

# QUETTA VOICE

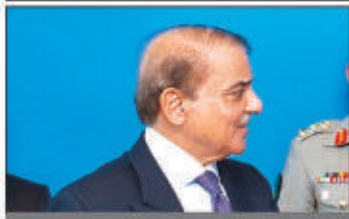
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**PM Shehbaz, US president had 'constructive' meeting in New York**



**Pashton Culture Day observed in Quetta amid traditional dances**

## Balochistan Government approves over 15bs rupees subsidy for farmers

**News Desk**

Balochistan government approved over Rs: 15 billion in subsidies for farmers in the flood-affected areas to restore the agriculture sector. Floods severely affected the agriculture sector and destroyed standing crops in almost all parts of the province.

Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Abdul Qudous Bizenjo chaired a high-level meeting regarding the restoration of the agriculture sector and food security in the flood-hit areas of the province on Friday. Provincial Ministers Mir Asad Ullah Baloch, Zmarak Khan Achakzai, Secretary Balochistan, Abdul Aziz Uqaili, and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion.

The Secretary of Agriculture Balochistan, Umeed Khokar briefed the meeting about the agriculture restoration plan of Balochistan. The provincial government will provide Rs: 6.71 billion in subsidies to the farmers for agricultural seeds, Rs: 6.47 billion for fertilizers, and Rs: 2.62 billion for tube wells and solar systems.

"Restoration of agriculture sector is our top priority", CM Balochistan told



the meeting.

Current torrential rains followed by flash floods affected 52 percent area of the crops in different districts. The rains and floods affected the solar tube wells and canal systems. Preserved agricultural seeds were also wasted. The damage caused to the agriculture

system will result in a shortage of food. The provincial government will provide a 70 percent subsidy on agricultural seeds and a 50 percent subsidy on fertilizers and for the restoration of solar systems, the meeting decided. This restoration of the agriculture sector will provide food security,

employment to farmers, and Rs: 324 billion benefits. Food Minister, Zmarak Khan Achakzai said that sale points were established in different spots to provide cheap flour to the consumers. The provincial government is purchasing flour from the Punjab government and PASCO to overcome the

food shortage. "Relief must be provided to the landowners and farmers in order to avoid shortage of food", Mr. Bizenjo stated. We will not hesitate to help the farmers even if we were not able to pay the cabinet members for two months' salaries", the CM announced.

## Collapsed British built bridge in Bolan be reconstructed by December 31st

Manan Mandokhail, Aziz Marri, Nashad Baloch

QUETTA, SIBI, JAFFARABAD: Train service between Balochistan and other parts of Balochistan is expected to be restored by the end of this year. Raging floods caused the collapse of an ancient British-built bridge in the rugged mountains of Bolan on August 25.



Divisional Superintendent of Pakistan Railways Balochistan, Nisar Ahmed Khan stated that work on the reconstruction of the bridge that collapsed in the Bolan district of the province started on Thursday. "By December 31st, the collapsed bridge would be reconstructed", Mr. Khan told Daily Quetta Voice.

NLC given the task to reconstruct the bridge. "National Logistic Cell (NLC) has been authorized for the reconstruction of the bridge", Nisar Ahmed Khan said. The necessary machinery was moved to the area for the reconstruction of the damaged bridge. For the timely construction of the bridge, currently, Mach station has been declared as the station headquarters of the railways, Nisar Ahmed Khan informed.

He said the eleven-kilometer track located between Sibi and Jacobabad was completely flooded. "This was also one of the main reasons behind the suspension of the train service", the Divisional Superintendent of Railways stated.

Britains had established the bridge in early 1880s. Pakistan Railways started working on the reconstruction of the ancient bridge at Hirk area of Bolan district of Balochistan province, he informed. The bridge was built by the British Colonial rulers in the early 1880s in the rugged mountains of Bolan.

However, floods caused the collapse of the ancient bridge on August 25th this year. The collapse also caused the suspension of train service between Balochistan Sindh, Punjab, and other areas of the country.

"Pakistan railways have however restored train service between Pakistan and Iran. The DS railways stated that floods had damaged the track in 104 spots between Quetta and Taftan.



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets President Joe Biden at the reception of world leaders participating in 77th session of UNGA hosted by US President Joe Biden.

## PM Shehbaz, US president had 'constructive' meeting in New York

New York: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had a brief "interaction" with US President Joe Biden at a reception the US leader hosted on Wednesday evening for the world leaders gathered in New York for the 77th session of UN General Assembly. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar said. Responding to reporters' questions at UN Headquarters in New York on Thursday, Hina Khar described the conversation as "constructive and forward-looking." The

Pakistan-US relationship, the state minister added, was starting at a "solid footing and we don't want to rush it." The minister said there was a lot of sympathy and goodwill among world leaders for the flood-devastated Pakistan and now that must be converted into something concrete for the country to recover from the disaster, and build back better. "We have fully briefed the international community about the extent of damage wrought by the climate-induced floods", she added. I.N.P

## PMC President Dr Noshad tells about new policy of MDCAT 2022

Syed Muhammad Yaseen

The President of the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) Dr. Noshad Sheikh has told the media about the new policy of PMC MDCAT 2022. Today a meeting was held at the HEC office in Karachi for finalizing the policy, rules, and criteria of MDCAT 2022. Following decisions and amendments were made in policy for the medical and dental entrance test (MDCAT) 2022.

**Syllabus:** The syllabus for medical and dental entrance test will remain the same as shared by former governing body of PMC. The aspirants are advised to follow their provincial texts books as primary source of knowledge for clearing medical and dental colleges entry test.

**Updated Test Date of MDCAT:** 13th or 20th November are suitable dates for conducting entry tests throughout Pakistan, Dr Noshad Sheikh told a private news channel. Sunday comes on these both dates and we will be conducting test on any of the Sunday, he added. A uniform test will be taken throughout the country.

**New Pattern of entry test:** The test will not be taken online like last year but this year PMC will be taking test



physically from all students to maintain fair play and equality throughout Pakistan, President PMC told media.

**Eligibility Criteria for MBBS and BDS admission:** The eligibility criteria for MBBS and BDS admissions have been updated to 55% and 45% respectively. Also it was decided to reduce eligibility criteria for taking MDCAT is reduced to 60% in FSc. However, the FSc weightage required to sit in MDCAT was 65% the previous year.

**Provinces to Conduct MDCAT:** A public university from every province will be conducting MDCAT in its respective domain as per new policy framed by Pakistan Medical Commission.

## Anti polio campaign to begin in 141 UCs of Balochistan from Sep 26

Health Desk

Anti Polio campaign will begin in 141 union councils of 5 districts of Balochistan on the 26 of September. This campaign will continue for 7 days in the concerned areas. Hameedullah Nasar, the Chief of Emergency Operation Cell (EOC) said the health department has prepared a plan to make the campaign a success.



Anti Polio campaign will be carried out in all union councils of Quetta, Pishin, Chaman, Killa Abdullah, and 8 union councils of Zhob. During this seven-day anti-polio campaign, polio drops will be provided to 0.885 million children who are under the age of 5 years.

A total of 3,680 teams formed. A total of 3680 polio teams will be working during this polio campaign. The Levies, Police, and FC personnel will provide security to the polio teams during the campaign.

The children could be affected by the polio virus who are deprived of the polio drops. However, no polio case has been reported from January 2021 till this year.

This presence of the polio virus in the other provinces of the country and in Afghanistan is a challenge for Balochistan. All of the parents are requested to coordinate with the polio teams during the anti-polio campaign.

Pakistan has so far reported 19 cases of the crippling virus during the year 2022.

## Pashton Culture Day observed in Quetta amid traditional dances

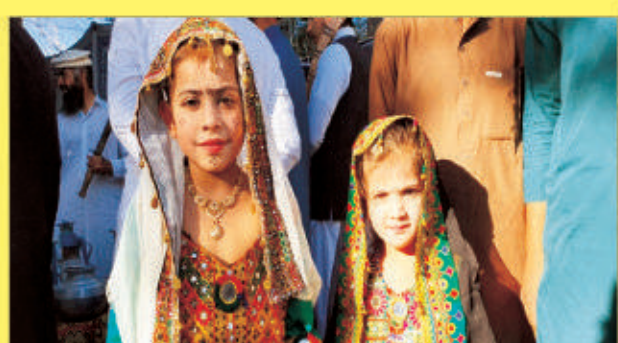
Manan Mandokhail, Muhammad Mudasar

Pashton culture day was observed in Quetta and other parts of the country amid traditional dances on Friday. Various programs were organized by political parties and Pashto academies in Quetta, Chaman, Loralai, Zhob and other parts of the province. The Pashtoonkhwa Milli

Awami Party (PKMAP) organized the cultural event at Liaquat Park to promote Pashtoon history, culture, language and tradition. PKMAP Chief Mehmood Khan Achakzai and other party leaders participated in the event.

**Youngsters danced to the beat of drums**

Youth danced to the traditional beat of drums and

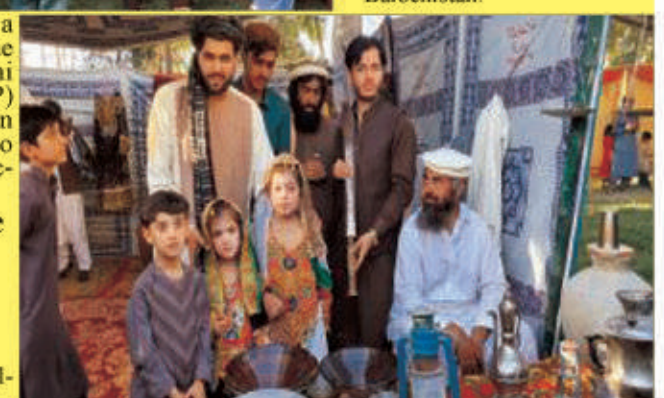


enjoyed the event to mark the day. Most of the participants of the culture day programs were wearing traditional Pashto turbans. Kids were also wearing traditional dresses to promote Pashtoon culture. Stalls were also established to attract the people to see the ancient things used by families in the mountains and deserts in the past. "We are a tolerant society and culture-loving people", Mr. Achakzai told the flags waving party supporters. Mehmood Khan Achakzai urged the young generation to play their due role in the promotion of the Pashto language and culture across the globe. "This is our prime responsibility to protect the culture", the PKMAP Chairman said. Pashto Academy organizes events to promote the culture. The Pashto Academy

Quetta also organized a function with regard to the culture day. Awami National Party (ANP) leader Asghar Khan Achakzia and others also participated in the function. "ANP strives for the promotion of Pashtoon culture", Asghar Khan Achakzai said. The poets, authors, intel-



lectuals and writers spoke at length about the importance of the culture day and the importance of the culture, language, history and tradition. "Writers play an important role in preserving the language and culture of a nation", Abdul Rauf Rafiqi, one of the writers said. Cultural day programs were also organized in Chaman and other parts of Balochistan.





## QUETTA VOICE

Editor Asim Khan

## Balochistan needs inclusive development

Balochistan, the country's resource-rich province is lagging behind all other provinces in terms of key social indicators including education, health, sanitation, clean drinking water etc. Mismanagement, injudicious distribution of development funds coupled with a lack of political commitments are the underlying reasons behind backwardness of the province.

Track record shows, successive governments have always launched politically motivated development schemes to please their influential supporters. Constituency, individual and political schemes always dominated the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) in every year's financial budget. Nexus among the Chief Minister's Secretariat, the Planning Development and Finance Department continue to deprive the constituencies of other lawmakers.

Opposition's constituencies were ignored. Opposition lawmakers constituencies remained ignored during last three-years of former chief minister, Jam Kamal Khan's government. Despite agitation in and outside the assembly, the opposition lawmakers were not able to force government to allocate funds for their constituencies.

This is irony of fate that the mandate of the lawmakers is to frame laws since the assemblies are called legislative assemblies. But legislators are least bothered about the legislation rather they take keen interest in construction of roads, buildings etc. That's why, provincial governments prefer not to hold local bodies elections rather decentralization of development projects.

Development deficit of Balochistan is likely to be Rs. 100b. Balochistan government announced to have allocated Rs. 172 bs for the PSDP during the financial year 2021-22. However, currently the government has more than Rs. 40bs as per the statement of ruling party's Spokesman Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran. The province has already spent Rs. 40bs and it has more than 40bs for the remaining year. It means the deficit is close to Rs. 100bs.

Chief Minister Qudus Bizenjo needs to put his house in order and introduce a strict financial policy to ensure completion of development projects. The government should ensure inclusive development and end the practice of exclusive development so that this backward province could come at par with other parts of the country. Action should match words now.

According to Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), Pakistan is the 5th most vulnerable country to climate change. Pakistan will face a \$26 billion annual loss. The greenhouse gas emissions of Pakistan are 0.7% which is nearly negligible. Greenhouse gases are resulting in the increase in temperature of the planet earth.

Pakistan received heavy rainfall in this monsoon. The rainfall was followed by extreme flash floods in many parts of the country. The 3 provinces Khyber Pakhtun khwa(KPK), Sindh, and Balochistan particularly received heavy rainfall and floods. Till now most damages are recorded in the Balochistan province.

Balochistan is the most vulnerable to climate change.

Balochistan is the most vulnerable province of Pakistan to climate change. Many times this province has faced different types of natural disasters due to climate change. Drought is the major threat to Balochistan as Barkan the district of Balochistan faced a prolonged drought of 22 months from 1999 to 2002, and Quetta experienced severe droughts in 2000, 2004, and 2008. During this monsoon season, Balochistan faced extreme floods in almost every part of the province.

Houses damaged in Quetta

## Vulnerability of Balochistan Pakistan to Climate Change

Syed Muhammad Qaseem



The floods swept away dams and destroyed the buildings, houses, roads, and bridges in Balochistan, KPK, and Sindh. The communication links were destroyed by the merciless waves of the flash floods. This resulted in the break-



down of physical communication between the provinces. The provinces faced food shortages, as all of the roads were broken and the bridges collapsed. Train service was also suspended due to the collapse of a bridge in Bolan, a dis-



trict of Balochistan. Punjab is also facing smog and heatwave as a result of climate change. Sometimes the density of smog becomes such high as the transportation system remains suspended even for days.

large scale, and people faced economic issues. Life in the province was totally paralyzed as it faced a prolonged Sui gas suspension, no electricity, a shortage of food items, and no mobile network. The government announced 7 days holiday for all educational institutions in the province, due to the continuous floods.

The floods claimed many precious human lives. Most of them were children, women, and aged men. The provincial government and Federal government seemed very weak to cope with the situation. Balochistan's government called for the Pakistan Military to be stationed in the different flood-affected areas of the province in order to handle the unwanted incidents.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) need to make disaster management plans to handle such situations. It should highly train its employees so that human lives can be saved.

Dams must be built on emergency bases to prevent floods and store water for drought-like situations. The dam construction work should be strictly supervised to increase the construction quality of the dams. The provincial government must ensure zero encroachment in the waterways. Pakistan as a developing

country needs the cooperation of the International community.

Pakistan's economy is mainly based on agriculture and climate change is adversely affecting its crops. Climate change is having an impact on the seasonal conditions of Pakistan in which summers will get longer and winters will be shorter. Pakistan is economically weak and it is difficult for the country to fight climate change. As a developing country, it has limited resources and poverty is spread all over the country. The average daily income of more than half of the population is around 2 dollars.

Bridge collapsed in khuzdar district of Balochistan

The highest emitters of greenhouse gases are developed countries. Interestingly only 10 countries emit 68 percent of the greenhouse gases. Pakistan being a signatory of the Paris agreement on climate change and being the least emitter of greenhouse gas needs the cooperation of the international community to help it to fight against climate change.

The author is a student of Software Engineering at the Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIEMS). He frequently writes about looming threat of climate change and global warming in Balochistan and Pakistan

## The Socio-Economic Impacts of 2022 Floods in Balochistan

Syed Ahmed Safdar

Flood is one of the most devastating natural hazards throughout the globe. According to CREDE-Data Base, from the 19th century till the present day thousands of people have lost their life due to flood disasters. Further, 4.5 million people were displaced, injured, and homeless.

Pakistan Vulnerable to Natural Disasters:

Pakistan is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters including floods. The 2010-11 floods adversely affected the economy of Pakistan. The geographical location of Balochistan is prone to many natural disasters, like drought floods, and earthquakes. The recent monsoon spells have adversely affected the rural communities of the province. The socio-economic development of the rural areas of Balochistan mainly



belongs to the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector is depending on the availability of the required amount of water.

Balochistan loses huge amount of water due to no dams.

Unfortunately, in the recent monsoon season, we have lost a huge amount of water due to the lack of proper reservoir and dam systems in the province. Dam and reservoirs can minimize the initial pressure of flood on one

side whereas; on the other hand, such storage of water can recharge the depleted groundwater table in those particular areas.

Due to a lack of proper management and planning, we always face catastrophic events in terms of floods drought, etc. the relevant stockholders like PDMA, Agriculture Department, and Irrigation Department need to revisit their policies in terms of water storage to minimize the adverse

impact of flood and drought in the province.

The consequences of floods, both negative and positive, vary greatly depending on their location, duration, the extent of flooding, depth, and speed, as well as the vulnerability and value of the affected natural and constructed environments.

We need to take action with a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. If we invest \$10 in the pre-phase of a disaster so we can save \$100 in the post-phase of a disaster.

The environmental benefits of flooding can also help the economy through things such as increased fish production, recharge of groundwater resources, and maintenance of recreational environments.

We need to take action with a proactive approach rather than a reactive approach. If we invest \$10 in the pre-phase of a disaster so we can save \$100 in the post-phase of a disaster.

## Future directions

By Atta-ur-Rahman

As the floods sweep across much of Pakistan, they have highlighted the need for proper water management. It was in the 60s when President Ayub Khan built the Warsak, Mangla and Tarbela dams. Little work on new dam construction has been done in the subsequent 50 years.

In contrast China has constructed 80,000 large dams, and India has built over 5000 large dams while Pakistan has only two big dams. If Pakistan too had built about a thousand large dams, much of the water that is causing national devastation could have been stored and used both for agriculture as well as for electricity generation.

The country's river systems are dependent on melting of glaciers in the snow-covered Himalayas and with global warming, increased flooding is to be expected both in terms of overflowing rivers as well as flash flooding due to unusually heavy rains, as has happened now. The water storage capacity of Pakistan in the Indus Basin is hardly 30 days whereas India has a storage capacity of about 200 days while in Australia and US this capacity is about 900 days. It is imperative that a well-thought-out water management strategy is urgently implemented as the present floods are likely to be a regular feature with further intensification over the next few decades, on account of global warming.

But dam construction is only one of the major problems facing Pakistan. The country has dismally failed to tap into its real wealth, our children, by neglecting education. Our planning ministry needs to drastically change the overall directions of the country to a technology driven knowledge economy. Innovation leading to creation of disruptive businesses must become the national priority. For this it is important to promote the venture start-up eco system.

Pakistan's main problem is that its exports are at a miserable level of about \$30 billion since we are exporting only low value textiles, agricultural products etc. We need to emerge from this low value trap and start manufacturing and exporting high value products such as electronics, engineering goods, automobiles, new solar energy technologies, pharmaceuticals as well as AI products such as those based on Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things etc.

To achieve this, a number of steps need to be taken. Our universities and research centers must integrate innovation and entrepreneurship into their programmes. Universities today are harbingers of change. They can act as the platforms from which thousands of successful start-ups can sprout up. Technology Parks need to be made an integral part of all universities, and government support to university budgets linked to their success in promoting new businesses and enhancing national exports.

One excellent model is that of the University of Cambridge. I know the uni-

versity well as I spent over eight years there first for my PhD and later as Fellow of Kings College Cambridge. This association has continued over the last 50 years. A large Science Park is associated with Cambridge University which has been the home to thousands of new start-up companies in high tech fields. Established in 1970 by Trinity College, Cambridge Science Park is today Europe's largest centre for commercial research and development.

Cambridge city is now home to some of the fastest-growing tech companies in the UK such as Darktrace, GeoSpock and more. These companies have been estimated to have an annual turnover of GBP2.4 billion.

There are huge opportunities in Pakistan in many sectors that remain unexploited including waste recycling, mineral extraction and processing, advanced agriculture and energy storage systems. Our universities need to be upgraded with high quality faculty, and technology parks established within them to foster new start-up companies. They should be given liberal research grants in both applied and basic areas of science, for technology development and for social sciences. The private sector has a pivotal role to play in these efforts by investing in Research and Development -- this is almost absent in Pakistan. The government can help jumpstart the private sector R&D efforts by giving tax breaks to industry investing in research and development.

## Learning from catastrophes

By Abdul Sattar

Monsoon rains and floods continue to wreak havoc across the country. More than 1,000 lives have been lost and over 1,500 people wounded in the calamity that saw the destruction of bridges, small dams, schools, hospitals besides the inundation of millions of acres of land.

The recent floods have not only exposed the flawed development models but also put a question mark over the elite claims of the ruling elite that pretends to be altruistic.

The heart-wrenching scenes of five young men making desperate appeals for help in a town of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the images of children swept away by merciless waves of floods in Balochistan have moved every sensitive person. The grief of those who saw their loved ones drowning in front of their eyes as they called authorities for help is unimaginable.

Such tragic incidents must have inflicted deep wounds in the hearts of those who lost their relatives. This tragic loss has become an integral part of their life, which will make them heartbroken every time they think about their loved ones.

What is even more unfortunate is the fact that these flood victims do not seem to have respite any time soon. The spectre of diseases, which are likely to break out in several parts of the country, is haunting millions of flood victims. Poor hygienic conditions in camps and temporary

shelters are also multiplying their misery. It seems that it will take years, or maybe decades, for these people to rebuild their shattered lives.

But far away from the grief and misery of these unfortunate people is a ruling class which is busy enjoying its carefree life. The champion of change, whose party is ruling four out of the six regions that have been devastated by floods and torrential rains, has nothing to do except repeating the foreign conspiracy allegations. His teams in Punjab, KP, Gilgit-Balistan (GB) and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) seem to have a hectic schedule that forces them to visit every place except the areas that are inundated because of the incessant downpours and overflowing rivers.

These people are defending the logic of the 'revolutionary leader', who unabashedly asserted that he would hold public gatherings even in the middle of war. The pious leader firmly believes that his struggle for real independence will immediately tame the furious waves of the River Indus, warding off the danger posed to Nowshera and parts of KP. Imran Khan has a dogged determination to prove that as a leader is clad in shalwar qameez, repeats the mantra of corruption and addresses mammoth public gatherings, the misery of flood-affected people would evaporate within no time. Such an approach will immensely help rebuild

destroyed houses, drain inundated land, repair damaged bridges and restore extirpated roads. Therefore, he thinks it is justified to squander billions of rupees on larger-than-life billboards, thousands of panaflex and giant screens to propagate the message of the modern emancipator.

These floods have also exposed the performance of the party that claims to be the champion of the general will. Its pathetic handling of the situation in Sindh has infuriated tens of thousands of people who are struggling to get relief. The way the party's feudal lords treated grief-stricken people has unleashed a torrent of criticism. Video clips of a politician distributing Rs50 among the affected have prompted many to criticize the party that has been ruling over a decade now.

In the last few days, we saw how angry mobs surrounded provincial ministers who went to flood-affected areas for photo sessions, questioning these modern barons over the lacklustre response of the provincial government. Instead of responding to these questions, some of these government's representatives misbehaved with the affected.

Unfortunately, these members of the ruling elite, whether they are from the PTI, the PPP or the PML-N, will continue fooling the people unless the people rise against them demanding a model of development that does not benefit just a few

companies, contractors and politicians but the vast majority of the country. From Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, all are trying to give the impression that they really care about the plight of the people, but, in reality, no politician is ready to take responsibility for the loss of over 1,000 lives.

Several reports suggest that the government knew about the severity of the rains. However, the measures it took were not enough to ward off the losses that have had devastating effects on the lives of millions of people.

Many argue that the ruling elite is responsible for the destruction and devastation caused by the floods and torrential rains. The ruling class failed to make concrete efforts to clear off waterways, which could have minimized losses to a great extent. In 2019 the government was informed that the existing waterways were so broad decades ago that one million cusecs water could easily pass through them but their size has shrunk now because of encroachment and unplanned development. Now only 100,000 cusecs of water can pass through these waterways. Rivers have been encroached upon by the builder mafia, and even sewerage drains have not been spared.

What has been done cannot be undone, but the government can at least identify the waterways that are occupied by various vested interests and

make efforts to clear the same so that future floods and rains do not turn out to be as devastating as the current ones. The timber mafia, whose greed for profit has also complicated the situation, should also be reined in.

As far as relief efforts are concerned, it is not the federal body or the provincial disaster management that should be handling these activities across the country. Instead, the local bodies should be tasked to deal with the situation. But unfortunately, our politicians have unjustified contempt for devolution of powers.

The PPP which takes credit for the 18th Amendment is not ready to transfer powers to districts, towns and union councils. In Sindh it has effectively defanged local government institutions, concentrating all powers in the hands of the provincial government.

Imran Khan had promised to devolve such powers, arguing that legislators should not be given any development funds at all as local governments were responsible for taking care of such development work, but he opened the gates of the national exchequer for elected parliamentarians, showing billions of rupees to carry out uplift projects.

The visits of Prime Minister Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari are commendable, but there is no point in squandering precious state resources on VIP movements, aerial visits and advertisement campaigns.

## Inequality and hunger

By Chuck Collins

Beginning on May 24, the World Economic Forum is gathering in Davos, Switzerland for an in-person meeting, discussing the global tax system and financial inclusion.

Thanks to protests and new research, however, participants will not be able to avoid the elephant in the room: the surging inequality of wealth during the pandemic.

As the Institute for Policy Studies (IPS) and Inequality.org have documented over the last two years of a global pandemic, billionaire assets have surged while millions lost their lives and livelihoods.

A new report from Oxfam dramatizes how hundreds of millions of people around the world have slid further into poverty during this time period. In a detailed examination of the food and agriculture industry, Oxfam found that billionaires in that industry saw their wealth increase by \$382 billion during the pandemic. An emergency windfall tax on their wealth increase alone (to say nothing of their pre-pandemic billions) could end world hunger and double the incomes of 545 million small-scale farmers.

In January, an analysis by the Fight Inequality Alliance, Institute for Policy Studies, Oxfam, and the Patriotic Millionaires found that an annual wealth tax starting at just 2 percent for those

with more than \$5 million, 3 percent for those with over \$50 million, and up to 5 percent for billionaires could generate upwards of \$2.52 trillion a year. That's enough to lift 2.3 billion people out of poverty, fund vaccines for everyone in the world, and deliver universal healthcare and social protections for all the citizens of low- and lower-middle-income countries.

A group of over 150 millionaires released a strong statement calling on Davos attendees to face the dangers of runaway wealth inequality and speak out in favor of national efforts to levy progressive income and wealth taxes on the ultra-wealthy. "The truth is that 'Davos' doesn't deserve the world's trust right now," the statement reads. "For all the countless hours spent talking about making the world a better place, the conference has produced little tangible value amidst a torrent of self-congratulations."

"Until participants acknowledge the simple, effective solution staring them in the face -- taxing the rich -- the people of the world will continue to see their so-called dedication to fixing the world's problems as little more than a performance."

The letter is signed by actor and activist Mark Ruffalo, as well as supporters of the In Tax We Trust movement including Abigail Disney, Morris Pearl, and Nick Hanauer. These millionaires delivered the In Tax We Trust

letter directly to the World Economic Forum offices in New York and Geneva, and attended pro-taxation demonstrations at the outskirts of the elite compound in Davos itself.

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Faisal Vawda's plea against lifetime disqualification set for hearing on Sept 29

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Friday set Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Faisal Vawda's plea against lifetime disqualification over dual nationality for hearing on September 29.

Chief Election Commissioner Sikander Sultan Raja, disqualified Vawda for concealing his dual nationality with a direction to return the salary and other benefits he had received as a minister and National Assembly member within two months. He was also de-notified as a Senator.

The plea on September 29. The bench includes Chief Justice Umer Ata Bandiyal, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Aisha Malik. The court has issued notices to all parties, including the Attorney General and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).



QUETTA: Local present traditional dance on occasion "Pashtun Culture Day" was celebrated provincial capital Quetta at QMC.

Sindh seeks Punjab's help to tackle spread of diseases

KARACHI: Amid the rise in spread of diseases in flood-hit areas, the Sindh government has sought help from Punjab on Friday.

As per the official sources, the Sindh government has written a letter to the Punjab government, seeking 380 paramedics from it. The objective of seeking help from the Punjab government is to deal with the diseases that are spreading fast in the flood affected areas. INP

Russian gas a viable option for energy-starved Pakistan: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: Russian energy is one of the most viable options that may be available for Pakistan to stabilize its economy, as other Asian and European countries are already importing LNG from Russia despite US sanctions.

MMBTU. This shows how much the government has to pay in subsidies to maintain exports, he added. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reports that during the first two months of FY2023-24 the import bill of Pakistan was \$11.1 billion, which was 10 percent lower compared to \$12.2 billion in the corresponding period of financial year 2022-23.

In Pakistan, the demand for energy is increasing day by day due to the rapid growth of population. According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2021-22, the country's population growth rate is around 2.4 percent, which is much higher than the growth rate of other countries.

Security situation under control in Swat, Senate body told

ISLAMABAD: The Senate's Defence Committee on Friday was assured that the writ of the state was paramount and the law and order situation was under control in Swat after law enforcement agencies launched strict action against hostile elements.

It was told that some violent incidents were reported in the area but the culprits behind them were traced and caught. The committee members appreciated the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), and other law enforcement forces, including police, Levies and paramilitary forces, who had played a heroic role to protect and promote peace as well as the lives of the people of Malakand.

crimes against the people and the state must be caught, tried in the court and given due punishment as per the law. A motion moved by Senator Dost Mohammad Khan was also discussed and disposed off by the committee.

SHC fixes case of 'deporting' two Pakistani citizens to Afghanistan for hearing

KARACHI: Relatives of the two Pakistani nationals, who have been 'deported' to Afghanistan have filed a plea in the Sindh High Court (SHC) for their safe return on Friday.

The plea has alleged that cases of fake documents were registered against Sardar Asif and his family. Both Sardar Asif Nasqashbandi and his son were declared Pakistani national after investigation by the SSP security and the special branch, the family said and added despite the fact, their CNICs were blocked by NADRA.

The family has pleaded with the SHC to pass order for the safe and early return of their loved ones. The SHC has fixed the case for hearing on October 3. The plea filed by the 24 members of Naqashbandi's family will be taken up by the Sindh High Court on October 3.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman HEC, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at Ministry of Law.

SBP amends prudential regulations to enhance agricultural financing: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has made amendments to its prudential regulations (PRs) relating to agriculture financing to allow banks and development finance institutions (DFIs) to increase lending to farm and non-farm sectors.

ensure that these amended regulations are distributed throughout their branches and field offices. The State Bank has been playing a vital role in uplifting the agricultural sector. Due to its significant contribution to national income, employment, food security, and export earnings, Pakistan's agriculture sector continues to play a central role in the economy.

lending regulation into its functions. In August 2022, the State Bank had set a target of disbursing Rs1.8 trillion in agricultural credits to the financial institutions for disbursement among farmers during the fiscal year 2022-23.

Chinese, Pak universities to build research centre on food security

BEIJING: A Chinese research university and a Pakistani university are to jointly build a research centre on food security and plant biotechnology, sai Dr Wang Depeng, professor at the College of Life Science of China's Linyi University, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN).

The research centre is part of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to be signed between Linyi University and Pakistan's Abdul Wali Khan University, Dr Wang told CEN.

Under the MoU, the research centre and laboratories, which will be established at Linyi University, will focus on the disciplines of biotechnology, agronomy and food sciences.

Both sides will also recruit researchers from respective universities to work in the research centre and supervise student researchers, says the agreement.

Two joint research groups will be formed, states the MoU, to conduct research of mutual interests and a joint training programme of M.Phil and PhD students will also be offered.

In recent years, a growing number of Chinese and Pakistani researchers have jointly conducted research projects to mitigate the effects of worsening climate change.

Last year, Dr Wang together with Pakistani and Turkish scientists published four English monographs on climate-smart agriculture and climate-resilient crops as the world is struggling to maintain and increase agriculture production. Four publications co-edited by Chinese, Pakistani and Turkish researchers "Recently, I have introduced two Pakistani professors to Chinese universities," Dr Wang said, adding that more such cooperation is also in the pipeline. INP

Textile exporters sceptical about meeting \$25bn target due to energy crisis: WealthPK

ISLAMABAD: The exporters of textile products in Pakistan are sceptical about meeting the export target of \$25 billion in the current fiscal year due to the energy crisis in the country, WealthPK reports.

two months of the current fiscal, registering less than one percent growth on a year-on-year basis in July. However, he said that textile exports showed a decline of 13.21% during July as compared to the month of June.

They have asked the government to resolve the issue of the energy crisis in the country and provide uninterrupted electricity to the textile sector to enable the industrialists to meet the export target.

"Production of the textile sector is severely affected by the current energy crisis. It is affecting Pakistan's textile exports badly," Asad Naqvi, a senior analyst associated with All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), told WealthPK.

He feared that Pakistan would not be able to meet the textile export target of \$25 billion keeping in view the volume of exports recorded during the first two months of the current fiscal.

He said that Pakistan exported textile exports worth \$3.056 billion during the first two months of the current financial year. Textile items worth \$1.481 billion and \$1.575 billion were exported from the country in July and August, respectively.

Asad Naqvi said that textile exports increased only by 4.18% during the first

"How can we achieve the export target of \$25 billion with these statistics," he questioned. He added that it was difficult for exporters to fulfill the orders according to schedule owing to the stoppage of production caused by the suspension of power supply to the industry.

Asad Naqvi said that textile exports should be around \$2 billion each month to meet the target set for the current fiscal. He said that gas supply to the industry has been suspended since June 30, 2022, which has almost halted production in the whole value-added textile industry.

He said that the uninterrupted supply of gas is imperative for the textile industry to maintain the momentum of export, adding that Pakistan's overall exports are also affected owing to the energy crisis.

Asad Naqvi said that a 26% upsurge in the export of textile products during the last financial year was made possible only due to the uninterrupted supply of gas as well as electricity to the industry at the regionally competitive tariff. INP

Repealing of Section 124-A: IHC says will not interfere in legislative affairs

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has remarked that it is the parliament's prerogative to do the legislation saying that the court will not interfere in it.

Table with 6 columns: S.No, Name of the Applicant, Name of the Bank, Amount, and other details. It lists various banks and their associated amounts.

Pakistan to bear the brunt of Fed rate hike

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is to bear the brunt of Federal Reserve (Fed) rate hike, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday.

The U.S. Central Bank, the Fed, has hiked the key rate by another 0.75 percentage points lifting the central bank's benchmark overnight interest rate to a range of 3.00%-3.25%.

While presenting his arguments, lawyer Niazi said that Sec 124-A was being used to suppress the freedom of expression. He further contended that the aforementioned section which is related to file the sedition cases was in repugnant to the basic rights as guaranteed in the Constitution of Pakistan.

The petition was filed by former human rights minister and PTI leader Shireen Mazarri. She attended the court proceedings along with her lawyer Abuzar Salman Khan Niazi.

Advertisement for Coal & others minerals Sand Gravel Bajri. Includes contact information for DGR, website, and phone number.



# Pakistan debt relief requests won't include commercial creditors

ISLAMABAD Pakistan's finance minister said on Friday the South Asian nation was seeking debt relief from bilateral creditors in the wake of devastating flooding but emphasized the government would not seek any relief from commercial banks or Eurobond creditors.

Pakistan's bonds had slumped to just half their face value throughout the day after the Financial Times said a United Nations development agency was urging the cash-strapped country to restructure its debt.

Devastating floods engulfed large swathes of Pakistan this month, killing more than 1,500 people and causing damage estimated at \$30 billion, fanning fears that Pakistan would not meet its debts.

"Given the climate-induced disaster in Pakistan, we are seeking debt relief from bilateral Paris Club creditors," Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said in a Tweet. "We are neither seeking nor do we need, any relief from commercial banks or Eurobond creditors."

A memorandum the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is set to hand Pakistan's government this week says its creditors should consider debt relief in the wake of the floods, according to the Financial Times.

The memorandum further proposed debt restructuring or swaps, in which creditors would forego some repayments in exchange for Pakistan's agreement to invest in climate change-resilient infrastructure, the paper said.

Neither the foreign office in Islamabad nor a UNDP spokesperson in Pakistan immediately responded to Reuters' request for comment on the memorandum. The country's finance and information ministers could also not be reached.

The bond market reaction on Friday strengthened fears of another default by Pakistan, hammering its inter-

national market government debt.

One of the main sovereign bonds due for repayment in 2024 slumped more than 10 cents to about 50 cents on the dollar, while another due in 2027 fell to about 45 cents.

Miftah had told a Reuters interview earlier this week that there was no chance of a credit default risk.

The government needs to pay \$1 billion on bonds maturing in December. It has interest payments worth around \$0.6 billion for the 2022-23 fiscal year but the next full bond redemption is not until April 2024.

Miftah said in Friday's Tweet that the \$1 billion bond would be paid on time and in full.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also appealed on Friday to rich nations for immediate debt relief, saying what had been done was commendable, but adding, "It's far from meeting our needs."

Shehbaz, who along with Ismail is in New York to attend the U.N. General Assembly, told Bloomberg TV that Pakistan had taken up the debt relief issue with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and world leaders.

"We have spoken to European leaders and other leaders to help us in Paris club, to get us a moratorium," he said, referring to rich nation creditors.

Sharif and finance minister Ismail said they had also taken up the relief issue with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Ismail said the IMF has "almost agreed" to the request for easing the conditions of Pakistan's \$7 billion programme that was resumed in July after being delayed for months.

"They've said almost yes," he told local Pakistani Dunya News TV in New York a day after Shehbaz met the IMF's managing director Web Desk.



NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a bilateral meeting with Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of Belgium on the sidelines of High-Level General Debate of the 77th Session of UN General Assembly (UNGA77) in New York..

## Authorities insist no food shortage in Pakistan; death toll from floods crosses 1,600 mark

ISLAMABAD: The National Flood Response Coordination Centre (NFRCC) said on Friday that there was no shortage of food items in the country, as the death toll from devastating floods since June 14 crossed the 1,600 mark.

An intense and long monsoon dumped around three times as much rain on Pakistan than on average in recent weeks, causing major flooding which killed 1,606 people, including 579 children and 325 women, according to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).

In its daily update, it said that 10 people have lost their lives in flood-affected areas, out of which six hailed from Balochistan and the remaining from Sindh.

This figure does not include those killed by disease in the aftermath.

Hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the floods are living in the open and as flood waters spread over hundreds of kilometres start to recede. The calamity has not just destroyed houses and roads but also crops spread over millions of acres subsequently creating fears of a food shortage.

In the latest update today, Pakistan's top flood response centre said: "A huge stock of wheat for [the] next six months is available along with the strategic reserve which is sufficient till next harvesting season."

Other than two million tons of strategic reserves, an import of additional stock of 1.8m tons is in progress out of which 0.6m tons has reached. The NFRCC said 46,000 tons of wheat from the public sector was being released on a daily basis.

The centre also gave a breakdown of certain crops

and food stock.

It said that bumper tomato crops were harvested last year, which were more than sufficient to fulfil the country's requirements. The NFRCC said a total of 7.5m tons of potatoes were harvested when the total requirement was 4.2m tons.

The forum said the import of onions and potatoes was in progress from Iran and Afghanistan. "In that regard, the government has directed to waive of all duties [...] however the release/distribution of items is ensured [the] same day at earliest."

The country's rice requirement, the NFRCC said, could be fulfilled easily through available stock till December, adding that the next harvesting season would start in October. In a nutshell, the country has a sufficient stock of food and sustenance items and measures have been taken to further enhance the capacity, the NFRCC said. However, speaking to the media on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said that the country may have to import wheat if the crop was not sown in time. Later today, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to make his debut on the global stage with his address to a gathering of world leaders at the UN headquarters in New York. He is expected to highlight the massive devastation triggered by deadly climate-induced floods, and will appeal for international support to deal with the catastrophe. Meanwhile, at a meeting today, Minister for Water Resources Khurshid Shah said that he would talk to the prime minister about the deferral of the recovery of agricultural loans to farmers. Web Desk

### Militant killed after CTD team comes under attack in Swat

SWAT: One militant was killed when personnel of the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) responded to an attack by a group of militants at Manglore, Swat on Friday.

The slain militant, who was identified as Adil, was a resident of the same area and was wanted by the CTD for his role in three incidents of terrorism.

The remaining militants, however, managed to flee.

The CTD launched a search operation in the area to arrest the absconders. INP

### Pakistani rupee busts US dollar's upward trajectory, gains 71 paisas

ISLAMABAD: The value of Pakistani rupee was strengthened against the US dollar as the greenback lost 71 paisa in its value in the interbank trading on Friday.

According to the data provided by money traders, the rupee showed muscles during morning session today as its value appreciated against the US dollar which was traded at Rs239, down by 71 paisa in the interbank by 10:15am. Yesterday, the dollar was closed at Rs239.71.

The local unit is facing slump for the last several trading sessions. During the last 52 weeks, Pakistani rupee lost 29.48% against the greenback while reaching its lowest at 239.94 on July 28, 2022, and the highest at 169 on September 23, 2021.

The State Bank of Pakistan on Thursday announced that country's Current Account Deficit (CAD) fell to \$0.7bn in August compared to \$1.2bn in July. Cumulatively, Jul-Aug FY23 CAD declined by \$0.5bn to \$1.9bn compared to the same period last year mainly due to increase in exports by \$0.5bn & contraction in imports by \$0.2bn, the bank concluded.

The market is volatile as the world is committing to help the flood-hit Pakistan. On Sept 18, Saudi Arabia rolled over a \$3 billion debt for one year on the existing tough terms and the International Monetary Fund also announced support for Pakistan's flood-relief efforts but without giving any additional loan.

IMF Resident Representative Esther Perez Ruiz on Sunday issued a brief statement, making clear the global lender's approach towards Pakistan in the aftermath of the devastating floods.

Perez said that the IMF was deeply saddened by the devastating impact of the floods in Pakistan, offering sympathies to the millions of victims of the floods. "We will work with others in the international community to support, under the current INP

### Flood-hit Pakistan should suspend debt repayments, says UN paper - FT

WASHINGTON: Pakistan should suspend international debt repayments and restructure loans with creditors after recent floods added to the country's financial crisis, the Financial Times reported on Friday, citing a UN policy memo.

The newspaper said the memorandum, which the UN Development Programme will share with Pakistan's government this week, states that the country's creditors should consider debt relief so that policymakers can prioritise financing its disaster response over a loan repayment.

Pakistan has estimated the damage at \$30 billion, and the government and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres have blamed the flooding on climate change.

The memo further proposed debt restructuring or swaps, where creditors would let go of repayments in exchange for Pakistan agreeing to invest in climate change-resilient infrastructure, FT said.

Floods have affected 33 million Pakistanis, inflicted billions of dollars in damage, and killed over 1,500 people - creating concern that Pakistan will not meet its debts. INP

### Lahore: Infant dies after being thrown from moving motorcycle

LAHORE: In a shocking incident, a newborn baby girl died after she was thrown from a moving motorcycle in Gulberg area of Lahore on Friday.

According to details, the inhuman incident took place near Gunamangar Road in Gulberg area of Lahore. In a CCTV footage a man and two women can be seen travelling on the bike.

Later in the video, they can be seen throwing the newborn baby girl on the corner of street. The man and two women riding the motorbike fled the scene.

Getting the information, the police reached the spot and moved the infant to the hospital, where she breathed her last during few hours of treatment.

Police have registered a case against unknown persons in Ghalib market police station and started searching for the accused. INP

### Woman found murdered at farmhouse of senior journalist in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A woman was found murdered at a farmhouse in Islamabad on Friday. The farmhouse belongs to a senior journalist of the federal capital.

Police are currently questioning the woman's husband, who is also the journalist's son.

Shahzad Town police on Friday said that they were called to a farmhouse in Chak Shahzad area of Islamabad on Friday morning.

They added that they were told a man named Shahnawaz had allegedly murdered his wife, Sara.

The officials added that a team comprising senior officers from Islamabad's homicide division along with forensic experts are at the crime scene and combing it for clues and evidence. INP

### Flour prices skyrocket while weekly inflation drops to 29.82pc: PBS report

ISLAMABAD: Prices of multiple essential items went up in the last week; however, the weekly inflation rate dropped by 8.1% to settle at 29.28%, data issued by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed.

According to the PBS data, flour, pulses, and potato prices increased last week. However, onions, tomatoes and Masoor pulse dropped; the data showed.

The price of tea went up by Rs18.60 per kg, Moong pulse went up from Rs248 to Rs252, and Chickpea pulse shot up Rs6.37 to sell at Rs257.50.

The price of sugar went up by Rs0.71 to sell at Rs87.64 per kg. And the price of a dozen of eggs increased by Rs1.47. The PBS data shows that the rate of alive chicken also went up by Rs12.76 per kg.

However, the price of tomatoes dropped by Rs12 and onions by Rs0.39. And prices of 15 essential items remained unchanged in the last week.

According to the PBS data report the previous week, prices of 30 items went by while the weekly inflation rate dropped by 0.19%.

The rate of tea went up by Rs18.60 per kg, Moong pulse by Rs8.31, Chickpea pulse by Rs6.20, Maash pulse by Rs6.34, eggs by Rs5.98 per dozen, mutton by Rs3.98, beef by Rs2.41 and prices of milk, rice and yoghurt also went up in the last week. However, the price of a 20 kg flour bag went up by Rs25.41 to sell at Rs1323.90 the PBS data shows. INP

### Two recovered dead from floodwater in Nawabshah

NAWABSHAH: Two dead bodies were recovered separately from floodwater in Nawabshah on Friday.

The body of a 30-year-old man was recovered from floodwater in Amir Dahri area of Nawabshah.

The deceased was identified as Shamhir Dahri. He was reported to have drowned while going to Kacha area.

Another body of a man identified as Liaquat Ali was recovered from a village in floodwater in Sem Nullah.

The police shifted bodies of the deceased to the hospital. Search for their families was underway.

A 50-foot wide breach occurred in Canal 6-R near Faqirwali area of Haroonabad, Bahawalnagar, the Irrigation Department said.

The breach inundated cotton and other crops over hundreds of acres. Farmers were busy plugging the breach on a self-help

### Accountability court paves way for Ishaq Dar's return to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad has paved the way for return to Pakistan of senior PML-N leader and former finance minister Ishaq Dar by suspending his permanent arrest warrants.

Giving a change to the PML-N leader to surrender, Judge Muhammad Bashir on Friday ordered that Ishaq Dar should not be arrested on his return to the country and suspended his permanent arrest warrants issued by the NAB until October 7.

The judge remarked the court will look into cancellation of the arrest warrants once the former finance minister sets foot on the motherland.

Ishaq Dar's lawyer had informed the court on Thursday that his client was ready to surrender. Dar's lawyer Qazi Misbah prayed to the court to order the National Accountability Court (NAB) to withdraw the warrants since his client currently living in London was ready to surrender. "It is my request that the former finance minister is not arrested on his arrival in Pakistan," he said. INP

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### PM attends photo exhibition on 'Floods in Pakistan - A Climate Change'

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday participated in a photo exhibition titled "Floods in Pakistan - A Climate Change" held in the lobby of the United Nations Secretariat.

The exhibition was organized by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to highlight the effects of climate change on the occasion of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly.

Prime Minister said that the flood caused a loss of 30 billion dollars. Four million acres of standing crops were destroyed. One million houses were damaged and hundreds of bridges were washed away. INP

### Dengue continues on-slot in Islamabad, Rawalpindi with 174 more cases

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital reported 77 new dengue cases while its neighbouring twin city Rawalpindi reported 97 in the last 24 hours.

According to the data provided by District Health Officer (DHO), Islamabad, the capital, reported 77 dengue cases, including 41 from rural and 36 from urban areas, in the last 24 hours.

After the new cases, the total number of dengue cases in Islamabad has gone up to 1734, while five people have lost their lives due to the dengue virus, the DHO added.

Among the total cases in Islamabad, 1048 were reported in rural areas, while 686 were in urban

vicinities.

Dr Zaem said that 17 patients were admitted to the PIMS hospital Islamabad in the last 24 hours, 9 in the polyclinic hospital, 3 in Federal General Hospital, 11 in the Holy Family Hospital, 5 in BBH Rawalpindi, 2 in DHQ Rawalpindi, while private laboratories reported 30 cases. The DHO said five people lost their lives to the dengue virus in the current season. While the capital's neighbouring twin city Rawalpindi reported 97 new cases of Dengue in the last 24 hours, one person lost his life. The total number of cases in Rawalpindi has gone up to 1659, the ministry of health said. INP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China to Pakistan Nong Rong called on Federal Minister for Power, Engr. Khurram Dasgir Khan.

### HEC defers fees of flood-affected students

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr Mukhtar Ahmed on Friday announced that the students from flood-affected areas, enrolled at public and private universities, would get fee deferral for two semesters.

In a statement the HEC Chairman said all public and private universities were working to facilitate people of the flood-hit areas, adding that veterinary universities had also been directed to support livestock in these devastated areas. He also announced that the HEC was also working out a proper plan for compensating the universities in the flood-hit areas. In response to a question, Dr Mukhtar Ahmed said the HEC had also launched programmes related to artificial intelligence and cyber security in many universities, including the Air University, NUST, and the UET. He underlined the need for promoting skills education across the country, terming it more valued than simple educational degrees. He further added that skills education was

playing important role in development of the country. Underscoring the problem of awarding affiliation to colleges, he pointed out that universities had awarded affiliation to around 5,000 colleges so far across the country. "Such number of affiliation means compromising the quality of education," he regretted.

"A policy has been formulated to properly monitor the performance of affiliated colleges through inspection," he said, adding that affiliation of the poor-performing colleges would be cancelled.

Highlighting key issues in higher education sector, Dr Ahmed said, "We can significantly improve our educational institutions ranking by improving the quality and management in educational institutions and discouraging politics and grouping."

He also informed about the need-based scholarship programme being provided by the HEC to people with disability with clear instructions for public and private universities to implement it. INP

### Kaira for comprehensive social movement to contain rising social hatred, division

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira on Friday said that Pakistan needed a comprehensive social movement to bring change in behaviors to contain hatred and division rising in the society.

Inaugurating the Pakistan Peace Festival at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), he said that Pakistan got its freedom decades ago, but still the country was divided into different classes, races, tribes and with a popular perception of the masses to maintain their identity as a feudal society.

"We are not ready to listen the different opinions of various school of thoughts including political, religious and social minds. Instead of uniting the nation, social media is unfortunately being used to further divide the people," Kaira pointed out. The advisor said Pakistan had all the institutions and laws of democracy, but the attitude of the society as a whole seemed to be undemocratic. "It is necessary to promote

character-based democratic process instead of influence-based to maintain an atmosphere of peace and tolerance in the society," he suggested.

Talking about possible suggestions and solutions to bring peace and tolerance in the society, the advisor said the process of character building through social movements should be accelerated aimed to achieve national cohesion and harmony.

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QUETTA: AC Muhammad Ali Durrani distributing relief goods among flood affected victims' during a ceremony organized by UNHCR.