostly wrong destinations. Authoritarianism or pluralism, democracy or dictatorship, humility or hubris, prejudice or tolerance - all are there to crush or groom. The state makes most decisions about where to lead the nation. There are bursts of affection for certain personalities that develop personality cults.

Does this have anything to do with dogmas, religiosity and sectarianism? Of course. The more dogmas are propagated,

the more intolerant people tend to become. Dogma means a blind faith in unquestionable ideologies and personalities. If there is one ideology you can't question, there will soon be more of the same ilk. When you revere a personality at the cost of a more balanced assessment of personal traits, there are greater chances of more leaders emerging with the same claims of infallibility. It becomes a kind of a crusade for their followers to defend their leader at all costs, no matter how destructive or dumb that person may be.

The question is: why does a state nurture or tolerate such mad, bad, and dangerous behaviour? Perhaps the answer lies in understanding the nature of the state itself. In countries such as Pakistan there is always a cosseted elite embedded in the state itself. This elite comes from diverse sections of society: bureaucrats, capitalists, feudal lords, generals, industrialists, judges, and many more. If they are not from the existing elite, the state co-opts them for its own and their benefit. They are mostly complacent in their own attitudes and want to keep the people engaged in one preoccupation or the other.

These elites are safe in their own guarded compounds and their well-defended capital - or they think so. The country carries on its downward spiral from which it always struggles to emerge. When people are exposed to excessive chauvinism, ideological and narcissistic overdoses, religiosity, sectarianism, and xeno-

phobia, they seldom think about their real problems such as illiteracy, unemployment, lack of public healthcare, and shortage of power and water. The elite that composes the state itself is unaffected by these problems and sits comfortably while the people are fed with personality cults and chant slogans against purported enemies. Gradually, malign forces in society take a deep hold of the people who fail to understand the real conspiracies within - while believing in imaginary conspiracies from outer lands. It may be Afghanistan, America, India, or even Iran, hatching sinister plans against Pakistan while our own elite is safe and sound; binging up nearly all sectors of society from education to health to power to security and water and sanitation, and what not. That's how the mad, bad, and dangerous behaviour thrives. There are segments of society that pose a lingering threat to the constitution, democracy, financial stability, and overall health of society but the elite in power does not consider them a threat to itself. Amid this chaos emerge authoritarian personalities who may be from civilian or military backgrounds. They offer precise solutions to imprecise challenges. Such leaders master the art of grabbing people's attention without disabusing them of their false notions. People tend to overlook their leaders' abusive language, their acerbic tongues with brimstone rhetoric. Once these leaders come to power, they try to stack

the country's institutions with pliant people. They bully political opponents, criticize media outlets that refuse to support the great leader, and curb freedoms of assembly and expression.

They develop a mad, bad, and dangerous following that targets even a flicker of resistance. Such people are irrelevant in the broader scheme of things both nationally and internationally - but assume an air of importance as if the whole world is conspiring against them. They struggle to become relevant, and while doing so they inflict even more harm to their country internally - and to its standing externally. Their system of thinking is premised upon a desire to dominate; this desire underpins nearly all their acts, including violence. They try to sound impressive but lack substance. Then what should the state do? An immediate solution is legal proceedings against them. But, unless there is a realization that we need to democratize our society as a whole through education and economic opportunities, there is hardly anything that can control this mad, bad, and dangerous to know lot. Democratization does not mean just holding elections; and modernization is not just reflected in constructing bridges and buildings. What is needed is a democratic outlook that is opposed to authoritarianism; and a modern education that is not chauvinistic, conservative and sectarian. The state needs to initiate and promote a culture of dialogue in education.

Selling lies

By Nick Licata

We are in an era of disinformation. That term is thrown around by all political persuasions to accuse their opponents of not being truthful. The systematic dissemination of disinformation, however, is more than just lying. It is a political strategy in a war to take control of public power. Its intended purpose is to create confusion, which leads to rejecting government institutions entrusted to deliberate over verifiable facts.

There is a significant difference between lying about a particular action or product and a disinformation campaign to undermine public trust in a democratic republic. A classic example of the former is how the tobacco industry lied or created doubt about scientific findings that demonstrated that smoking caused lung and cardiac diseases. Up to the mid-Fifties, the tobacco industry had succeeded in elevating smoking to be one of the most popular, successful, and widely used items of the early 20th century.

In response to the mounting evidence that smoking cigarettes damaged one's health, the tobacco industry hired the nation's lead-

ing public relations firm. The industry followed the consultant's advice and focused its efforts on disrupting the usual processes of knowledge production in medicine, science, and public health. Consequently, the leading tobacco companies embraced the scientific discourse that assumes there is always more to know. The tobacco industry's strategy was to exaggerate that principle in order to spread doubt and uncertainty about the known facts. The tobacco industry's campaign did not attack the validity of scientific institutions to analyze the facts; instead, they accused scientists of not wanting to find the correct data.

Eventually, the tobacco industry lost its battle by paying over \$206 billion through a court settlement. However, that punishment was only achievable because it was delivered by an independent court system that fairly weighed the facts.

Borrowing a page from the tobacco playbook, Donald Trump has not directly attacked the concept of democracy; instead, he undermines the credibility of democratic institutions by accusing them of not treating him and his supporters fairly. For example, he

attacked Congress for not throwing out Biden's electoral votes, and he condemned the courts for their tossing out his 60 cases challenging the outcome of the election. His repeated message was that the election was rigged.

All politicians and political parties can be justly accused of lying from time to time about their accomplishments or their intent to accomplish things they have no power to do. However, past efforts from major political players have stayed within a sandbox of playing with democratic institutions.

Trump stepped outside that sandbox on the night of the 2022 presidential election when he tweeted, "This election is a total sham and a travesty. We are not a democracy!" He mistakenly thought that Obama had won the election without the majority popular vote.

Four years later, Trump won his presidential election without winning the popular vote, but he didn't mention that fact. Instead, when the polls indicated that he might lose the 2016 election to Democratic Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton, he claimed it would have been rigged if she had won. Then,

NA budget session paused over absence of lawmakers, ministers

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf on Wednesday adjourned proceedings of the budget session after Minister for Water Resources Khurshid Shah got irked over the absence of lawmakers and federal ministers.

fiscal position. He warned that if it continues then even those coming to attend the session will skip the proceedings. "The session should be suspended until the quorum is completed," he demanded and threatened to point out the quorum if the sitting is not adjourned. He further demanded the speaker to summon the prime minister and ensure his presence during the budget speeches. The speaker later adjourned the proceedings for 30 minutes and said that Khurshid Shah raised valid points.

"Khurshid Shah is also a minister but regularly attends the National Assembly proceedings," he said and urged the lawmakers to give time to budget session. It is pertinent to mention here that Finance Minister Miftah Ismail presented the budget for the financial year 2022-23 in the National Assembly on Friday. The federal budget 2022-23 has a total outlay of 9502 billion rupees has been announced, encompassing measures for what the government termed 'sustainable economic growth INP.



ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for power Engr. Khurram Dastgir Khan held a meeting with Minister of energy Sindh Imtiaz Sheikh.

Punjab Assembly reserved seats: IHC serves notice to ECP on PTI plea

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has served notice to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit replies in a case filed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) against staying notification of new Punjab Assembly members on reserved seats.

IHC judge Justice Aamir Farooq took up the plea and issued notice to the ECP to submit a reply on the matter. The court also directed the PTI counsel to make PML-N also respondent in the case and adjourned the hearing for next Tuesday.

It is pertinent to mention here that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday filed an appeal in Islamabad High Court (IHC), challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) verdict which stayed the notification of new MPAs on Punjab reserved seats after they fell vacant following the de-seating of 25 dissenting PTI lawmakers. Punjab Assembly reserved seats: IHC serves notice to ECP on PTI plea. The plea also mentioned the names of PTI members on the party's priority list for the reserved seats. Batool Zain, Saira Raza and Fauzia Abbas are in the priority list.

Pakistan looks collaboration with China to further tap its bamboo potential

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan looks to collaboration with China to further tap its bamboo potential, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Wednesday.

Pakistan has only four or five uses of bamboo, but in a bamboo-producing county in China, there are over 200 uses of it," said Dr. Raja Muhammad Omer, Deputy Inspector General of Forests, Forestry Wing, Ministry of Climate Change.

He told CEN in an interview that Pakistan looks to further tap its bamboo potential in collaboration with China. "While we are looking at establishing ecological zones in Pakistan, we can have a trans-boundary ecological corridor as well," he said.

Pakistan has limited forestry resources, with the forest area taking up about 5% of the total land area of the country. "But there is much scope for the bamboo industry. Currently, Pakistan still stays in the primary stage of bamboo utilization, with bamboo mainly used for the production of scaffolding and other construction materials, pens, and furniture," Dr. Raja Muhammad Omer told CEN.

Last year, Pakistan became a state member of the International Bamboo and Rattan Organization (INBAR). Since then, detailed feasibility studies have been conducted on Pakistan's bamboo potential as well as the value chain development. According to Dr. Raja Muhammad Omer, the main challenge for Pakistan's bamboo industry is the market. If there is good market for bamboo, the cultivation increases. If it shrinks, then the farmers do not have much preference to go for bamboo cultivation.

"We need to have a consistent and sustainable value chain for bamboo, so that the market will not fluctuate too much and more people will join this group and help increase bamboo resources", he analysed. He told CEN that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed with the National Forestry and Grassland Administration of China. "We can develop proposals for bamboo cultivation in Pakistan as well as value chain development in the long run", he added.

Uncertainty persists as Governor, Speaker call 'rival' PA budget sessions

LAHORE: All eyes are on today's rival Punjab Assembly's (PA) budget sessions as both Governor Balighur Rehman and Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, who represent two sides of a political divide, are showing no signs of softening their stance, and have convened the sessions at two different places and different timings.

While the speaker has called the session at 1:00 PM at the Punjab Assembly building, the governor has summoned the session at 3:00 PM, and that, too miles away, at Aiwan-i-Iqbal, and not in the assembly's building. Who wins and who loses; only the time will tell. Punjab Minister Sardar Awaiz Ahmad Khan Leghari will deliver the budget speech at Aiwan-i-Iqbal.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Kachhi invited the sealed percentage tender based on composite Schedule of Rates 2018 Government of Baluchistan along with tender Fee and item rates from interested Contractors/Firms for the work mentioned below:- Time limit 30-08-2022 for each work.

Table with columns: T.S.No., S.N., Name of Work, E/Cost, Qty, T/Fee. It lists various construction and supply schemes for solar based water supply across different districts like Balochistan, Sindh, and Punjab.



KARACHI: CM Sindh Murad Ali Shah brief media about 2022-23 budget at Sindh Assembly.

Money laundering: FIA launches probe against PML-Q's Moonis Elahi

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has formally launched money-laundering probe against the former federal minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) leader Moonis Elahi sources said on Wednesday.

"Sources privy to the development" told that FIA Lahore has registered a case against Moonis Elahi in money laundering case. "The PML-Q stalwart is accused of making properties abroad by allegedly sending money through Hundi and Hawala, the FIA said.

The FIA has also arrested two close associates of secretary Punjab Assembly - Nawaz Bhatti and Mazhar Iqbal - in a case related to money laundering. Moonis is the son of Pervaiz Elahi, a senior leader of the PML-Q and Punjab Assembly speaker.

Young doctors in Bannu resign as part of their ongoing strike

BANNU: Young doctors' ire in Bannu shows no sign of cooling down as all the departments, barring emergency, at city's all three MTI hospitals were closed on Wednesday and the doctors relinquished all their additional charges and resigned.

Not only that, the doctors also closed their private clinics as a part of their ongoing strike. Talking to the media, doctors said that neither there were facilities for them at hospitals nor medicines for the patients.

LAHORE: Man commits suicide after murdering three people

LAHORE: A man reportedly committed suicide after killing a couple and his friend in the Thana Factory area of Lahore.

According to details, the man named Rizwan reportedly murdered a couple and his friend and killed himself afterwards. The police reached the scene and started their investigation.

PTI counsel winds up arguments in prohibited funding case

ISLAMABAD: PTI counsel Anwar Mansoor on Wednesday concluded his arguments in the election commission hearing of the prohibited funding case.

A three-member panel of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) headed by Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the case. PTI counsel completed his arguments with rejecting the Scrutiny Committee's report on the accounts of the party.

"The cause list of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) have written 'foreign funding' today," the PTI lawyer complained, while initiating his arguments. The CEC directed the officials to avoid 'foreign funding' adjective with the case in future. "Your clients are also using the 'foreign funding' word in the media," chief election commissioner said.

"We are saying from the day one that it is prohibited funding case, not the foreign funding," Anwar Mansoor said. "You are correct, that is the reason instructions issued," CEC replied. PTI lawyer argued that "not the Election Act but the Political Parties Order 2002 will be the relevant law of the case."

"Foreign governments, multi-national and local companies come under the PPO," he said. "Election Act 2017 prohibits getting funds from anyone except Pakistan nationals," the lawyer said. "The 2002 law will be applicable to all cases prior to 2017. Non-resident nationals in India have not been eligible to donate any political party," he further argued. "Indian law not allows dual nationality but in Pakistan it is legally permissible," he said. "The law is also clear with regard to a foreign-funded party," petitioner Akbar S. Babar's counsel said.

The procurement shall be carried out per Balochistan Public Procurement rules, 2014. Eligibility: The Authorized Dealer must have valid registration with tax authorities i.e. (NTN, GST & BRA) (Original) valid PEC certificate registration (Original) with Pakistan Engineering Council in relevant category and discipline with renewal for the year 2021-22, where applicable including three years work experience and bank (Turnover) The Bidder must have completed three assignments of similar nature and the same above value work in the last two years in hand. 10% Security Deposit Should be submitted by Contractor/firm in case of rate offered below 10% of the total cost. In case of failure, Bid may be rejected at any STAGE. i. Firm must have having Solar code i.e EE-11. ii. The contractor/firm shall provide a Port clearance certificate of solar panels. iii. The firm must provide flash test reports, guarantee cards and SGS of solar panels. The firm authorized representative will be allowed having original CNIC and authorization letter. Joint Venture is not allowed. iv. The Contractor/Firm should download tender Documents by self. The firm authorized representative will be allowed having original CNIC and authorization letter/Deed must be provided on Judicial Stamp paper of Rupees 100 attested by the Notary public Or first Class Magistrate. The tender fee should be deposited in the head of account 02726-02 PHE Tender Fee through Green Chailan in National Bank of Pakistan Dhadar only. Terms & Condition, (A) under following condition bid will be rejected. (i) Conditional & telephonic bid / tenders. (ii) bid not accompanied by a bid security of required amount of bid (iii) bid Submitted after specified date & time. (iv) blacklisted firms / contractors. (v) Original firm or authority letter mention against each work and original CNIC, Stamp with letter Head. (B) Bid validity period 90 days. METHOD OF PROCUREMENT: Single Stage, One envelope procedure. BID SECURITY: 2% of total bid Value in the shape of CDR must be submitted in Favor of EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PHE Division Kachhi from Scheduled Bank. BIDDING / TENDER DOCUMENTS: ISSUANCE: The Contractor/Firm should download NIT and Bidding Document by self from WWW.BPPRA.ORG.PK. SUBMISSION: The last date for submission is 29-06-2022 at 01:00 PM. OPENING: The tender will be opened on 29-06-2022 at 02:00 PM. Place of issuance, submission inquiries, and opening will be: ADDRESS: Office of the Executive Engineer PHE Division Kachhi @ Dhadar. E-Mail: - xarph0000@gmail.com. Other terms and conditions are attached to tender documents. NOTE: It may be noted that no pay order will be accepted/entertained and the firm's complete title/name should be written on the call deposit. All the terms & conditions/sites of the work can be seen in-office hours of the undersign. Under sign have reserve rights to reject all any bid with any condition. The Tender form/Documents will be download BPPRA web site.

Italy to invest 1.5 million for olive cultivation in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese on Tuesday said that Italy was investing in a project worth 1.5 million for olive cultivation and growth in Pakistan.

The Ambassador said that Italy had always played a vital role in helping Pakistan to develop olive cultivation and technical expertise.

The "Olive Culture" project worth 1.5 million shall be executed in 26 months in suitable areas by CIHEAM Bari in cooperation with the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) through the Pakistan Oilseed Department. It represents a continuum with all the work done by Italy in the past, with a holistic approach encompassing all stages and stakeholders.

The Ambassador hosted an event to highlight Italy's contribution to the promotion of Olive and Olive Oil and its Value Chain in Pakistan, through the technical support of the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation - AICS in Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan had a lot of potential for olives and the country could earn foreign exchange by increasing olive production and using it for commercial purposes.

He further said that fair trade was going on between the two countries at present. Pakistan's overall exports to Italy were worth \$ 763 million, its overall imports from the country were worth \$754 million.

Andreas Ferrarese said that Italian olives were the best in the world in terms of quality. Pakistan could import olives from Italy which were very good for human health, he said. He said that the Pakistani business community in Italy could play a very important role in that regard.

Olives, he said, were an integral part of the entire Mediterranean civilization without which life and culture

would be incomplete.

He said that olives were a special gift of our Mediterranean culture, which were a part of the culture of the region.

Andreas Ferrarese said that olive is an important part of our food, weddings and festivals. Similarly, olives were of special importance in the Middle East and other regions and civilizations.

He said that the importance of olives is also mentioned in the holy religious books Quran, Gospel and Bible. The Ambassador said that Italy had always supported Pakistan's journey in the field and "We are happy to continue with an aim to develop a sustainable, modern and rich olive culture in Pakistan."

He said that it would not only provide quality edible oil for the Pakistani people but also help reduce the import bill of the country.

Rather, he said, "We look forward to the times when Pakistan would be among leading olive-producing and exporting countries in the world"

Project Coordinator, CIHEAM Bari International Olive Culture, Marco Marchetti said that Italy would play an important role in the cultivation and processing of olives in Pakistan.

He said that there was a need to work more on the olive supply chain in Pakistan, the lack of which at present could not reap the benefits in Pakistan.

He said that qualified human resources, technical assistance, quality and safety standards, reference laboratories for oil certification, and phytosanitary labs were much needed in Pakistan to establish a full value chain of safe and highly nutritious tasty food that improved health dramatically. INP



HUNZA: President Dr Arif Alvi being briefed about Shisper Glacial Lake Outburst Flood, in Hunza.

Shaukat claims govt will increase Rs30 on petroleum products today

ISLAMABAD: Former finance minister Shaukat Fayyaz Tarin said Wednesday that per litre price of petrol will go up to Rs33.

He was talking during the Senate session on Wednesday.

"We left the petrol at Rs149 per litre, we were cursed a lot for that. What's the price today? Rs209," said Tarin.

The government will increase around Rs30 [on petroleum products] today [Wednesday], he said.

They [the government] have said that they impose Rs72.5b levy on petrol and impose 17% sales tax, it will take price of petroleum product over Rs300, he said.

Tarin's statement comes days after Finance Minister Miftah Ismail in an interview with a private TV channel said that without the fuel price hike, there would be no agreement with the IMF, adding that without the Fund's support, the country would default. INP

All set for NA-240 Karachi by-election today

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has made all preparations for the by-election on National Assembly seat in Karachi, NA-240, after it fell vacant following the death of MQM-P MNA Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan.

As many as 18 candidates from MQM-P, seven other political parties and independents are taking part in the by-elections.

The constituency comprises 529,855 voters including 294,385 male and 235,470 female voters. The ECP has established 309 polling stations and 1,236 polling booths.

The ECP said that the ballot papers have been printed while CCTV cameras are being installed at the sensitive polling stations. Police will be deployed at every polling station while Rangers will serve as a quick response force.

"The polling material is being distributed among the staff and by evening, the staff

and the material will be sent to the polling stations," the commission said. The ECP will establish a control room in Islamabad to review all arrangements with regard to the polling process.

It is pertinent to mention here that ECP had declared all polling stations for the National Assembly constituency NA-240 as sensitive.

The National Assembly seat comprising Landhi and Korangi area of District Korangi in Karachi had fallen vacant after the death of the MQM-P MNA Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan on April 19.

The ECP had declared 203 polling stations in the constituency 'very sensitive' out of 309 polling stations while the remaining 106 polling stations have been declared 'sensitive'.

The election commission had established 182 polling stations in Korangi and 127 in the Landhi area for the by-election. INP

Now chemistry paper leaked in four Sindh districts

HYDERABAD: The grade-12 papers have been kicked off under the auspices of Hyderabad Intermediate Board and Secondary Education but the copy mafia was more active as another important paper leaked on Wednesday much before the start of the exam.

With the start of the paper, the copy mafia also becomes active and leaks the chemistry paper in four districts of Sindh ahead of the scheduled time.

Moreover, first-year Chemistry paper was out in Kashmir and Larkana and grade-12th chemistry paper in Nawabshah ahead of the time and was available in the WhatsApp groups and candidates are using the mobile phone freely.

Similarly, a chemistry paper of eleventh grade was leaked in the WhatsApp group and the solved answers key was available to the candidates by 8am in Tharparkar under the nose of the Mirpurkhas Education Board.

The candidates are also worried due to the load shedding. INP

A collection of Photographic dialogues between Chinese and Pakistani scholars released

ISLAMABAD: Beyond the Karakoram, a Collection of Photographic Dialogues between Chinese and Pakistani Scholars has been released, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday.

The book is co-authored by researcher Jin Qiang from the Intercultural Communication Research Center of Hebei University, China and Assistant Professor Muhammad Arif from the School of Social Sciences & Humanity at the National University of Science and Technology, Pakistan.

This book represents the deep cultural connection of the Sino-Pakistan friendly relationship. It is also a testimony to the connection between the people's hearts and cultures of China and Pakistan since the "Belt and Road" initiative was proposed, authors stated. The book is a collection of Photographic

Dialogues under two main parts from which Part I is based on Photographs from Pakistan and the second part consists of Chinese photographs.

The book tells its readers cultural stories chapters wise of natural scenarios, architecture and sculptures, people, food, restaurants, fruits, mosques, street views, shops, arts festivals, and both countries' unique cultural aspects in a pictorial way as photographic dialogue.

608 photos have been selected from a total of 10,000 photo collection by both authors. This book also has some text of dialogue which concentrates on people's observations and unique insights on various aspects of both countries.

The book is available in both Chinese and English versions with some important content added to the book in Urdu as well. INP

Speakers urge UN to take cognizance of impending genocide in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar hosted by Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) in collaboration with World Muslim Conference (WMC) have urged the international community particularly the United Nations to take effective notice of impending genocide of Muslims in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The webinar titled "Impending Muslim Genocide in Indian occupied Kashmir" held on the sidelines of the ongoing 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was addressed by Phil Bennion (UK), former Member of the European Parliament; Ms Mary Scully, human rights activist, US; Robert Fantina, author and historian, Canada; Barrister Nida Salam, British-Kashmiri barrister and writer; Dr Waqas Ali

Kausar, Professor National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, and attend by several others including UN officials. The event was moderated by Chairman KIIR Altaf Hussain Wani. The UNHRC's 50th session commenced on 13 June 2022 and will continue till 8 July 2022. In his initial remarks the KIIR chief while referring to dire situation in IIOJK said international experts have already warned of impending genocide of Muslims in Kashmir. He said that in the aftermath of 5th August 2019, the apartheid regime launched a massive and multi-front political, social and cultural onslaught on the Kashmiris. Citing the patterns and typology of genocide in the occupied territory, he said, "Erasing Kashmiris' political identity, disempowering Muslim. INP

B&R Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest Center established for a greener and richer Gwadar

ISLAMABAD: Belt and Road Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest Center has been established for a greener and richer Gwadar, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday.

"In the eyes of outsiders, high temperature and scorching sun may be a disadvantage of Gwadar, but in our view, the light and heat conditions here are a natural advantage for the development of agriculture and non-wood forest", said Zhang Saiyang, vice director of the Belt and Road Engineering Research Center for Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest and doctoral candidate of Central South University of forestry and technology.

The Belt and Road Engineering Research Center for Tropical Arid Non-wood Forest was jointly initiated and established by Central South University of forestry and technology, China Overseas Ports Holdings Co., Ltd and Yulin Holdings Co., Ltd for Gwadar ecological construction and industrial development. Since 2018, it has systematically improved the local soil conditions in Gwadar.

Zhang told Gwadar Pro that the Chinese team combined the organic fertilizer collected from local sheep farm and leaves and other humus to mix with local soil in a certain proportion to improve the fertility and pH of the local soil. Besides, the local soil conditions were greatly improved by the team members planting legumes to use the nitrogen fixation of legume rhizobia. "In addition to the soil, moisture is our long-term focus as well. With arid climate here, the irrigation method appears to be particularly important," Zhang said, "after enhanc-

ing the soil water retention capacity through soil improvement, we mainly use a combination of sprinkling irrigation and drip irrigation to maximize water conservation. Not to mention that our selected varieties are drought tolerant crop with very developed root systems." By now, nearly 100,000 seedlings such as bananas, dates, orchid and figs have been cultivated here. Among them, bananas (Musa nana) are selected local varieties that can adapt to drought and high temperature and produce a large amount of fruit. In May, the center successfully held the first non-wood forest products-banana harvest festival in Gwadar Port. "Our production of bananas has attracted the attention of local farmers, who hope to buy banana seedlings to grow on their own land." Zhang mentioned. Moreover, figs are also a key economic crop here. Hundreds of fig seedlings have already produced a lot of fruit in just one month. More than 10 hours of sufficient sunlight per day and the temperature difference between day and night in the Gwadar region allow figs, a drought-tolerant and light-loving plant, to accumulate more sugar. According to the promotion plan, the fresh and dried figs launched by the center will have a place in the market. "In addition to bananas and figs, which are familiar to Chinese people, the endemic crops of Pakistan, including Sesbania grandiflora and Ziziphus spina-christi, can also give full play to their economic value through our breeding techniques," Zhang listed the local valuable economic crops one by one. "the leguminous. INP

Ishrat Ali removed as secretary overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: Zulfiqar Haider, a grade-22 officer, on Wednesday replaced Ishrat Ali as Secretary Overseas Pakistanis Division.

Earlier, Ishrat had been removed from his post and directed to report to the Establishment Division.

Zulfiqar was previously serving as special secretary Petroleum Division.

The Establishment Division has issued notifications in this regard. INP

Allies iron out differences over Punjab ministries share

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and People's Party have ironed out their differences over share of ministries in Punjab Cabinet, citing sources ARY News reported on Wednesday.

Former president Asif Ali Zardari played role to decide matters between the two coalition partners. "People's Party has got three key provincial ministries including irrigation, agriculture and CWD portfolios in the understanding," sources said.

The PML-N however disagreed over giving finance and revenue ministries to the PPP and instead offered to other provincial ministries of their choice, according sources.

"The People's Party will give the names of these ministries to the PML-N after consultation," sources said.

The PPP will get five provincial ministries in provincial cabinet including the senior minister. Two

advisers and special assistants will also be given to the party, according to sources.

The provincial cabinet will likely to take oath soon after agreement between the coalition partners.

Earlier, PML-N and the PPP were failed to reach understanding over the distribution of portfolios as Peoples Party (PPP) expressed reservations over cabinet portfolios and demanded key ministries in the provincial set up.

PPP - a key coalition partner of PML-N in Punjab - was interested in three portfolios of finance, education and law but CM Hamza wanted them for his party.

PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari held a detailed meeting with Punjab CM Hamza Shehbaz in Lahore last week to end the impasse over their share in the coalition government. INP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with Maulana Fazal ur Rehman and other leaders.

Govt working tirelessly to provide relief to masses: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb says the government is working tirelessly to provide relief to the people.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, the Information Minister said the past government of PTI was never interested in development but only looted the country, laundered money and illegally grabbed money of welfare trusts.

She said the last PTI government broke all records of corruption and did not complete development projects started before 2018 during the tenure of PML-N government.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said the present government is trying to complete the incomplete development projects to bring economic stability in the country.

She said the government is committed to clear the mess created by PTI and will steer the country on the path of progress and development.

She said if there was any foreign conspiracy, PTI Chairman Imran Khan should have presented evidence before the national security committee. She said Imran Khan keeps on changing narratives and when one narrative fails, he puts forth another.

She said the last PTI government broke all records of corruption and did not complete development projects started before 2018 during the tenure of PML-N government.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said the present government is trying to complete the incomplete development projects to bring economic stability in the country.

She said the government is committed to clear the mess created by PTI and will steer the country on the path of progress and development. INP

Rs3.226 trillion Punjab budget unveiled

LAHORE: Finance minister Awais Leghari on Wednesday unveiled Punjab's budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 at Aiwan-e-Iqbal after the treasury and opposition benches failed to reach a consensus over convening a session.

Criticising PTI government in his budget speech, Awais Leghari said data shows that during the period 2019-22, there has neither been a single development programme worth mentioning nor has the province witnessed any social welfare programme. The provincial minister accused the PTI-led government of not paying attention to the energy issues which led to other issues including unemployment, poverty, inflation, etc. After a two-day-long delay, Finance Minister Punjab Awais Leghari unveiled the Rs3.226 trillion provincial budget for the next financial year. The income has been estimated at Rs2.521 trillion the finance minister said, adding that the province is expected to receive over Rs2.020 trillion from the come from the federal divisible pool.

The finance minister said over Rs500 are expected to be collected under the head of provincial receipts - more than 24% in comparison with last year's collection. Leghari said the government, aiming a 24% increase, has set the target of non-tax revenue at Rs163 billion. Awais Leghari said the allocation of Rs over Rs435 billion has been proposed for the provision of salaries and Rs312 billion for the payment of pensions of the employees in the financial year 2022-23. Rs528 billion have been allocated for the local bodies in the upcoming financial year. The Punjab Finance minister said Rs200 billion have been proposed for the provision of flour at cheap rates in the province. The 10kg flour sack will be available at Rs490 instead of Rs650, he added. The development budget with an increase of 22pc has been proposed at Rs685 billion in the FY2022-23, while Rs35 billion have been proposed for the construction and repair of the roads. INP

K-electric assures Karachi MNAs to rationalize load-shedding

ISLAMABAD: K-electric CEO has assured the National Assembly members from Karachi to rationalize load management and complaints of overbilling in the port city on Wednesday.

Moonis Alvi in a meeting at the Energy Ministry here assured the meeting, which was also attended by Federal Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel, that any discrepancy in billing procedure will be addressed urgently.

Patel, also an MNA from Pakistan's largest city, described power supply challenges and problems in his constituency in detail.

"Unannounced load shedding has made life miserable of the people," he said. Power Minister Khuram Dastgir Khan, who chaired the meeting on power woes of the country's largest metropolis, directed the K-electric to ensure power supply during water supply hours to maintain water provision in all areas of the city.

Most of the issues pertained to water and electricity problems being faced by the people of Karachi including unscheduled load shedding, over billing and disruption in water supply due to power outages.

On the suggestion of Qadir Patel, the meeting decided to constitute a committee to develop a liaison between elected representatives and K-electric including late distribution of bills close to the due date, resulting in a late payment surcharge to consumers. INP



QUETTA: Members Unemployment Agriculture Association Balochistan hold protest outside QP.