

# QUETTA VOICE

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## In yet another hike, govt jacks up petrol price by nearly Rs15

The government on Thursday announced a hike of Rs14.85 per litre in the price of petrol, the fourth such raise in the last 35 days, taking the cumulative amount of all hikes since May 26 to nearly Rs100.

According to a notification issued by the Finance Division, petrol will now be priced at Rs248.74 after the latest hike, followed by high speed diesel at Rs276.54, kerosene oil at Rs230.20 and light diesel at Rs226.61. The new prices will come into effect from midnight tonight. The notification said in view of the fluctuations in prices in the international market and exchange rate variation, "The government has decided to partially apply the petroleum levy and revise the existing prices of petroleum products as agreed with the development partners." As per the notification, Rs10 petroleum levy has been applied on petrol and Rs5 each on high speed diesel, kerosene oil and light diesel. Since coming to power in April,



the PML-N-led coalition government had first raised the petrol price by Rs30 on May 26, followed by another increase of Rs30 on June 2 and nearly after a fortnight on June 15, it hiked the fuel price by another Rs24. According to a Dawn report, the government, under the structural benchmarks, will start imposing the petroleum development levy (PDL) from July 1 (Friday) at the rate of Rs10 per litre on all products, except Rs5 per litre on high-speed diesel (HSD). The levy would then keep going up at the

rate of Rs5 per month to a maximum of Rs50. Pakistan had on Tuesday received the Memorandum of Economic and Fiscal Policies (MEFP) from the IMF for the combined seventh and eighth reviews of its \$6 billion loan programme, which has been stalled since April. The MEFP contains certain prior actions that would be necessary for implementation before the IMF board takes up Pakistan's case for approval and the subsequent disbursement of funds. According to the MEFP, Pakistan will have to take at least two more "prior actions" to secure the two combined tranches by the end of July or early August. The prior actions include the passage of the federal budget as agreed to with the IMF and presented in the National Assembly on June 24 and present a memorandum of understanding duly signed by the provincial governments to jointly provide about Rs750bn cash surplus to the centre. Web Desk



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Chinese state-owned company, NORINCO, calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

### 1180 jobs: Court restrains Secretary Agriculture Balochistan from recruitment

By Our Reporter

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court (BHC) on Thursday restrained the Secretary of Agriculture Department from the recruitment process. The department had given an advertisement in local newspapers for the recruitment of 1180 vacancies in various cadres the other day. A division bench of the BHC comprising Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Naeem Akhtar Afghan and Rozi Khan Bareech passed this order on a constitutional petition i.e. Bayazeed Khan versus the Government of Balochistan. The petitioner had challenged the process of recruitment and termed it in violation of merit. The learned counsel for the petitioner had complained that the department had failed to include two newly established divisions quota and disabled's quota in the advertisement. The court ordered the Secretary of Agriculture Department Balochistan not to recruit anyone for these posts till further order. The Bench also restrained Secretary Labour and Manpower Balochistan from the recruitment process. The hearing of the case was adjourned till August 25th.



### Death sentence awarded to 3 accused in child murder case in Quetta

Staff Reporter

An Anti-Terrorist Court (ATC) in Quetta awarded the death sentence to 3 accused involved in the kidnapping and murder of a minor child on Thursday. Judge of the ATC, Abdul Majeed Nasar announced the judgment regarding the conviction of the three accused to life imprisonment.

According to court sources, three accused identified as Dawood Shehzad, Mehdi and Iftikhar to death sentence twice in the kidnapping and murder case of a 10-year-old child. Similarly, the court convicted Muhammad Baqir of death sentence twice, and another accused Roohullah of seven years of rigorous imprisonment. Zahid Ali Khan, the deputy district prosecutor presented the case in court



on behalf of the government. The accused had kidnapped a 10-year-old boy Sher Ali Hazara. The accused had kidnapped a 10-year-old minor boy Sher Ali Hazara from Quetta's Hazara Town. The incident happened on

February 10, 2021. The accused had demanded a ransom of Rs.30 million from the family members of the child.

The parents and other family members had refused to pay the ransom amount. Subsequently, the dead body of the minor child was found in district Pishin Saranan. Levies shifted the dead body to district headquarters hospital Pishin and then handed over it to the heirs. The incident had caused outrage on social media. The incident had caused an outrage on social media with people asking the police and levies to bring the perpetrators of the heinous crime to book. Police had also registered a case against the accused in the Brewery police station. Soon after the announcement of the judgment, police arrested the accused and shifted them to district Jail Quetta under tight security.

## Quetta: unemployed agriculture graduates stage protest demo

Syed Ali Shah

QUETTA: Unemployed agriculture graduates staged a protest demonstration outside the Balochistan Assembly on Wednesday evening. A scuffle also broke out between protesting graduates and the baton-wielding policemen deployed outside the assembly.

However, there was no report of any injury as police pushed back the protesters. "We want the creation of jobs for our unemployed agriculture graduates", Aziz Ahmed Khan, the central leader of the protesters demanded.

He said the provincial government had created more than 1000 jobs for clerks and class four employees but it was reluctant to create vacancies for the unemployed youth of Balochistan.

The session of the Balochistan Assembly resumed here with acting speaker Sardar Babar Musakhail in the chair. The house discussed the recently presented budget for the financial year 2022-23. Both the members of the opposition and treasury benches hailed the budget.

Outside the assembly, the unemployed graduates staged a demonstration. Despite repeated requests by the protesters, none from the assembly turned up to meet the protesting unemployed graduates. The protest caused the suspension of traffic on the main Zarghoun road, which house the Chief Minister's Secretariat and Governor's



House. Baton-wielding policemen were deployed in the entire red zone to stop protesters from staging the demonstration. "I have done my Mphil from Punjab in agriculture but the government is not giving me any job", Mr. Aziz Khan lamented. Baton-wielding. This protest has come a day after the Balochistan agriculture department announced 1180 posts of clerks and other lower cadre employees in the province. The protesters said that the number of unemployed agriculture graduates was 3000 and the government should immediately announce the vacancies. "Our protest will continue till the creation of vacancies", Muhammad Tahir, another protester said. He said they would intensify their protest if the government created new posts for them. There was no immediate reaction from the provincial government in this regard.

### Protest in district Musakhail against kidnapping of a minor girl

Abdul Rehman Musakhail

Hundreds of tribesmen staged a protest demonstration against the kidnapping of a minor girl in Balochistan's Musakhail district on Thursday. A tribal jirga was also held in Musakhail to evolve a strategy to mount pressure on the government to make sure unhurt recovery of the minor girl.

"Our protest will continue till the recovery of minor kid", Comrade Khudai Noor Musakhail, one of the tribal elders warned. The protesters chanted full-throated slogans against the district administration and police for their failure to recover

er the minor girl. The minor girl was playing along with other kids in a marriage party when picked up by an unknown accused.

"Who kidnapped the minor girl? the tribal elders asked. The tribesmen lashed out at the district administration and warned that protest would be intensified if it failed to recover the minor girl. This incident has come few days after the kidnapping of two children in the Musakhail district. The girls were later recovered.

Speaker Balochistan Assembly, Sardar Babar Musakhail had also directed the Balochistan Police Chief and Chief Secretary to submit a report in this regard.



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## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## QLF a vibrant platform for birthing new ideas

The Quetta Literary Festival (QLF) has proved to be a vibrant platform for birthing new ideas and it must be supported in a nascent democracy. Leading authors, writers, poets, novelists, etc spoke candidly about the factors, which shape the sociopolitical landscape in all 46 sessions during the historic festival.

Despite all odds, the organizers, faculty members, and students of the Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS) were able to hold the third QLF on June 27 and 28.

Thousands turn up to participate in all 46 sessions

In a province where an open expression has become rare, the QLF provided an opportunity for all dissenting voices to freely express their opinion without fear and being censored. They spoke with full freedom and shared their ideas. Crowds of the audience attended all 46 sessions held on the premise of the BUIITEMS, which is considered to be the educational face of Balochistan.

Also, Read Balochistan University: 85-year old man completes Ph.D. degree

A total of 150 delegates including leading authors, poets, writers, artists, musicians, and journalists from across the country participated in the two-day event. As per rough estimates, around 20,000 people visited the QLF. This was overwhelming keeping in view the narrative of troubles and security issues of the province.

Literature and culture gathered to promote a soft image of Balochistan. Literature and culture were brought together and a soft and true image of Balochistan was promoted in all 46 sessions. The organizers had to cancel a Qawali program because of an unruly crowd entering the hall. Youth gathered outside the hall were asked to peacefully disperse.

The message of love and peace in Balochistan and Pakistan was echoed in all sessions. This gave hope to the youth of Balochistan, a bright future without violence, and a sense of deprivation.

This was the third QLF. The provincial and federal governments should encourage the organizers, faculty members and students of other universities and colleges in Balochistan to organize such events to give a learning and exposure opportunity to the students.

## Harmonizing the sales tax

By Muhammad Awaiz

The 18th Amendment to the constitution had a profound impact on the legal and political framework of the country. Among other measures leading to the long-awaited provincial autonomy, the amendment led to drastic changes in the sales tax system of the country. As part of the overarching endeavor to achieve fiscal autonomy for the provinces, the sales tax on services was specifically excluded from the federal legislative domain, making it a provincial subject. This devolution of power caused major legislative and structural changes in the sales tax system, with provincial governments enacting their own laws and establishing provincial authorities for the administration of sales tax on services. Without denying the instrumental role of the provincialization of sales tax on services in strengthening the provincial economies, the ramifications of the fragmented sales tax system in the form of increasing conflicts between the provinces among themselves and with the centre, yielding problems for business entities, cannot be ignored. The disparities in the design, structure, and operation of different sales tax regimes have made compliance for businesses exceedingly complex. First, the splitting of sales tax into sales

tax on goods and services has resulted in multiplicity of sales tax jurisdictions. Under the current system, a business operating all over Pakistan in goods and services has to account for registration, sales tax returns, and other compliances before five different tax authorities. In addition to making compliance difficult, this has also caused a spike in the compliance costs. Already burdened with extensive compliances under other tax laws, the barrage of compliance under provincial sales tax enactments has added insult to injury for the businesses.

Second, the lack of understanding between the centre and the provinces over a uniform definition of goods and services has resulted in jurisdictional conflicts. Consequently, the taxation of businesses involving the supply of goods as well as provision of services – industrial vending, food supply/restaurants, construction businesses, fashion designing etc – often results in a tax war situation between the federal and provincial authorities. Likewise, the differences among the provinces over the classification of services and the applicability of origin/destination principles gives rise to the demand of tax on a single service by multiple jurisdictions. Use of different Pakistan

Customs Tariff (PCT) codes by the provinces for the same services also gives rise to tax disputes.

Third, inter-jurisdictional variations in tax rates, exemptions, assessment processes and systemic procedures, have damaged the uniformity and consistency of the sales tax system in the country. The regulatory regimes and domestic institutional structures of a country being the major factors considered by foreign investors, the current sales tax system has gravely impaired the prospects of foreign investment in the country. Rated 108 on the Ease of Doing Business Index (EDBI) as per the Doing Business 2019 report (most recent) issued by the World Bank, Pakistan has made zero progress towards improving the ease of doing business environment for more than a decade. Rather, the Paying Taxes rating of Pakistan has gone from 18 in 2011 to 30 in 2019, indicating an increase in compliance difficulties of taxpayers. Policymakers and the business community concede to the idea that harmonization of different sales tax regimes can be an effective tool to deal with the issues in the current sales tax system. Along with reducing compliance cost for the businesses, harmonization can also benefit state institutions by cutting down

their administrative costs and dealing with the tax collection inefficiencies. Further, increased efficiency, uniformity, and consistency of the sales tax system as a result of harmonization shall also improve Pakistan's rating on the EDBI.

Notably, the efforts towards the harmonization of sales tax in Pakistan commenced in December 2019 on the recommendations from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In March 2020, the federal and the provincial tax authorities mutually established the National Tax Council (NTC) as a national body tasked with resolving the issues in the current sales tax system. The responsibilities of the NTC include harmonizing the sales tax rates applicable to goods and services for the entire country, formulating model sales tax laws on goods and services along with precise definitions of goods and services, principles governing the place of supply, rules for exemptions, apportionment of sales tax on services for inter-provincial trade, data harmonization and other related matters. Halted by the pandemic for a long period, the harmonization efforts resumed with the first-ever meeting of the NTC on September 2, 2021. At the second meeting of the NTC held on

September 16, 2021 the federation and the provinces developed a consensus on a single portal system for the filing of sales tax returns along with other issues including taxation rights on the construction business, toll manufacturing, restaurants and transportation. In January 2022, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) launched the National Sales Tax Return (NSTR) calling it a "significant milestone towards automation and data integration in order to facilitate the taxpayers, promote ease of doing business, and reduce compliance costs". It also signed an MOU with the Central Board of Revenue, Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) for extension of the NSTR to its territorial jurisdiction.

Despite the development with the consensus of and agreements signed by the provinces, the implementation of the NSTR has not yet been possible and taxpayers are still required to file sales tax returns with respective provincial authorities. Importantly, the major obstacle in the way of the implementation of the NSTR is the lack of legal backing that is possible only through amendments in the provincial sales tax laws. Therefore, until the legislative reforms are brought, the centre and the provinces may proceed to undertake.

## A look at democracy: Part - II

By Dr Naazir Mahmood

In addition to an academic lens to look at the crisis of democracy, we may also use a behavioural lens. This relates to how communities, individuals, and leaders behave in their personal and social lives. How people respect or do not respect democratic norms in their daily routines.

The behavioural lens to democracy may be wide-ranging and subsume in itself the civic and cultural dimension of a society. If most people within their families follow dictatorial tendencies and the heads of the family impose their own will on all their family members, such families are not going to cultivate a democratic community. Even if regular elections take place and a majority party assumes power, but individuals still tend to favour authoritarian attitudes, that society can hardly be termed as democratic. Behaviourally speaking democracy is about personal choice and respect for others' opinions.

In a country such as Pakistan a family does not even allow a young man or woman to marry of their free will. If a couple defies the family, and moves out to live their own lives, even that is not acceptable. Many couples who have been married for years, had children and live far away are still not safe. Their families hunt them down, such killings in the name of false honour are not uncommon in Pakistan. You may have a

democratic setup at the top with elected governments, but looking through a behavioural lens, the society is in crisis.

If a young man or woman cannot choose what subjects to study or whether to become a doctor or engineer or opt for any other profession, this is also a crisis of behaviour that does not allow people to make personal decisions. Then there is also a civic dimension of democracy that relates to how we behave as citizens. A behavioural lens is all about being considerate and respectful in a democratic society. If there is no consideration for other people in society, we can hardly call it democratic behaviour.

If almost nobody is willing to stop at a traffic signal when it is red, it is a behavioural crisis of democracy. When people do not understand – or do not want to understand – the principle of right of way on streets and try to push themselves in, with a complete disregard to decency and law, the behavioural lens of democracy tells us that it is a crisis. Behavioural and civic dimensions are an integral part of a democratic society, without which regular elections at the top won't help much. But it does not mean a complete submission to authority.

When we talk about decency and respect it is not about accepting dictates. A democratic society needs to strike a fine balance between respect

and submission. Here it is more related to the cultural norms of a society. Democratic behaviour helps us become more sociable – though sociability is not a sure sign of being democratic. There are people who are fairly sociable in gatherings but highly undemocratic in their families. Still, it is safe to say that in public spheres, people of countries such as India or Pakistan are not pretty sociable.

Sociability means cultural behaviour that brings people together in harmony. Sociable people smile at each other, nod in approval, and send positive vibes without violating somebody else's personal space. These are signs of democratic behaviour which is hardly visible here. Through the behavioural lens of democracy we notice that people appear to be aggressive and hostile. Their mood is ignited at the slightest provocation; even if they have a minor accident on the road, they are more likely to resort to fisticuffs rather than an amicable resolution of the crisis at hand.

This lens also takes us to the conclusion that education should essentially have some effective behaviour-change communication in the curriculum. Civic education paves the way for a democratic society with individual liberties guaranteed. It is sort of a social liberalism that challenges feudal and tribal behaviours that are in essence undemocratic.

Behavioural lens is in some cases even more important than other lenses as it exposes the roots of a society as democratic or undemocratic. In countries such as India and Pakistan, democracy is in crisis as successive governments have failed to inculcate democratic norms, and that is the crux of the problem – irrespective of how many democratic or dictatorial governments we have had.

Next, we can use a constitutional lens to look at democracy. It is different from academic and behavioural lenses but does not work in isolation as our constitutions are also a reflection of our academic orientation in constitution-making and the behaviours of those who frame or amend constitutional provisions. Looking at Pakistan through a constitutional lens, we find that it took us nine years to formulate the first constitution as opposed to India which could develop its own within two years by the end of 1949 and promulgated it in January 1950.

Our first constitution could survive only from 1956 to 1958 before being thrown away by Maj-Gen Iskander Mirza and Gen Ayub Khan, both of whom had no role in the freedom struggle and catapulted themselves to power with the help of the civil and military bureaucracy. Then the 1962 constitution was a handiwork of self-appointed field marshal and president Gen Ayub

Khan. The good general usurped power and concentrated all authority in the office of the president, targeting civilian leaders and senior politicians such as Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Fatima Jinnah. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was one constitutional crisis after another resulting in the breakup of the country in 1971.

The constitutional lens shows us that even the 1973 constitution is not ideal as it has had amendments that have changed its shape. There are provisions in the constitution that need improvements or outright removal. The constitution in its present shape is not entirely friendly to all citizens, and has some discriminations embedded within it. We can go on for long discussing the constitutional lens, but there are a couple of other lenses too. One of the most significant lenses in an economic lens which helps us see how much a society is divided in economic terms.

If there is a wide gap between the rich and the poor, academic and constitutional debates remain futile. In a truly democratic society, there should be some egalitarian considerations to cater for the underprivileged. We can also call this economic lens a window of equality and equity. There should be equal and equitable economic opportunities. With widespread poverty, democracy can hardly impress. INP

## It's come full circle

By Faizaan Qayyum

With one foot on a banana peel, we are standing at an abyss. PM Shehbaz Sharif and the PML-N face mortal political and economic challenges, and the government has shown little resolve to confront them head-on. Domestic petroleum prices are up more than 40 per cent within the last few days, and energy prices have quickly followed suit.

It is morbidly satisfying that Shehbaz Sharif and the PML-N – of motorway, flyover, and underpass fame – should face rising fuel prices in their ultimate battle for political survival. For decades, our cities have facilitated private car owners at the expense of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The Shehbaz Sharif model of urban development, albeit with different speeds of execution, pervades other political parties and leaders as well; large-scale grey infrastructure like signal free corridors, flyovers, underpasses, and ring roads with obscene levels of service have become the norm in cities around the country. Cities, from Islamabad to Turbat, have become sprawling sites of speculatively held vacant plots in shady housing schemes.

This is our real tragedy. Our current economic crisis is our own Frankenstein's monster staring right back at us. Consider these examples: Capital Smart City Islamabad is approximately 40 kilometres from Blue Area. DHA City Karachi is over 60kms from Frere Hall. These and other projects exclusively target car owners; only the most influential five per cent of our urban population.

So what to do when the most influential people's financial and residential interests move 50kms from the city's economic hubs? Build expressways, signal-free corridors, ring roads, Lyari Expressways, and Leh Expressways to coddle them. These projects help the elite bypass the city's congestion, often by taking a longer route. Sometimes flyovers and underpasses help address particular points of congestion in the city's road network. As these projects materialize, the richest few begin to travel more and more to reach their workplaces, meet friends, or for other everyday tasks. Because there's no public transit exists is class incompatible – people drive, often in their sparkling new SUVs.

The same logic has unfortunately extended to inter-city travel. We have prioritized motorways and highways over railways. Our railways network has shrunk from over 8500kms of tracks in 1950s to around 7,800kms today. This has been accompanied by a drastic drop in the railways' share of traffic: while the service carried over 86 per cent of all freight traffic in the 1950s, its current share stands at a meager 4-6 per cent. Similarly, Pakistan Railways has gone from the single largest carrier of passenger traffic in the 1970s to carrying less than 10 per cent of all passengers today.

This drastic decline is not coincidental. According to one estimate, the state spent three times as much on intercity road infrastructure than it did on railways. The uniformed state's patronage of entities has combined with private car owners' interests to completely overpower socioeconomic efficiencies associated with rail travel. All these developments are brazen examples of elite capture. Only around 10 per cent of all urban households own cars, and yet all of our cities have seen massive infrastructural investments that favour private car travel.

## 'Picturesque' protests

By M Neelika Jayawardane

In March, as Sri Lanka's economic crisis unfolded, desperate people started gathering in front of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa's respective official residences to protest endemic corruption, nepotism and mismanagement in the country.

They set up an encampment on the iconic Galle Face Beach in front of the Parliament, which came to be called GotaGoGama (the village demanding that 'Gota' – President Gotabaya Rajapaksa – resign from office). The Inter University Students' Federation joined the protests in massive, well-organized rallies. Hundreds of trade unions called a general island-wide strike in support.

As I monitored international media's coverage of these protests, I quickly recognised some familiar discrepancies often seen in the coverage of such events in the Global South.

Most news sources, for example, initially referred to the people at the GotaGoGama encampment as "protesters". But as the police and military moved in, deploying tear gas and water cannons, and at times, live bullets against these very same people, rather than describing the events as they are – attacks on protesters by

security forces – news reports started referring to what was unfolding as "clashes".

When members of the Rajapaksa family and their political cronies reportedly bussed in their supporters – themselves destitute people paid a few thousand rupees and bottles of attack – to attack the protest site and destroy the 'village', reports containing references to 'mobs', 'rioters' and 'clashes' further proliferated.

As Dilini Algama, a PhD student of English Linguistics at Justus Liebig-Universität Giessen in Germany, noted in a conversation on Twitter, it was always clear who was armed, and who instigated the violence. Yet German news outlets referred to chaos and 'unruh', which, explained Algama, can also mean 'riots'. There was "little to no clarification about the violence of pro-government and pro-Rajapaksa groups, or that tear-gas and water cannon toting military provoked and assaulted protesters". Moreover, "phrasing the violence as a 'clash between two groups' delegitimises the protests and equates people practicing their democratic right to protests with the violence of groups dispatched by the state to intimidate and stop them", she added. This

is nothing unique to Sri Lanka – we often see similar narratives of "clashes" and "riots" in the international coverage of protests and police actions against them across the Global South, most infamously evident in Palestine.

In Sri Lanka's case, however, the reality of the protests was not only misrepresented through narratives about "clashes". Due to the island's colonial past, and the fact that many Europeans – Scandinavians, Germans, Russians and Britons – regularly holiday there, other problematic attitudes that reduce the protests into one-dimensional Orientalist fantasies have also crept into the coverage.

Sri Lanka's protest movement is idealistic and focused on collective care. Organisers at GotaGoGama, for example, set up a free food station that provides meals for protesters and the destitute, a medical aid tent, and a library, where anyone can come and read books or organise a "People's University" session hosting discussions on social and political issues. The protesters at the village have been consciously and strategically educating each other, through "teach-outs", about the conditions that created this economic crisis, and the way successive leaders

have used ethno-nationalism to obtain votes and power. They have been working to bring together people who have purposefully, and for political ends, been divided across ethnic, religious, and class divides since Sri Lanka's independence. The protesters have also put on educational shadow-puppet shows, sung raucous island bails (catchy tunes, often accompanied by cheeky lyrics commenting on social conditions), chanted inventive slogans, and made some of the most hilarious protest posters I've ever seen. In some international news reports, however, these strategic and undeniably effective efforts to bring about change and bring a nation together have been portrayed as youthful naivete, infantilising the movement and making it look somewhat less serious and impactful than its Western counterparts.

Throughout these protests, people from different religious and ethnic groups, who have been trained to be deeply suspicious of each other, broke fast together during the month of Ramadan, celebrated Easter, and had fun on the Buddhist holiday Vesak. On a few occasions, a kat-tadiya, or an exorcist came to do an exorcism ceremony to cast out evil demons from the island. They've educat-

ed each other about the state's violence against their communities – especially violence targeting the country's Muslim and Tamil people; Ambika Satkunanathan and others repeatedly noted why Tamil people, especially those in the North and the East could not, without inviting further state surveillance and bodily harm, protest as freely as did the Sinhala in Colombo. They honoured the Tamil victims of the civil war together, and invited the surviving families of those forcibly 'disappeared' in the North and the South to speak.

Representatives of various religious organisations also attended the protests to bear witness to the events, and try to offer some protection to protesters from the violence of police, Sri Lankan Armed Forces and extrajudicial groups looking to harm them.

Images of Catholic nuns forming human chains to protect protesters were undeniably potent. So were those showing Catholic and Anglican priests, Muslim imams and maulanas, Hindu priests, and Buddhist monks, all in their religious robes sitting together at Galle Face Beach, chatting and sharing views. Together, they have held vigil, overnight, at the main protest,

## Palestine's victories

By Ramzy Baroud

In November 2006, the Israeli military prevented all Palestine-based footballers from participating in the final match of the Asian Football Confederation qualification group stage. The news had a major demoralizing effect on all Palestinians. Even rare moments of hope and happiness are often crushed by Israel.

As disappointing as the Israeli decision was, it was hardly compared to the collective shock felt by Palestinians everywhere when, in 2007, Palestinian players were not allowed to participate in a decisive World Cup qualifying game against Singapore. Instead of showing solidarity with Palestinians and condemning Israel, the International Football Association (FIFA) decided to award an automatic victory to Singapore of 3-0.

This is why Palestine's latest qualification is historic, as it is more proof that Palestinian resilience has no bounds. It sends a message to Israel as well, that its unjust draconian measures will never break the spirit of the Palestinian people.

The latest achievement should also be placed within another context. It is the third time in a row that the Palestine national team qualifies for the Asian cup finals, thanks

to an impressive squad that represents all Palestinian communities, at home and in the Diaspora. This moment, however, is bittersweet. Many Palestinian footballers, who should have been present in the Sports Center Stadium in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia – where the qualification rounds were held – were missing. Some are in Israeli prisons, others are maimed or killed. Much of the killings happened in 2009.

Indeed, 2009 was a terrible year for Palestinian football. In January 2009, three Palestinian footballers, Ayman Alkurd, Shadi Sbakeh and Wajeh Moshatah, were killed during the Israeli war on the besieged Gaza Strip. All three were seen as promising athletes with bright futures. Two months later, Saji Darwish was killed by an Israeli sniper near Ramallah. The 18-year-old was slated to become a big name in Palestinian football, too.

In July of that same year, the tragedy of Mahmoud Sarsak began. Sarsak had only been a member of the Palestine National Football Team for six months when he was arrested and tortured by Israel in a painful saga that lasted for three years. He won his freedom after undergoing a hunger strike that lasted for over 90 days. The permanent health issues Sarsak was left with, however, meant

that his once-promising sports career was over. Arrests, torture and killings of Palestinian footballers became a regular headline in Palestine. This includes the killing of former Palestinian football star, Ahd Zaqqut, in 2014, and the deliberate shooting of the feet of Jawhar Nasser Jawhar, 19, and Adam Abd Al Raouf Halabiya, 17. The two players were attempting to cross an Israeli military checkpoint in the occupied West Bank to return home after a long training session.

These are but mere examples. The targeting of Palestinian sports is a constant item on the Israeli military agenda. Palestinian stadiums are often bombed during Israel's brutal wars on Gaza. Indeed, 2009 was a terrible year for Palestinian football. In January 2009, three Palestinian footballers, Ayman Alkurd, Shadi Sbakeh and Wajeh Moshatah, were killed during the Israeli war on the besieged Gaza Strip. All three were seen as promising athletes with bright futures. Two months later, Saji Darwish was killed by an Israeli sniper near Ramallah. The 18-year-old was slated to become a big name in Palestinian football, too. In July of that same year, the tragedy of Mahmoud Sarsak began. Sarsak had only been a member



# FIFA lifts suspension on Pakistan Football Federation

World football's governing body FIFA on Thursday decided to lift the suspension on the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) that was imposed last year owing to "undue third-party interference".

"The decision was taken after FIFA received confirmation that the normalisation committee of the PFF had regained full control of the PFF's premises and was in a position to manage its finances," a press release issued by Bureau of the FIFA Council stated.

"The PFF was also informed that any undue interference in its affairs or action that could hinder the fulfilment of the mandate of the normalisation committee might lead to the PFF being suspended again and/or the imposition of other sanctions provided for in the FIFA Statutes," the



press release said.

It added that the deadline (today), by which the normalisation committee was required to fulfil its mandate, was now no longer realistic, hence the bureau decided to extend the committee's mandate until June 30, 2023.

"This will enable the latter to finally carry out the tasks assigned to it in full," the FIFA said.

Meanwhile, PFF Normalisation Committee (NC) chairman Haroon Malik hailed the decision as a "historic day" for Pakistani football.

"I congratulate the whole nation and football community on the news," he said in a video message.

Malik said the Normalisation Committee was resolved to fulfilling FIFA's mandate and would revive footballing activities, as well as ensure

participation of the national team in international competitions.

He said that heading towards elections and reclamation of assets would also be among the top priorities for the PFF.

Pakistan was suspended by FIFA in April 2021 after its appointed NC was thrown out of office by a group of officials led by Ashfaq Hussain Shah, who claimed that the Haroon Malik-led committee wasn't sincere about holding elections.

Rounds of talks between the PSB and the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination with officials of the NC as well as the Ashfaq group and others eventually saw the NC return to the PFF headquarters after handing over an eight-month roadmap to hold the elections.



ISLAMABAD: Bernhard Stephan Schlagheck, German Ambassador to Pakistan calls on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

## Imran Khan warns of wheat crisis in coming days

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan has warned that the country could witness a wheat crisis in coming days.

Speaking during an interview to anchorperson Arshad Sharif, the former premier said that the target of wheat sowing in Punjab has been not met and the country could witness a wheat crisis in the coming days.

Referring to the Lahore High Court's (LHC) verdict on Punjab Chief Minister's election, Imran Khan said that the party had always said that the election of Hamza Shehbaz as Punjab Chief Minister is 'unconstitutional'.

The PTI Chairman announced that the party would move Supreme Court (SC) against the LHC verdict regarding Punjab CM vote recount. "Election under Hamza Shehbaz and Deputy Speaker will create more crisis," he added.

"The apex court had ordered against the turncoats, so why their votes were considered. There is no governance in Punjab and the rulers' only motive is to get rid of their corruption cases," he added.

Imran Khan pointed out that the Lahore High Court has given a 24-hour deadline for recounting votes in Punjab CM election. "Many of our party members are not in Pakistan currently," he said, adding that he knew six such members went to perform Hajj INP.

## Mills association rejects ministry's figures about sugar reserves

ISLAMABAD: Rejecting the figures of the Ministry of Trade, Sugar Mills Association on Thursday said currently Pakistan has reserves of two million tonnes of sugar.

"The figures released by the ministry are contradictory against the ground realities," the sugar mills association spokesperson said in a statement.

The Sugar mills association said even Brazil and India are also mulling over exporting the surplus stock of their sugar. The decision to export sugar after October will not yield results for the country, he added. INP

## Commission to probe PTI govt decisions in petroleum sector: Shahid Khaqan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PMLN) leader and former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Thursday said that a commission will be formed to investigate wrong decisions taken by the PTI government in the petroleum sector.

Talking to the media in Islamabad flanked by Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that the country has lost billions of rupees due to the wrong decisions of Imran Khan and his cabinet and he has also ruined the energy sector. A commission will be formed to probe Imran Khan and his cabinet decisions in energy sector.

"After the report of the commission, strict action will be taken against responsible persons," he added. INP

## PM Shehbaz asks Zardari to convince allies

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday has asked Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari to convince allies.

Asif Ali Zardari and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called on PM Shehbaz and discussed the current political situation and the new NAB chairman appointment.

Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, former Speaker. INP

## Rs113.899 billion to be spent on reinforcement of gas transmission network

ISLAMABAD: The two state-owned companies, SNGPL and SSGC, would collectively spend funds amounting to Rs113.899 billion on the reinforcement of gas transmission networks in their operational areas across the country during the next fiscal year.

"The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) have planned to invest Rs27.669 billion on transmission projects, Rs77.484 million on distribution projects and Rs8.746 million on other projects bringing the total investment of Rs113.899 billion during the fiscal year 2022-23," according to an official document available with APP.

During the first nine months of the current fiscal year (July-March), the companies gasified 108 villages and towns at their respective networks, besides laying 67 kilometers (KM) gas

transmission pipelines lines, 3,244 KM main and 829 KM services lines.

They also provided around 259,212 additional gas connections including 257,644 domestic, 1473 commercial and 95 industrial across the country as compared to 304,573 additional gas connections awarded during the same period in the last fiscal year. "It is expected that gas will be supplied to approximately 736,060 new consumers (this target is subject to approval/revision by OGRA during FY2023," the document said, adding the indigenous supply of natural gas witnessed a decline of around 5 per cent and its contribution recorded at 33.1 per cent in the total primary energy supply mix of the country. The available statistics indicated that Pakistan had an extensive gas network of over 13,513 KM transmission, 155,679. INP

## ICT police mulls to conserve energy via solar panels installation

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory Police has decided to shift all its offices and buildings on efficient energy system and to make them more environment friendly.

The decision to this effect was made during a meeting of Inspector General of Capital Police Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan with Managing Director, National Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority (NEECA) Dr. Sardar Moazzam.

According to the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and following the approval of Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan, Islamabad police is introducing an environment friendly major energy saving project.

All police stations, lines, safety city, offices and other buildings and equipment of Islamabad

Capital Police are being shifted to efficient energy system i.e solar system.

A survey on this project has been started under the supervision of Director General Planning Policy Innovation Program Muneer Ahmed.

Under this project, all devices will be transferred to the solar system and the main objective of this whole project is to ensure austerity and save energy.

Meanwhile, IGP Islamabad had also issued orders to reduce the fuel quota of vehicles, which would save about Rs. 10 million per month.

Islamabad Police will play its full role in the development of the country and to put the vision of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif into practice, the police source added. INP

## At UN, Pakistan objects to 'selectivity' in condemning HR abuses

UNITED NATIONS: At the United Nations, Pakistan has objected over selectivity in the condemnation of human rights violations, citing the deafening silence over Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Participating in a debate, the Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the UN, Aamir Khan, called for a review of the current approach to advancing international peace and security.

He was speaking in a discussions sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the UN. The Subject was: "From Words to Action: A global ceasefire beyond COVID-19 pandemic."

"Today, people are talking about violations and human rights in one situation," Ambassador Aamir Khan said

in an obvious reference to the developments in Ukraine, but pointed out that "there is a deafening silence elsewhere in similar situations of violations of human rights, especially in Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine."

"It's unfortunate," he said, "that there is an element of selectivity when it comes to the condemnation of violation of human rights."

The Pakistani envoy maintained that other sources of world's geopolitical tensions were the failure of the international community to live up to the ideals of collective and cooperative security, as also that inequality was now embedded in the global political, economic and financial system in the post-1945 world order. INP

## Pakistan needs mineral processing units to save precious by-products

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is continuously losing a host of precious subsidiary elements/by-products which are part of the principal minerals that are exported to different countries, reports WealthPK.

The major causes are the export of non-processed minerals and sometimes lack of proper agreements with the mine owners or exploration companies. Of these subsidiary elements, rare earth elements (REEs) are of considerable importance.

They are in relatively low concentrations of less than 0.1% and are seldom found in the form of deposits. So, their availability is subject to the processing of host metal only.

In a discussion with WealthPK about the economic value of mining by-products, Assistant Director Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) Yasir Shaheen Khalil said, "Subsidiary products found along with the principal elements/metals are sometimes too valuable. Sometimes, this type of low constituents is part and parcel of modern technology. Although they are used in considerably low quantities, they are important value additions. They impart some special properties to the products in which they are used."

Naturally, Yasir said, they are found with other host metals. For example, gold ore is associated with silver and platinum or at least one of them is found in its deposits. Sulphur, Rhenium, Selenium, Tellurium, molybdenum, and silver ore are sometimes by-products of porphyry copper, while Platinum Group Elements (PGEs) are mostly associated with Chromite ore. Manganese can be considered the frequent constituent of iron ore found in sedimentary rocks.

Yasir said the iron ore deposit in Chiniot is named as Iron Oxide Copper Gold (IOCG) deposit,

which means copper and gold are also found there along with the iron ore. Oftentimes, silver and sometimes gold occurs as the minor constituent in copper, lead, or zinc ore. There are far more examples of this type, he added.

"The presence of REEs is considered a fortune for the miner, as they are high in demand in modern technologies from LED lights to spacecraft. They are such powerful natural elements that can bring exponential changes in considerably low quantities when processed with other metals. It can be said that they can make the physical properties of other metals a little better," Yasir continued.

He said the government must review the clauses of mining agreements whether they were with the local miners or with international companies/individuals. This will help bring a revolutionary change in reaping handsome revenues for the country, he added. Secondly, the export of directly mined material must be banned in order to fully benefit from their monetary worth, he suggested.

Assistant Director Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) Naeem Ullah in a discussion with WealthPK about the question of why Pakistan is not getting proper value/product benefit from the mining of by-products said, "The country's profit and income generation claim is limited to the benefits of principally mentioned elements, leases or some revenues i.e., taxes, etc. But the harvest of subsidiary elements is not clearly mentioned. Direct export of mineral ore without processing is another cause, while smuggling is another factor causing financial losses to the country." He said the sale and purchase of mineral ore continue in the absence of awakening that sizable chunk of money could be generated from the subsidiary elements. INP

## 55,700 pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia for Hajj rituals: Religious Ministry

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony on Thursday informed that 55,700 pilgrims had arrived in Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj rituals from Pakistan so far.

In an exclusive talk with APP from the holy land, the ministry's spokesperson Muhammad Umar Butt said that 33,000 pilgrims had reached under the Government Hajj Scheme while 22,000 availed Private Hajj Scheme.

He said 16,989 pilgrims were in Madina while 4,908 were in Makkah. A total of 82,000 Pakistanis would perform Hajj from Pakistan this year, he added.

Umar said the pre-Hajj flight operation would be completed by July 3, under the Government Hajj Scheme.

He further said the Pakistan Hajj Mission had acquired six Makatib in old Mina near Jamrat to accommodate the Pakistani pilgrims, adding Pakistani catering companies' services had been hired for the provision of food to pilgrims in Mina.

He said strict monitoring system had also been adopted during the cooking of meal and no patient of indigestion or gastroenteritis had been reported in the Hajj Medical Mission yet.

He lauded the Saudi government for providing 'home check-in' facility under Road to Makkah project to the Pakistani pilgrims.

Umar said under this facility, the pilgrims' luggage would be collected from their residences and they would be issued boarding passes by their airlines concerned.

He said it would help in saving the precious time of pilgrims as they had to reach the airport before 16 hours of departure but now they would have to arrive a couple of hours earlier.

To a query, he said due to pragmatic approach towards Hajj arrangements, Pakistan Hajj Mission ensured the provision of affordable and high quality facilities for the pilgrims through direct dealings with Makatibs, residential. INP

## Minister acknowledges US efforts for curbing narcotics production, smuggling

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti has acknowledged the efforts made by the US in curbing production and smuggling of narcotics in the region.

The federal minister was talking to a delegation led by Mr Todd D Robinson, Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs of the US department of state along with US Ambassador to Pakistan Donald Bloome, which met him in Islamabad Thursday.

The Minister has said that even with meager resources and limited manpower, Pakistan is effectively controlling smuggling of narcotics on its western borders. The Minister has

said that there is a need for more advanced technological tools to cater the needs of anti-narcotics forces.

He said Pakistan is planning to induct 10,000 personnel for narcotics control. Besides these, there is a dire need for advanced surveillance technologies like drones and other vehicles to overcome powerful drug networks, he added.

The federal minister said the biggest challenge is the use of new forms of drugs in the young generation and Pakistan is working towards making efforts for public awareness in this regard.

The Assistant secretary of state assured full support to Pakistan in combating the menace of drug trafficking and its use. INP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Switzerland, Bénédict de Cerjat, paid a farewell call on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## LHC orders re-counting of votes for Punjab CM election excluding PTI dissidents

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday ordered re-counting of votes for the elections of Punjab's chief minister held on April 16, instructing that the votes of 25 dissident PTI lawmakers be excluded from the counting process.

A five-member bench comprising Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, Justice Shahid Jamil Khan, Justice Shehram Sarwar Chaudhry, Justice Sajid Mahmood Sethi and Justice Tariq Saleem Sheikh announced the verdict with a 4-1 majority.

The detailed order will be issued later in the day.

Hamza was elected as the Punjab CM on April 16 during a provincial assembly session that was marred by violence. He received a total of 197 votes — 11 more than the required 186 — including from 25 dissident PTI MPAs that were crucial for his victory. On May 20, those lawmakers were de-seated by the ECP for defecting.

Since then, a series of petitions have challenged Hamza's election as the chief minister. All of them were, however, clubbed together after the court observed that they were identical.

The petitions — In his petition, Elahi, who was also the PTI-PML-Q's can-

didate for the CM Office, requested the court to declare that Hamza was not the chief minister since he had failed to secure the requisite number of votes in light of the SC's interpretation stating the votes of defecting lawmakers would not be counted.

Therefore, the April 16 election, its results and the certificate issued by the Punjab Assembly deputy speaker to Hamza declaring his victory had "no legal effect", the petition stated.

The petition requested the high court to declare "all consequential actions taken by [Hamza] in his purported capacity as the chief minister Punjab and all any other communications made, orders passed and notifications issued etc., consequential upon the declaration of the aforementioned result and issuing the set certificate... to be null and void".

Separately, PTI's petition, which was filed by MPAs Mohammad Sibtain Khan, Zainab Umair, Mian Mohammad Aslam Iqbal, Syed Abbas Ali Shah and Ahsan Saleem Baryar, stated that the session held for conducting the election witnessed "immense chaos and most unfortunate events". Deputy Speaker Mazari took "unlawful" aid from the police and provincial officials for holding a "sham and fraudulent" election, following which he communicated that Hamza had won, the petition said. It noted that votes of 25 dissident PTI MPAs were also counted in the final tally for Hamza. While the then governor Cheema had refused to accept the election results, Hamza was administered the oath due to "judicial overreach", it contended. "As per the investigation. INP



QATAR: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on an official tour to Qatar called on His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar and His Excellency Doctor Khalid Bin Mohammed Al Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of State for Defence Affairs, State of Qatar..

**CORRIGENDUM**

Master Planning of Jhal Jao Town

Reference to tender Published in the News Paper Vide PRQ. 4014, dated 25-05-2022. The TSE of the Project is 21220599484 The last date for bid submission is extended till 11 July 2022. Also, requirement of Code 1217 is waived off. All the condition mentioned in the bidding documents remains the same.

Executive Engineer,  
Urban Planning and Development Department,  
Department, Kalat Division at Khuzdar

PRQ No.4492/20-06-2022  
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